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Daisaku Ikeda's Environmental Ethics of Humanitarian Competition: A Review of His United Nations Peace and Education Proposals

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DAISAKU IKEDA'S ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS OF HUMANITARIAN COMPETITION: A REVIEW OF HIS UNITED NATIONS PEACE AND EDUCATION PROPOSALS

Introduction

The increasing impact of climate change and environmental degradation in displacing people, causing war, and limiting basic human rights to potable water, sustainable food sources, safe habitats, and a livable planet have thrust front and center the intersection of global peace and environmental protection and sustainability. This article examines Daisaku Ikeda's (1928 -) ethics of environmental protection, sustainable development and the cultivation of ecological consciousness as nodal points of peace, social justice and human dignity at (inter)national and individual levels.

Ikeda is perhaps best known as leader of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a lay Buddhist nongovernmental organization of 12 million members in 192 countries and territories; and while a substantial body of literature exists on Buddhist approaches to environmental ethics (e.g., Brown 1994; Brown 2008; Chappell 1999; Inada 1987; Kremmerer 2008; Rockefeller and Elder 1992), Ikeda's proposals and efforts—both Buddhist and secular—at institutionalizing the principles of peace, culture and education have remained limited or absent in academic literature, particularly as they relate to environmental protection and sustainability. Unlike other Buddhist scholar-practitioners working in these areas, Ikeda's contributions since the 1960s have uniquely and consistently focused on the United Nations, secular education, and individual action. Perhaps most recognizable is Ikeda's proposal for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development,

which began in 2005. The World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa included Ikeda's proposal and the UN General Assembly formally endorsed the decision. While Greenwood (formerly Gruenewald), Manteaw and Smith (2009) and others have championed the Decade, Ikeda's proposal has not been excerpted or explicated in extant academic literature. Similarly, Ikeda has submitted peace proposals to the UN annually since 1978 aimed at promoting the ideal of the UN and calling for reform of UN systems to expand the role of NGOs. Consistent themes in these proposals include the abolition of war and nuclear weapons, human and women's rights, poverty, hunger, refugees, spirituality, global citizenship, education and environmental issues; however, these proposals have also not been excerpted or explicated in extant literature. Thus, this article breaks new ground by excerpting and reviewing Ikeda's UN peace proposals, UN Decade education proposal and dialogues with leading individuals in politics, sciences, culture and education to articulate his ethics of peace, cooperation and social justice in the context of the natural environment. As no extensive explication of Ikeda's ideas and initiatives in this area exists, this article aims to stimulate new understandings of and research in environmental protection, sustainability and education worldwide.

For this article I examine the following works by Ikeda (1963, 1982, 1984a1, 1984b, 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Aitmatov and Ikeda 2009; de Athayde and Ikeda 2009; Derbolav and Ikeda 1992; Diéz-Hockleitner and Ikeda 2008; Galtung and Ikeda 1995; Henderson and Ikeda 2004; Huyghe and Ikeda 2007; Pauling and Ikeda 2009; Peccei and Ikeda 1984; Singh and Ikeda 1988; Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005; Toynbee and Ikeda 1976); and as Ikeda may not be well known, I begin with a brief biography couched specifically in the context of peace, followed by explanation of theoretical frameworks undergirding his environmental ethics.

Daisaku Ikeda: A Brief Biography in Peace

Born in Tokyo in 1928, Ikeda experienced firsthand the human loss, anguish and turmoil of a nation at war. In the chaos of postwar Japan, Ikeda encountered educator, ardent pacifist and then leader of Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, who had been imprisoned for his resistance to Japan's war efforts. These experiences shaped Ikeda's deep commitment to peace; his initiatives in environmental protection and sustainable development are part and parcel of his wider vision for a global culture of peace and creative coexistence.

Ikeda's achievements as a peacebuilder and Buddhist philosopher represent a startling diversity of activity. He has founded numerous peace, cultural and educational institutions, including the Institute for Oriental Philosophy (with offices

in France, Hong Kong, India, Japan, United Kingdom and Russia), the Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning and Dialogue (formerly the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century; U.S.), the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research (Japan and US), the Min-On Concert Association (Japan), the Fuji Art Museum (Japan), the Victor Hugo House of Literature (France), and the secular Soka education system, which includes universities in Japan and the U.S., K-12 schools in Japan, a kindergarten and elementary school in Brazil, and kindergartens in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea.

While Ikeda has been the subject of what Gamble and Watanabe (2004) argue is libelous and unfounded derision in Japanese media, he is recipient of, among numerous other awards, the United Nations Peace Prize (1983), the Rosa Parks Humanitarian Award (1993), the Simon Wiesenthal Center International Tolerance Award (1993), and the Education as Transformation Award (2001). In addition, the world academic community has awarded Ikeda over 275 honorary doctorates and professorships for his efforts in peace, culture and education, and he was recently named the first honorary lifetime member of the John Dewey Society¹.

Theoretical Frameworks

Scrutiny of the Ikeda corpus reveals numerous theoretical frameworks undergirding his views and activities. With respect to his conceptualization of human-environment interaction, environmental protection, and ecological consciousness, I focus on the theories of abstraction, humanitarian competition and *esho funi*.

Spirit of Abstraction

Drawing on the work of existentialist philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), Ikeda (1992, 2009) argues that an individual and societal "spirit of abstraction," the act of reducing the Other's humanity and character into abstract concepts such as Communist, fascist, Zionist, fundamentalist and so on has wrought war, mammonism and, thereby, environmental degradation, climate change and the recent global economic meltdown. Marcel argued that people wage war or otherwise denigrate individuals only *after* abstracting them to the point of neglecting their humanity. Ikeda (1992) argued such spirit of abstraction promulgated the Russian Revolution, which oppressed, dehumanized and killed people based on abstract ideology. In 2009, he revisited the spirit of abstraction as the root cause of the global economic meltdown, whereby unbridled capitalism denigrated and oppressed the Other because of an abstract valuation of money.

This spirit of abstraction is pertinent to a discussion of environmental issues and sustainability for two reasons: First, Ikeda's consideration of the spirit of abstraction in 1992 and 2009 present his view over time and space that it has led at once to the failure and dissolution of Russian Communism and its apparent

"victor," capitalism, when that capitalism is unbridled and operates on inhumane ethics. Second, Ikeda argued such spirit of abstraction—in both instances—is simultaneously at the root of environmental degradation:

It goes without saying that the essence of our environmental problem is how we should go about creating a society that can exist in harmony with the natural ecosystem. For this reason, it is a compound problem that transcends the boundaries of politics, economics, science and technology. The environmental issue concerns the fundamental problem of how human beings live, including all fields of endeavor which range from their sense of values to the nature of culture in future societies. This is an issue that cannot be successfully solved only from the political or economic viewpoint of individual nations. We must instead proceed with a reformation of the consciousness of all the Earth's people, a task that renders the need for internal spirituality all the more acute. In the coarse of my earlier discussion of the "abstract spirit" the issue of environmental destruction was on my mind constantly. Regardless of the system that embodies it, the "abstract spirit" has continued to wield the same deadly sword over the environment as it has over humanity itself. The horrible environmental devastation in the former communist countries, going far beyond anything we had dared imagine, is still fresh in our memories. Surely, the reformation of our internal consciousness, as citizens of the Earth who share a sense of crisis, is an issue that bears on the entire course of human history. (1992)

In 2008, Ikeda (2008b) revisited this application of the spirit of abstraction, arguing that abstract principles and ideas undergirding "religious fundamentalism, ethnocentrism, chauvinism, racism and a dogmatic adherence to various ideologies, including those of the market...take precedence over living human beings who in turn are forced into a subservient role" (12-13). Ikeda (2009) then applied such thinking to the environment, arguing that abstract principles of free-market capitalism have led to environmental degradation, destruction of the biosphere and global climate change. In his dialogue with Johan Galtung (Galtung and Ikeda 1995), Ikeda argued, "The current worldwide economic slump can hamper implementation by dampening enthusiasm for environmental protection. Unless the United Nations comes up with some very bold ideas, global environmental protection is unlikely to make much progress" (137).

Humanitarian Competition

Fifteen years later, Ikeda argued that ecological destabilization in the midst of the current economic dislocation has provided humanity an opportunity to overcome the spirit of abstraction by pursuing a dialogic *humanitarian competition* toward creative coexistence instead of economic, political and militaristic competition consonant with the spirit of abstraction:

Herein lies the value of humanitarian competition. As a concept, it compels us to confront the reality of competition while ensuring that it is conducted firmly on the basis of humane values, thus bringing forth a synergistic reaction between humanitarian concerns and competitive energies. It is this that qualifies humanitarian competition to be a key paradigm for the twenty-first century. It is crucial here that we heed Gabriel Marcel's warning always to keep concrete realities in view. (2009: 20)

To this end, Ikeda (2009) references President Obama's economic stimulus and job creation strategy as a possible "Green New Deal" (29), but it and The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, albeit an historic bill passed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee to regulate greenhouse gasses for the first time in the nation's history and "create clean energy jobs, achieve energy independence, reduce global warming pollution and transition to a clean energy economy" (HR 2454: 1), evidence the limits imposed by political, economic and militaristic competition. Indeed substantive change can happen, Ikeda argues, only through a sincere commitment to humanitarian competition.

The concept of humanitarian competition (*jindouteki kyousou*; occasionally also translated as "humanistic competition") was first proposed by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), founding president of the Soka Gakkai, in his initial work, *Jinsei chirigaku* (The Geography of Human Life, 1903/1981-88, Vol. 1-2; hereafter *The Geography*; cf. Bethel 2002)3. *The Geography* examined the two-way relationship between humans and their natural environment as an educational means of developing students' social, moral and academic capabilities. Within this context, Makiguchi advocates humanitarian competition among nation-states as an alternative to economic, political and military competition, which he argued cannot foster or sustain mutual betterment or human happiness4:

There is no simple formula for this humanitarianism. Rather, all activities, whether of a political, military or economic nature, should be conducted in conformity with the principles of humanitarianism. What is important is to set aside egotistical motives, striving to protect and improve not only one's own life, but also the lives of others. One should do things for the sake of others, because by benefiting others, we benefit ourselves. This means to engage consciously in collective life. (1981-88, Vol. 2: 399)

Humanitarian competition occupies only a few pages (Vol. 2: 398-401) at the end of The Geography and never appears in any of Makiguchi's subsequent writings (which span ten volumes); however, Ikeda has continually returned to it as a central theme of his peace proposals and educational initiatives since first referencing it in 1996 in the context of education to meet the goals set forth in the UN Decade of Human Rights Education (e.g., 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002c, 2005, 2007b, 2008b, 2009; Henderson and Ikeda 2004). He argues, "I am fully convinced that the time has now arrived, a hundred years after it was originally proposed, for us to turn our attention to humanitarian competition as a guiding principal for the

new era" (Ikeda 2009: 19). Moreover, in promoting humanitarian competition with increasing urgency and repetition, Ikeda has refined the concept in two important ways. First, he argues that humanitarian competition provides a means for fostering environmental sustainability, social justice and peace:

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi called for "humanitarian competition" among states. This was a vision of an international order in which the world's diverse states strive to positively influence each other, to coexist and flourish together rather than pursuing narrowly defined national interests at each other's expense. I feel that the work of solving the global environmental crisis provides a unique opportunity to move toward such a world. (2008b: 31)

Second, he envisions and articulates humanitarian competition vis-à-vis environmental issues (as well as with respect to other planetary concerns) among individuals in addition to nation-states: "Ecological integrity is the shared interest and concern of all humankind, an issue that transcends national borders and priorities. Any solution to the problems we face will require a strong sense of individual responsibility and commitment by each of us as inhabitants sharing the same planet" (ibid: 6). In 2009, he reiterates this conviction:

In my peace proposal last year, I called for humanitarian competition to be at the heart of efforts to solve the global environmental crisis, urging the promotion of renewable energy measures and energy efficiency initiatives as a way to realize a transition from dependence on fossil fuels to a low-carbon no-waste society. Recent developments suggest movement in this direction. (2009: 29)

Esho Funi

According to Ikeda (2002), individual and (inter)national humanitarian competition requires a Bakhtinian dialogism among humans, cultures and the environment (e.g., Ikeda 1995a). For Ikeda, such dialogic interaction is based on the Buddhist principle of *esho funi*, or dependent origination, that sees the self and Other—the self and environment—as inseparably and cooperatively interconnected. In his definitive dialogue with Arnold Toynbee, Ikeda (Toynbee and Ikeda 1976) explains *esho funi*:

Sho stands for shoho, the independent life entity; e stands for eho, the environment supporting that life. Since human life influences and depends on its environment, the two—Esho—are inseparable—Funi. Should man and his environment be regarded as two separate and opposed entities, it would be impossible to grasp either in true perspective. Instead of remaining fixed and immutable, the environment changes according to the kind of life it supports. (38)

In 1978, Ikeda argued elsewhere (1987a) that, "The teaching [of *esho funi*] includes the idea that the subjective individual is, in fact, created by the environment.

Furthermore, it advocates splendid interrelations and harmony since it maintains that a revolution for the betterment of the interior environment can have a revolutionary, ameliorating effect on the exterior environment as well" (76-77). That is, "As life extends its influence into its surroundings, the environment automatically changes in accordance with the life condition. An environment, then, which is a reflection of the inner life of its inhabitants, always takes on the characteristics of those living within it" (163). Ikeda revisits this principle numerous times in his UN proposals and dialogues with regard to environmental issues and sustainable development. Brown (2008) Inada (1987) and others have also discussed environmental education and ecological consciousness from the perspective of this Buddhist principle.

Ikeda (Toynbee and Ikeda 1976) argued, "Only by living in harmony with the natural environment in a give-and-take relation is it possible for man to develop his own life creatively" (38). He continued that a lack of interdependent harmony with nature and environment has resulted in a reversal in the power relation between human beings and nonhuman nature; it "is in some way related to natural disasters...I believe that deep within the causes of much of the climatic confusion that spawns so-called natural disasters is always a human element" (ibid: 44; see also Aitmatov and Ikeda 2009).

In the process of dialogically understanding the subjective particularities of the Other, we are further developed and renewed in a more complete version of ourselves. Ikeda (2001c) argued, "A truer, fuller sense of self is found in the totality of the psyche that is inextricably linked to 'other'" (41):

If the twentieth century was one in which human beings violently destroyed the global environment like rapacious invaders, then maintaining communication and contact with nature are absolutely indispensible in the education of our children and young people who are to take responsibility for the twenty-first century. Just as with communication among humans, we must increase our opportunities to interact directly with nature rather than with the world of virtual reality. (ibid: 76)

Again, for Ikeda (2002b), this process of resisting abstraction through dialogic humanitarian competition, couched in esho funi, is firmly grounded in Makiguchian theory, which is even more relevant today than when first proposed:

Makiguchi fully foresaw the need for human beings to live in harmony with their environment. He predicted that none of the human sentiments such as compassion, goodwill, friendship, kindness, sincerity or simplicity could be realized to any appreciable degree without proper consideration for the natural environment, nor could human character be fully developed...Not only have we failed to maintain dialogue with nature, but we have sought to conquer and dominate nature, becoming a civilization whose greed drives it madly onward until it confronts a crisis of

environmental destruction that threatens the survival of the globe itself. (xxxv)

Such dialogic interaction among humans, culture and the environment prohibits us from abstracting the Other, whether it be other human beings, other cultures, or the natural environment. When we seek to value the subjectivities of the Other through dialogue, we thereby "concretize" them, which is the first step in humanitarian competition. From this place, in the concept of *esho funi*, when we engage in a winwin humanitarian competition, we foster self-betterment by working for the betterment of the Other—what Ikeda calls "creative coexistence."

In the following sections I excerpt and chronologically review Ikeda's UN peace and education proposals and dialogues in which he addresses humanistically competitive ways to resist the spirit of abstraction causing environmental and human degradation.

Ikeda's UN Peace Proposals: A Chronological Review

1960s and 1970s

As stated above, Ikeda does not use "humanitarian competition" until 1996, but this ethic of cooperation toward mutual excellence is evident in his proposals, initiatives, programs in and dialogues about environmental protection and sustainability as early as the 1960s when he called for international cooperation among nations—outside of economic, political and militaristic competition—to solve food shortages (1963). In 1974, Ikeda (2009) proposed the establishment of a world food bank because of concern that national interests were taking precedence over humanitarian concerns in response to global hunger and based on his conviction that life-sustaining commodities must not be politicized.

In 1978, Ikeda (2008b) proposed the creation of an "Environmental United Nations," arguing that, "Developing an institutional framework that enables all states to engage with environmental issues will be of utmost importance, especially toward the widely acknowledged goal of establishing effective global environmental governance" (29; see also 1987b). This Environmental UN would involve all nations "pooling their brain power in study and research for the development of concrete policies to solve these [ecological] difficulties" (1987b). This proposal in many ways provided the foundation for his future UN proposals and initiatives in environmental protection and sustainability.

Related to this proposal, Ikeda argued the major key to creating an Environmental UN "must be the devising of ways to ensure not only harmony between man and nature, but also harmony, coexistence, and coprosperity among the nations of the world—especially between those of the North and South" (ibid: 80)—industrially developing and negatively affected by that development. He (1997) articulated this

North-South spirit of abstraction again in 1997 in the context of esho funi and yet again in his dialogue with French philosopher René Huyghe (Huyghe and Ikeda 2007):

These peoples [of Third World nations] are deeply dissatisfied with the excessively wide gap separating them from the industrialized nations, at whose hands they have endured deeply resented tyranny and selfishness. Far from being confined to North Africa, emotions of this kind are general and very widespread. Resentment greatly aggravates the difficulty of convincing the peoples of the Third World of the dangers they face if they fail to avoid the errors and mistakes already made by the industrialized West. No amount of preaching about harmony and cooperation with nature can be effective in the face of mistrust and existing differences in living standards. We must first strive to eliminate distrust by rectifying discrepancies between the Third World nations and the industrialized ones. Then, we must act sincerely to offer words of caution about the crisis. (71-72)

To that end, in 1978, Ikeda also proposed reparations: "All nations who have built their own prosperity on sacrifices, large or small, on the part of developing nations must pay for what they have done. I include Japan among the industrialized nations to whom I strongly address a plea for reparation" (ibid).

1980s

In the early 1980s, Ikeda's (1984a, 1986) consideration of environmental issues is particularly evident in his call for abolition of nuclear weapons when he argued, based on the Buddhist principle of *esho funi*, they cause destruction to the ecology. Also in the 1980s Ikeda critiqued consumerist greed as a cause of war and environmental destruction (Ikeda, 1984b), expanding such thinking to incorporate humanitarian cooperation in his dialogue with Club of Rome founding president Aurelio Peccei (Peccei and Ikeda 1984):

I believe that curbing the human desire for profit and fame could go a long way to decelerating the kind of emphasis on progress that today lays waste large stretches of our environment and therefore puts humanity itself in jeopardy. If this were achieved, it would next behoove us to establish as our primary goal consumption commensurate with Nature's regenerative powers and a lasting life of happiness for us and all other life forms. (150)

Such consideration is expanded and articulated more explicitly in his 1987 peace proposal (1987b), in which he revisited his 1978 proposal for the creation of an Environmental UN, as well as introduced a proposal for a "United Nations Decade of Education for World Citizens," which would include environmental issues connected with peace and human rights (see also Pauling and Ikeda 2009). He argued, "Harmony between humanity and nature should be the theme of education in relation to the environment. It is important to bring the most serious consideration to the extent to which nuclear explosions harm the ecosystem"

(1987b). In 1988 he expanded on this proposed Decade with a proposal for a "World Citizens' Charter [to] be created as a base for the education of world citizens beyond the limitations of national identity. It would be a charter for peace education dealing comprehensively" (1988) with issues of human rights, peace and environmental issues (see also Ikeda 1989; Singh and Ikeda 1988).

1990s

Applauding UNESCO's initiatives in 1990, Ikeda proposed a UN Special Session of Education concerning environment, poverty, hunger and population growth. He also proposed the 1990s be designated as the Decade of World Citizens' Education and that curriculum be created that embraced themes of urgent concern to humankind, including environment, development, peace and human rights. The book Educating Citizens for Global Awareness (Noddings 2005) arguably emanated from these proposals. In the book's foreword Ikeda (2005a) argued,

The great wave of globalization sweeping contemporary society, in areas such as information and communications, science and technology, and the market economy, is a contrast of light and dark. The positive potentials are democratization and the spread of awareness of human rights; the negative aspects are war and conflict, rising economic disparities, the obliteration of distinctive cultures, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and the destruction of the global ecology...

Education, in the genuine sense of the word, holds the key to resolving these problems. Education has the power to enrich the inner landscape of the human spirit, to build within people's hearts what the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) refers to as "the defenses of peace." True education summons forth the innate goodness of humanity—our capacity for nonviolence, trust, and benevolence. It enables individuals to reveal their unique qualities and, by encouraging empathy with others, opens the door to the peaceful coexistence of humanity. This kind of humanistic education is crucial if we are to foster global citizens. (ix)

While he does not use such terminology in the 1990 peace proposal, Ikeda thereafter contextualized such education for global citizenship in Makiguchi's concept of humanitarian competition (2005a).

In 1991, Ikeda argued the "common task of humanity [is] to protect our one and only Earth" (1991). To that end, he strengthened his initiatives in environmental sustainability by proposing an Environmental Security Council within the UN as part of his earlier vision for an Environmental UN. In preparation for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Ikeda argued,

Indeed, the threat to human life today consists not only of war or nuclear holocaust, but also of the destruction and deterioration of the earth's environment. Protection of the global environment must be made one of the top priorities of international politics, and the whole issue of security should be reappraised, incorporating environmental questions.

In view of the gravity of the environmental destruction underway on our planet, I have called for the establishment of an "Environmental United Nations." As an important step toward that goal I propose that a second security council be set up to monitor and take charge of environmental problems. A United Nations conference on the environment and development will be held in Brazil next year, and UN efforts to grapple with environmental issues are now entering a decisive stage. Japan can make a significant contribution, befitting its economic strength, in the area of environmental protection. I am especially eager to see Japan exercise active leadership in realizing the establishment of an "Environmental Security Council," a bold and courageous step that would help remedy its image as a nation of "economic animals." (1991)

Not only is this an impressive proposal identifying the gravity of environmental instability before the Earth Summit, but it also evidences a consistent theme in Ikeda's proposals, initiatives and programs—an increased cooperative role for Japan vis-à-vis environmental security. In 1992, Ikeda again urged Japan to take the lead in regional disarmament and the promotion of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies in the region.

Also in 1992, in addition to discussing environmental issues through the abovementioned lens of an abstract spirit, Ikeda delineated a series of proposals to reorganize the UN as environmental issues were not considered at its inception. Namely, in addition to revisiting the idea of an Environmental UN and the previous year's proposed Environmental Security Council, which had, by 1992, received approval from Japan and other nations, Ikeda (1992) proposed the UN be divided into two strengthened independent bodies, one concerned with peacekeeping and the other concerned with global problems such as environment and human rights. He recommended the latter as a UN of Environment and Development with an Environment and Development Security Council, rather than as some reorganized form of the UN Economic and Social Council; he also provided an extensive plan for equitable membership. In the spirit of humanitarian competition, Ikeda argued that realization of such a UN of Environment and Development "depends upon whether or not each country is willing to give priority to the Earth's interest meaning the survival of the human race and this planet itself—over its own national interests. Each country must abandon its long-held belief in the primacy of national sovereignty and be prepared to transfer part of its authority to the international body" (1992).

Second and related, he proposed a "UN Disarmament Fund" whereby nations—in an ethic of humanitarian competition—defer portions of their defense budgets to the fund, which pools money for environmental protection and sustainable development. At the time of the 1992 proposal, the UN Environmental Programme operated on a meager 40 million dollars compared to the one trillion spent globally

on defense, but it required 125 billion per year to enact UN environmental initiatives; Ikeda's idea for an environmental fund that simultaneously cuts defense spending in an ethic of humanitarian competition is a powerful proposal warranting further consideration. Additionally, Ikeda (1992) argued that raising capital for environmental protection should not be left entirely to national governments, local governments, and other public agencies, but that here the role of NGOs could be expanded (see also Derbolav and Ikeda 1992).

In 1993, 1994 and 1995, Ikeda wrote less about environment than in previous years, but it remained a theme in his peace proposals. In 1993 he continued urging Japan to cooperate with the UN on issues of environment, poverty, population growth and hunger; in 1994, he proposed a UN Asian Office to deal with such issues as environmental concerns. In 1995, Ikeda again reiterated the environmental damage war causes. In 1996, Ikeda explicitly recommended humanitarian competition for the first time.

The year 1997 marks a dramatic increase in Ikeda's treatment of environment and sustainability in his UN peace proposals. Referencing the Club of Rome's 1972 report The Limits of Growth, Ikeda reiterated his call to rectify North-South disparities (1997). He also reiterated his proposal for creation of an Environment and Development Security Council to serve as a forum for internationally cooperative decision-making regarding urgent problems of the environment. He also proposed a global fund like that in conjunction with the Earth Summit to be held annually to procure funding for continued environmental protection. He stated, "This forum could be 'antennae of the people' channeling information from NGOs for the benefit of discussion at regular and special sessions of the UN General Assembly, to pool voices from grassroots, and to provide a certain overall direction toward the outcome of discussions" (1997).

The year 1997 also marks a turning point illustrating Ikeda's contribution to humanitarian contribution as a mutual striving for excellence among individuals in addition to nation-states. He noted as favorable the fact that NGOs and, thereby, individuals are taking a more active role in the UN; he further favorably noted that with such representation, the UN's character as a federation of sovereign states will fade. Ikeda discussed this idea earlier with Galtung (Galtung and Ikeda 1995) with respect to Galtung's proposal for a UN Peoples' Assembly. To this end, Ikeda voiced support for the Earth Charter, "the crystallization of a process of global dialogue" (Ikeda 2001), which he reiterated within a framework of humanitarian competition in 1999, 2001, 2002, 2006, 2008b, 2009 and in his dialogues with Henderson (Henderson and Ikeda 2004) and Swaminathan (Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005).

In 1998, Ikeda again called explicitly for humanitarian competition and proposed the free movement of people be secured at the People's Millennium Assembly in 2000, which would have provided smooth legal migration for the subsequently dramatic increase of "environmental refugees," who are currently not recognized in international law (Goulah in press).

2000s

In 2000, Ikeda (2000) again identified environmental degradation as a negative effect of unbridled globalization, and in 2001 he furthered his initiatives for Japan, urging the Japanese government to respond to emerging environmental challenges and chastising it for not considering environmental issues in its 2000 Constitutional research commission (see also Galtung and Ikeda 1995).

Ikeda's numerous proposals and initiatives in 2002 again called explicitly for humanitarian competition and a dramatic reorganization of UN bodies and activities. In 2002, as stated above, Ikeda proposed the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which I discuss further below. In addition, within a framework of dialogic cooperation, Ikeda proposed a World Conference on Sustainable Development and a UN Special Session for a World Charter on Education. He proposed a UN high commissioner for environment to coordinate the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) (see also Ikeda 2008b), UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), which function under different mandates; he proposed the phased consolidation of the secretariats overseeing the implementation of the various environmental treaties and the establishment of a global green fund to alleviate problems arising from designation of different secretariats for each international treaty on the environment. He proposed a convention for the promotion of renewable energy envisioned within a framework of cooperation and dialogue.

In 2003, Ikeda proposed more concerted efforts in literacy education, alongside which is "growing awareness of the need for a new form of humanistic education, education that encourages creative coexistence with the natural environment and which fosters a culture of peace" (2003; see de Melo Silva 2000 for such efforts in Brazil). In 2004, Ikeda again articulated nature as the Other and stated that human security includes environmental security and sustainability.

In 2005, 13 years after the UN adopted the Framework Convention on Climate Change, Russia finally ratified the Kyoto Protocol, causing it to enter force. At such a time, Ikeda reflected on his past initiatives and Makiguchi's prescience in indentifying and advocating a dialogic interaction between humans and nature. Ikeda advocated society take a more personal perspective of nature through dialogic interaction. He also proposed a greater role for the UN Economic and Social Council to fight against poverty and manage the effects of globalization, such as environmental degradation (2005c). He also revisited his 1994 proposal to create a UN Asian Office by proposing a UN Asia-Pacific Office, including such countries as Australia and Canada. In a related theme, he urged increased cooperative integration of Asia in such issues, noting UN University in Japan, which focuses on environment and sustainability (ibid).

In 2006, Ikeda articulated environmental issues as a raison d'être of humanitarian competition, again referring to his proposal for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and considering esho funi as a principle that can help resolve the environmental crisis. Also in 2006, Ikeda engaged in dialogue with Wangari Maathai in Japan and proposed that Japan create a successor framework to the Kyoto Protocol:

As the country that, as host, made a significant contribution to the completion of the Kyoto Protocol, I believe Japan has a special role to play in developing a successor framework. It can no doubt be most effective in this by working with countries with a strong commitment to environmental issues. (Ikeda 2006: 24)

In 2007, Ikeda called for the creation of an East Asian environment and development organization as a pilot model of regional cooperation and the kernel for the eventual creation of an East Asian Union.

In 2008, Ikeda, again reflecting on the state of the world and certain advances in combating climate change and environmental degradation, reiterated his numerous and substantive past proposals and initiatives (e.g., UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Environmental UN, establishment of UN High Commissioner for Environmental Issues) couched in an ethic of cooperation, or humanitarian competition. To this end he urged nations negotiating responses to climate change held under the Bali Roadmap to "break away from the negative approach of minimizing national obligations and burdens and instead adopt a positive focus on the achievement of larger, global objectives...In this way, I hope they will engage in positively oriented competition [a humanitarian competition] aimed at making the greatest contribution to the resolution of this planetary crisis" (Ikeda 2008b: 30-31).

Also in 2008, Ikeda proposed, "the establishment of a world fund for water for life as a step toward securing the kind of funding and focused strategies that will ensure the rapid amelioration of conditions that continue to threaten the dignity of so many people" (ibid: 38). He also advocated strengthening and upgrading the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) to the "status of a specialized agency, a world environmental organization" (Ikeda 2008b: 29; see also Ikeda 2002c). A similar vision underlay his call in 1978 for the creation of an Environmental UN (1987a).

Additionally, with a firm understanding of the growing influence individuals and NGOs have within the UN, which he first articulated in 1978 (1987a) and again in 1997, Ikeda (2008b) stated,

I would wish that [the East Asian youth exchange initiated in 2007 by the Japanese government] to deepen understanding and friendship will also be a chance for the young people of the region to develop a shared sense of

awareness and responsibility for the future. I would propose, for example, that opportunities be created to meet and talk with the staff of UN agencies and to learn from the environmental and disarmament programs promoted by the UN. (48)

Most recently, in 2009, Ikeda proposed "that in the future an international sustainable energy agency be created under the aegis of the UN to further the work of [the IRENA and IPEEC] so that international cooperation on energy policy may take firm and universal root throughout the global community" (31).

Ikeda's abovementioned proposals in environmental protection, sustainable development and ecological consciousness from the 1960s to the present envision and actualize international humanitarian competition as a resistance to the spirit of abstraction that has caused decades of environmental and human degradation. These proposals also provide a framework for Ikeda's similarly envisioned applications in education. As he articulated:

In addition to "top-down" reform through institutional reframing, it is crucial to encourage "bottom-up" change by broadening grassroots engagement and empowering people toward collective action. This conviction underpinned my call for a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. I believe strongly in the power of learning. Empowerment through learning brings out the unlimited potentials of individuals and consequently creates currents, first within the respective regions, and eventually globally across borders, that can fundamentally transform the world in which we live. (Ikeda 2008b: 32)

In the following section I briefly examine Ikeda's application of humanitarian competition in the "bottom-up" context of his proposals and initiatives in education for environmental protection and sustainable development. Specifically, I examine its application first in the context of Soka University of America, which Ikeda founded, and, second, in his proposal for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Ikeda's Environmental Education Programs

Ikeda's commitment to peace through environmentalism and sustainability lies in his uncompromising faith in people's limitless potential to engage in a transformative "human revolution" through internal and external practices, whereby the former involves spiritual transformation in accord with Buddhist principles and the latter involves secular education:

When the human revolution is achieved in the inner and outer beings of more and more people, human relations and relations between man and Nature will be more harmonious. This will provide a reliable basis for the solution of the grave problems—environmental pollution, war, exhaustion of natural resources and so on—facing humankind now. (Peccei and Ikeda 1984: 108)

This conviction has driven Ikeda to proclaim education as the culminating undertaking of his life (Ikeda 2005b, 2007a), and his initiatives, proposals and programs in environmental education and education for sustainable development, therefore, fall under the broader approach to education he calls ningen kyoiku. Literally "human education," ningen kyoiku is Ikeda's vision for fostering global citizenship and creative coexistence; it is education in the nurturing relationship between teacher and student that empowers ordinary individuals to transform their beliefs and behavior and create value toward personal and social—and, thereby, environmental—benefit (e.g., Ikeda 2001c, 2006b).

Ikeda (Díez-Hochleitner and Ikeda 2008) argues:

Although time consuming, education is the foundation for all reforms. To the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in South Africa in August 2002, I proposed that we build a sustainable future through the power of broad-based education on protecting the environment. I also suggested that the Earth Charter be enthusiastically used as material for education on the environment in schools and elsewhere.

Saving the environment requires a global revolution that must start with individual human revolutions. That is the road to the solution of the complex of worldwide problems. (39)

This intersection of human education and environmental coexistence is present in practice at Soka University of America, which I discuss next.

Soka University Guidelines: Path to Planetary Citizenship

As founder, Ikeda established the founding guidelines for Soka University of America: Foster leaders of culture in the community, Forster leaders of humanism in society, Foster leaders of pacifism in the world, Foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity (e.g., Henderson and Ikeda 2004; Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005). Henderson (Henderson and Ikeda 2004) noted that, "The 'creative coexistence of nature and humanity' summarizes the environmental curriculum necessary for future generations" (152). Ikeda (2001c) further articulated this vision,

If we are to build a society that serves the essential needs of education in the twenty-first century, we must not become divided or isolated. Rather, we must deepen human bonds that transcend differences of race and nationality and also be in free and full communication with nature. We must give the highest priority to

cultivating in young people the strength of character and values that will enable them to take the lead in building a world of creative coexistence. (77)

To that end, Ikeda argued, "In the years to come, environmental issues must be a primary aspect of education. We must teach the importance of life and relations between humanity and the environment from the still profounder dimension of the great universal force of life and the cosmos" (Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005: 76). Such cultivation results, in Ikeda's view, in global or planetary citizenship.

In specific terms, how does Ikeda encourage global or planetary citizenship? He (Henderson and Ikeda 2004) stated that by global citizen he does not mean "polyglots who fly all over the world conducting important business" (77). Rather, he envisions globally minded people such as Mahatma Gandhi and Paulo Freire who work for their own happiness and the happiness of others in their hometowns and local communities (ibid). According to Ikeda, the answer to true education for global citizenship lies in Makiguchi's argument that global citizenship exists at three levels—the local community, national community and global community (e.g., Ikeda 2002a, 2005a, 2008b; Henderson and Ikeda 2004; Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005; see also Makiguchi 1981-88; cf. Bethel 2002). He continued, "Makiguchi rejected both narrow-minded nationalism and the kind of globalism that lacks concrete content. He stressed that the education of global citizens must start at the level of the local community, extending outward from there" (2005a: x). Thus, Ikeda argued,

...the character of a global citizen is creative through a dynamic harmonization and development of these three levels. As the individual grows, the sphere of what that individual experiences as her or his local community expands to a national and then global scale. Thus, humanitarian contributions to one's community and country further the cause of world peace; at the same time, contributions to global humanity on a planetary level reverberate back to the national and local levels. (ibid)

In other words, such actions as being a good neighbor and a good citizen both at home and internationally or coping in practical ways with environmental problems specific to one's local region are examples of such global citizenship (Henderson and Ikeda 2004; Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005). Soka University of America, then, seeks to foster leaders of such global citizenship. Moreover, it was this educational vision that undergirded Ikeda's proposal in 2002 for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which I discuss next.

UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

Ikeda (2002a) argued that, "Nothing is more crucially important today than the kind of humanistic education that enables people to sense the reality of interconnectedness, to appreciate the infinite potential in each person's life, and to cultivate that dormant human potential to its fullest" (7); in proposing the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Ikeda argued that

environmental education, like peace education and human rights education, must be at the heart of such humanistic education for creative coexistence. In his Decade proposal, Ikeda (2002a) stated, "The objectives of the decade would be to promote education as the basis for sustainable human society and to strengthen international cooperation toward the dissemination of environmental information..." (2). At the heart of this, he concluded, is sustainability.

Ikeda's (2002a) proposal of education for sustainable development promotes three curricular goals, which hinge on humanitarian competition: to learn and deepen awareness of environmental issues and realities, to reflect on our modes of living, renewing these toward sustainability, and to empower people to take concrete action to resolve the challenges we face. For Ikeda the Earth Charter is instrumental in effecting this tripartite vision for the Decade (2002a). Ikeda has long supported the Earth Charter, arguing that educators "must also prepare easy-to-understand, appealing pamphlets presenting the Charter's environmental message to children. Young people are responsible for the future. We must achieve international consensus about devoting energy to youth-oriented environmental education. The Earth Charter is an excellent starting point for such a program" (Henderson and Ikeda 2004: 130-31; see also Ikeda 2002c).

Because of Ikeda's ardent support of the Earth Charter, SGI organizations, members and affiliated peace research institutes have organized symposia and publications that offered multifaceted input into the Charter drafting process (2002c; Henderson and Ikeda 2004), sponsored a series of Earth Charter consultations, resulting in publication of "Women's Views on the Earth Charter" and "Buddhist Perspectives on the Earth Charter" (Ikeda 2001b), and have "worked with the Earth Council and other organizations to support the translation of the Earth Charter into various languages and the development of pamphlets, videos and other materials that will publicize its ideas" (Ikeda 2002c). They have also established the Amazon Ecological Research Center (AERC), run by SGI-Brazil in Cupertino together with the Soka University Ecological Research Centre and other institutions, whose reforestation program for the Amazon rainforest has so far planted 20,000 seedlings of 60 different tree species on 53 hectares of land.

In addition, since 2002, the SGI has held the exhibition 'Seeds of Change: The Earth Charter and Human Potential,' developed in collaboration with the Earth Charter Initiative, in twenty countries and eight languages" (2009: 31), and the SGI exhibition "Symbiosis and Hope: The Amazon—Its Environment and Peace" has been shown in Brazil, Peru, Costa Rica, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela, Paraguay and Bolivia (Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005: 67; see also Ikeda 2001c; de Athayde and Ikeda 2009); the exhibition "Ecology and Human Life" has been shown throughout the U.S. and "EcoAid" in Japan (Ikeda 2002c). Finally, the SGI exhibition "Toward a Century of Hope: Environment and Development" was an official side event at the Rio Earth Summit. Such initiatives within and by the SGI

affiliate organizations have helped to promote the Earth Charter and advance the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development currently in effect.

Finally, an additional component of Ikeda's proposal for a UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is his long-held vision for a UN of Education, a forum for educational policy administrators and teachers to exchange ideas, experiences and best practices. In his UN Decade proposal, Ikeda (2002a) suggested that the commencement of the Decade would have been an ideal opportunity to organize such a world summit of educators. It warrants noting that Ikeda's idea for a UN of Education in conjunction with the Decade was couched in his similarly long-held conviction that education should occupy a fourth and separate branch of government; for only when education is free from political, economic and militaristic competition, Ikeda argued, will it fully address environmental issues, sustainability, human rights and happiness (e.g., Ikeda 1987a, 2001c).

Conclusion

Through thorough review of Daisaku Ikeda's annual UN peace proposals, education proposals and dialogues, this article attempted to introduce for the first time in academic literature Ikeda's ethics of environmental protection, sustainable development and the cultivation of ecological consciousness as nodal points of peace, social justice and human dignity. I presented these ethics through the theoretical lens of the Buddhist principle of esho funi and humanitarian competition as resistance models to the spirit of abstraction at the root of war, environmental degradation and global climate change. While Ikeda's extensive and consistent efforts in these areas have not been discussed in extant literature, they have arguably brought awareness to and cultivated grassroots action among the SGI's 12 million members in 192 countries, its affiliate institutions, students in the Soka schools Ikeda founded, and numerous others beyond the scope of the SGI. This article is intended to be introductory and, thereby, aims to begin discussions about empirical examination, application and implementation of Ikeda's ideas for peace, policy, practice and education in environmental protection, sustainable development, and an ecological consciousness to "shade and protect Earth with 'leaves of language' arising from the depths of life" (Ikeda 2008a: 55-56).

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Wolokokiapia: An Antidote to Neo-liberalism's Influence on War and Peace.

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WOLOKOKIAPIA: AN ANTIDOTE TO NEO-LIBERALISM'S INFLUENCE ON WAR AND PEACE

Introduction

Under a global paradigm of neoliberalism, with its emphasis on "free enterprise" and consumerism and a "pick yourself up by your bootstraps" approach to community, social/ecological justice, and the public good, our world is suffering. Humankind is at war with nature and itself, poisoning everything with the neoliberal rationale for greed. We need an antidote before it is too late. I suggest that Indigenous wisdom, as understood in the Lakota word for "peace within and without," wolokokiapia, offers such a cure.

Wolokokiapia, let's refer to it generally as "Indigenous wisdom," is ultimately about a sacred realization that all is interconnected. Through the denial of the Western ego of its relationship with Nature, the natural world has been objectified so it might be controlled and subsequently exploited for economic gain or glory. Indigenous means being so completely identified with place that you reflect its soul. Maybe it is not possible for a population that is so separated from place and Nature to ever replicate the Indigenous sense of place and the importance of being in harmony with it, but I propose it is our only chance for survival, health and happiness.

In the eyes of Tribal people, Nature and spirit are essentially the same. This is why Indigenous tracking is so intimately involved in coming to the source of spirit. I would love to see an MRI scan of a traditional, trained tracker's brain while he was tracking an animal. In the process of tracking, actions and relationships are reflected in the patterns that reoccur in all of Nature. Tracking connects people to their own spirits, the spirits of the land, the animals, plants and other entities.

Indian People's see the animals as teachers of such virtues as patience, courage, fortitude, humility, honesty, etc. When hunters came into direct contact with the life and death of fellow creatures, right relationships was a matter of survival. All teaching based on hunting was predicated on the principle of abiding respect and relationship with the animals hunted. Individuals learned that we have within us an animal spirit and understanding that spirit was and is an important lesson in self-knowledge. "The concepts of sharing, connecting, and relating one's life to animals formed a basic premise of Indigenous education. Of course, the animal world was not the only focus of reverence. Plants, stars and the celestial bodies of the cosmos provided an equal opportunity for establishing and understanding our place in the world (Cajete, 2010, p 92)."

The CAT-FAWN Connection

If Indigenous wisdom, accessible to all from the teachings of those who still live against all odds according to its precepts, and an inherent part of all of our cultural backgrounds, is a "solution" for our ecological calamity, how exactly might we proceed toward transformational learning? An important option is to stop ignoring the Indigenous perspective and learn more facts from Indigenous writings. Another is a specific process of self-reflection that came to me in a vision after a near death experience in Mexico's Copper Canyon, where a nearly drowned during an attempt to be the first person to successfully kayak the Rio Urique. In my book, Primal Awareness: A True Story of Survival, Awakening and Transformation with the Raramuri Shamans of Mexico," I describe in detail what I refer to as the "CAT-FAWN Connection, but here I will briefly explain how it works (Jacobs, 1998).

CAT-FAWN is a mnemonic for helping to remember that transformational learning is ultimately connected to a processing of information that, referring back to neuroscience, represents collaboration between right and left-brain hemispheres. This means that different brain wave lengths known to be involved during predominantly right-brained hypnotic states of consciousness interact with brain activity relating to left-brain cognitive reasoning. CAT describes this process as "Concentration Activated Transformation," i.e., transformative learning that stems from a balanced integration of both hypnotically acquired ideas and rationally considered ones. Thus, any ecological literacy program that does not find ways to incorporate some sort of trance phenomenon will not be effective. Indigenous Peoples have understood this phenomenon of learning without the need for functional MRI machines. Their stories, use of images and art, experiences in Nature, ceremonies, rights of passage, etc., are intentionally used to help direct deep learning. Such activities would thus be important for environmental education if we want to reprogram the hypnosis of Western hegemony. Hegemony, with all its sources in media, folklore and education, works because of its repetitive influence during spontaneous states of trance we all experience regularly, but especially during times of stress or fear.

The second part of the mnemonic describes four major forces that play upon these spontaneous states of hypnosis. They include Fear, as mentioned, Authority, Words and Nature. Depending on whether a dominant Western cultural worldview informs how we think about these four forces or whether an Indigenous perspective does, determines whether transformative learning in a positive direction occurs.

For example, in Western culture teaches us that we should avoid fear and when it comes, make it go away as quickly as possible. We do not realize that when we are afraid we become hyper suggestible to the signals or words of a perceived, trusted authority figure. We allow others to hypnotize us into believing things that are not true and that are not useful or healthful. Indigenous wisdom, however, understands this particular power of fear and intentionally employs it for positive learning opportunities. We see fear as a catalyst for deeply learning, for example, a virtue. If we are trying to become more generous, or more courageous, or more patient, and a fearful situation occurs, once we use the emotion to do our best to assure personality safety, if the situation persists, we embrace it as a gift. "Grandmother Bear, I cannot believe I did not realize this was your territory in which I was seeking berries. I see I have no escape from you, so I will take this opportunity to practice my generosity. Look, if you need my flesh more than I want these berries, I offer both to you." Of course, the bear then moves on. You get the idea, though it is probably a very foreign one to you if you are a typical Western reader.

The second force that interacts with CAT is the concept of Authority. In Western tradition, authority stems generally from external sources. We listen to the authority of our books, our teachers, our preachers, our parents, our leaders, etc. Such authority, especially when coupled with fear or stress, literally hypnotizes us to believe the messages of the authority figure, no matter how incorrect. To the contrary, Indigenous wisdom teaches that the only true source of authority is personal reflection, honest reflection, on lived experience in light of the spiritual understanding that everything is connected. If education is to change the way people relate to Nature, even the neuroscience reveals that if we reflected honestly on how Nature makes us feel, we would realize its importance to us in a deeper way than any ecological literacy course not accomplishes.

The third force is Words. Western culture seems to be famous for its deceptive use of words. Social neuroscience even wants us to believe that it is key aspect of human existence. These studies, as summarized in my book (2010) seem to reveal that deception is a higher order brain function that evolved to help humans survive. The back cover, for example, of David Livingstone Smith's text, Why We Lie: the Evolutionary Roots of Deception and the Unconscious Mind, says, "Deceit, lying and falsehoods lie at the very heart of our cultural heritage." He tells us "Mother Nature has seen to it that the conscious mind is relatively blind to the nuances of social behavior (p. 146)."

In Indigenous ways of thinking, we learn to observe and listen carefully to understand physical reality and experience, not to find ways to misrepresent it! There can be little doubt that deception has "evolved" to play a large role in the

world today, but this says something different. Indigenous Peoples have always believed that it is important to see what is real about a situation, a thing or an entity. If something did not occur in the physical plane, it did not occur. Our languages help in such understanding because they are rich with descriptive terms and action verbs that minimize reductionism and abstract generalizing.

Although each of the forces in the CAT-FAWN concept are vital, I want to elaborate here on this one because our denial about the state of ecological affairs in the world is funded by our use of deception, one way or the other and we have much to learn from Indigenous wisdom about changing this.

Indigenous thinking honors the reality that there are always two sides to the two sides, that there are realities and there are realities. Learning how they interact is real understanding. Our knowledge comes from our stories, stories that mirror the way the human mind works. They echo a truth lived and remembered because their roots go beyond the context processes of the brain. They stem from the heart of the human psyche. Thus understanding what is true is a matter of heart and mind and this also helps one know what cannot be comprehended or articulated. If it were otherwise, if deception, not right thinking and remembering were tools for social cohesions, as these studies seem to conclude, it seems that survival would be compromised, not enhanced. Moreover, Nature is the first and foremost teacher of how things are in the world. This is why we believe that the animals and plants are our teachers. Neither Nature nor animals lie about reality. Animals may have instinctive ways of hiding food or playing dead or stalking prey, but these are not examples of misrepresenting reality in the ways human deception does. I think deception is not a cultural adaptation for survival and social cohesion but rather a moral failing.

In the development of early human societies, a single isolated individual had no chance at long-term survival. Of course, this perspective, as we have seen, stands in opposition to many Western academics view on the value of deception in survival. Still, it was the "group mind" that developed first among human beings. This "group mind" was rooted in the interdependence and mutual reciprocal behavior, which paralleled the symbiotic relationships found in natural communities. The dynamic process of human adaptation to ever changing environmental conditions that is so much a part of the "genius" of human evolution is based on our singular ability to evolve social environments conducive to the needs of our group. Honesty is both a value and a way of behavior that is required for the development of "trust" within a group. Honesty reinforces "trust" between members of a community that in turn fosters the cooperation necessary to sustain the group. Human adaptive values are those that encourage individual and family relationship, love, honesty, cooperation, collaboration, compassion, generosity and self-lessness. These are the values that keep a group working and living together for mutual benefit. Preagricultural humans cultivated these values of group cohesion because the survival of the group was the first and foremost priority. For our pre-agricultural ancestors belonging to a group mattered and belonging to a place mattered. Values that

reinforced belonging to a group form a deep part of human consciousness. Psychologically, pre-agricultural people did not see themselves as separate from their group or the natural place in which they lived. The community or group mind and its affective orientations of belonging, interdependence, mutual - reciprocal behavior characterize all tribal societies. Some socio-biologists would refer to this deeply embedded sense for belong as an expression of our human instinct for "biophilia," the predisposition to relate or affiliate with other living things particularly other humans. This instinct might be said to be the biological basis for socialability, relationally and community

In his wonderful book, A Time Before Deception: Truth in Communication, Culture and Ethics, Cooper writes about how Native peoples' first reactions to European habitual lying was believing that the invaders must be insane because in their cultures only insane people who had lost touch with reality spoke in ways that misrepresented it. His research also shows that lying can become a deviant strategy. The strategy may, like the use of weapons of mass destruction, lead to some temporary benefits for a small number of individuals, but in the long run, they are not an evolutionary boon to humankind at all.

Cooper also details a research project where when Indigenous individuals and Western individuals suggested and ranked various aspects of cultural values that might have an impact on integrity, Native peoples ranked "respect" above all else but it did not even make the Western list. He shows how the concept of appreciation for life and the recognition of spirit in all things pervades traditional Indigenous thinking and that such perception informed all communication in ways that are incompatible with deception. In reading his book I was reminded of Vine Deloria, Jr.'s famous book, *Red Earth, White Lies: The Myth of Scientific Fact* (1995) and how it might shed light on the implausibility of I think it is vital for neurophilosophers to consider Indigenous ways of knowing and the histories of Indigenous Peoples before drawing conclusions too quickly from the kinds of studies and scientific conclusions that have been reported in neuroscientific research.

The fourth concept in the mnemonic is Nature. Here I have little more to say about the difference between Western and Indigenous views that has not already been stated. The basic usefulness of CAT-FAWN is as an educational tool for self-reflection. Whenever a teacher or student can take any idea, experience, problem or belief and walk it through the analysis of FAWN, determining whether an Indigenous or non-Indigenous view operates and connecting to hypnotically derived determinations or actions, an opportunity for transformative learning arises. To consider such an activity, one that makes the Indigenous view have such a value for learning, we must first awaken to the anti-Indianism most of us encounter in culture, media and education.

Suppression of Indigenous Wisdom

As I mentioned, Indigenous wisdom belongs to all of us. It is in our DNA. This does not mean that the holders of this wisdom who are alive today throughout the world do not have a special role in serving as our teachers. To the contrary, it is time for us to wake up to the oppression of these cultures practiced via our educational hegemony. Indigenous Peoples who still live according to the old ways know best how to employ Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Sadly, such oppression continues and is even growing. Using post 9/11 anti-terrorist laws, governments around the world, generally supported by U.S. corporate interests and government policies, are literally killing Indigenous Peoples who are attempting to protect their land, water, and natural resources from the onslaught of multi-national land acquisition in the face of diminishing oil and other resources for corporate profit. (For more details on this, see my chapter, "Forced Hegemony" in Gabbard and Saltman's second edition of *Education as Enforcement: The Militarization and Corporatization of Schooling* (in press at time of writing).)

More significantly, as relates to education, is the continual anti-Indianism that leads to ridicule, dismissal or misinterpretation of the Indigenous perspective. (See Unlearning the Language of Conquest: Scholars Expose Anti-Indianism in America, published by the University of Texas Press (Four Arrows, 2006). Indigenous Wisdom is not mere folk psychology, although intuition, self-reflection (especially as relates to experience with both the visible and invisible worlds), meta-cognition, and observation of human nature have certainly contributed to it. It is the product of careful and methodologically sound observations of the natural world (which includes humans) that have been tested and re-tested for thousands of years in the most rigorous real-life laboratories of survival and well-being. Indigenous Peoples, meaning those cultures who have by inhabiting a location for thousands of years and retaining ancient ways of understanding it, have produced a "theory of mind" that is every bit as scientific as modern ideas that relate to predicting outcomes, perhaps more so. This is not only true as relates to the many inventions and contributions that relate to food development, storage and preparation; herbal-based medicines; forms of clothing and transportation; astronomy; sustainable practices, etc., but also relates to contributions to democratic government concepts; child discipline; and inter-personal relationship psychology.

Many scholars and philosophers have noted the tragedy of dismissing Indigenous wisdom and Indigenous science as it relates to contemporary affairs. For example, Niaz Ahmed Khan, a professor at Dhaka University in Bangladesh and an honorary research fellow at the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Wales, UK recently compiled and collated academic studies on indigenous knowledge known as "traditional ecological knowledge" and was able to identify and record only seventy-seven peer-reviewed articles/book chapters. In an editorial, he refers to this figure and laments that such wisdom remains a generally ignored subject

(2008). Edgar Mitchel, Apollo astronaut and found of the Institute of Noetic Sciences has said that "only a handful of visionaries have recognized that indigenous wisdom can aid the transition to a sustainable world." (amazon.com reviews at http://www.amazon.com/Shapeshifting-Techniques-Global-Personal-Transformation/dp/0892816635).

Support for traditional Indigenous wisdom challenges the conclusions of such popular books as *Constant Battles: The Myth of the Peaceful Nobel Savage*, written by Professors Steven LaBlank and Kathyrn Register or *Wild in the Woods: The Myth of the Peaceful Eco-Savage* by Robert Whelan, with its chapter titles like "Dances with Garbage." All one needs to do is study Yale's Human Resource Area Files, an internationally recognized organization in the field of cultural anthropology founded in 1949 to facilitate worldwide comparative studies of human behavior, to see that most human societies prior to the rise of monarchies in the West were relatively peaceful and did not practice war as we understand it today. The remarkable research of Johan M.G. van der Dennen, published in her doctoral thesis and subsequent book, *The Origin of War: The Evolution of a Male-Coalitional Reproductive Strategy* (1995) also supports the idea that Indigenous Wisdom can help re-member ways of living in harmony that can lead to peaceful co-existence, perhaps a pre-requisite for ecological sustainability. She writes:

Peaceable preindustrial (preliterate, primitive, etc.) societies constitute a nuisance to most theories of warfare and they are, with few exceptions, either denied or 'explained away.' In this contribution I shall argue that the claim of universal human belligerence is grossly exaggerated; and that those students who have been developing theories of war, proceeding from the premise that peace is the 'normal' situation, have not been starry-eyed utopians...(p.2).

Although I have been talking about reclaiming our Indigenous Science and remaining critical of an over-reliance on Western Science, I do believe collaboration between Western science and Indigenous wisdom is essential if we are to survive the current environmental crises. Many Indigenous stories talk about such a partnership between the red and white brothers. Perhaps the time for it is now if we let go of the negative stereotypes about Indians that many academics continue to support, like James Clifton does in his 1990 book, *The Invented Indian*, where he says "acknowledging anything positive in the native pas is an entirely wrongheaded proposition because no genuine Indian accomplishments have ever really been substantiated (p.36),"

In my book, *Primal Awareness*, I say, "the primal awareness of Indigenous Peoples about Nature puts us back in touch with the origins of love. We are naturally attracted to the sights, sounds, aromas and sensations in Nature. We spontaneously love the colors, the energy and the beauty that fills our senses. Our senses are made whole in Nature, but our dominant culture has rationalized our separation from

Nature and has presented Nature as a dangerous place (except for distant landscapes it seems)" (p. 231). So I end this chapter with a D.H. Lawrence poem that beautifully expresses the connection between Nature and love that Indigenous understands.

Oh, what a catstrophe, what a maiming of love when it was made personal, merely personal feeling. This is what is the matter with us: we are bleeding at the roots because we are cut off from the earth and sun and stars. Love has become a grinning mockery because, poor blossom, we plucked it from its stem on the Tree of Life and expected it to keep on blooming in our civilized vase on the table. (IBID, p. 231)

Neoliberalism will continue to sustain war rather than peace because it has replaced Nature and love with greed and personal power. If we can be return to our member of what our ancestors understood about peace, we may have a chance.

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Resolving the Niger Delta Conflict In Nigeria

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RESOLVING THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

Introduction

In this paper, I present a case study of intractable conflict in the oil-producing region of Niger Delta in southern Nigeria. The conflict has been raging for more than ten years because of the Federal government's neglect of economic and environmental security in the communities and inability to understand the dynamics of the conflict. This, combined with identity, group behavior and ethnicity make it complex and difficult to resolve. Specifically, this paper investigates the potential utility of the Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) model of problem solving to help move the conflict gradually to the point of being ready for mediation or negotiation while taking advantage of the present lull in hostilities and the desire for peace in the region.

Studies on intractable conflicts (Lewicki, et al. 2003; Putnam and Wondolleck, 2003; Azar, 1990; Kriesberg, 1999; Deutsch 1973) depict the complex nature of conflicts, the way in which disputants interpret issues and how patterns of interactions among different cultural groups impact problem-solving success or failure. These dynamic patterns and cognitive attitudes, norms, moral sanctions and regulative procedures of constituent parties, contribute to the intractability of a conflict. In the literature, it is argued that these patterns could easily become institutionalized behavior over time and accepted by the society if 'taken for granted' (see Gray, et al. 2007). Therefore, a way out of the conflict is to change these socialized perceptions and behavior that often block the way for problem solving.

Although this paper focuses on the Niger Delta conflict in Nigeria, it will propose a lesson that could be useful to other developing countries experiencing ethnic

conflicts. Sequential Interactive Forum is a problem-solving instrument of change and transformation of conflict through unfettered communication between parties. Pertinently, it also represents an incremental or one-step-at-a-time approach to problem solving that might lead to restoration of strained relationships and a change of each party's perception of the other. Sequential Interactive Forum is attractively a process of rediscovery, reflection and understanding. This is the first interactive stage of problem solving. Reaching understanding means that you have discovered how to move on to avoid obstacles to further discussions, and this comes also by probing feelings and needs. This is not an easy task, but demands consistency and commitment.

This process represents an extended model of problem solving that borrows from the early works of Herbert Kelman (1979, 1996, 1997, 1998), John Burton (1969), and Ronald Fisher (1972; 1983). But for any problem solving to be effective in a fast growing multicultural and globalizing world, an adequate model of conflict resolution is needed that will heavily emphasize both the outcome and the process of transformation. Sequential Interactive Forum as a model incorporates two other important approaches such as "cultural competency" and "coaching of parties" or stakeholders in skills of conflict resolution. The effectiveness of Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) is programmed to use a pre-forum interaction (or mock forum) to coach the disputants on useful skills separately, before bringing them together for a major forum of deliberation. These additional features distinctly differentiate it from the existing problem solving models. Such combination if understood might help the process of predicting the dynamics of interaction between disputing parties, develop some sensitivity of the parties towards each other, and improve their communication capabilities. Asking the right question, analyzing pertinent data and information and listening attentively to the disputants will facilitate change of cognitive behavior patterns and perception about the conflict that over time have been institutionalized or taken for granted.

This study analytically examines policy strategies used by the various regimes in Nigeria to address the demands of the Niger Delta communities, demands that relate to distribution of resources and protection of the much-polluted ecological environment because of intensive oil exploitation in the area. Understanding why these measures failed will enable us draw important lessons from it, with a view toward making policy recommendations to the government that will save Nigeria from further bloodshed. Although this article focuses on Nigeria, it will also propose lessons that could apply to other developing countries experiencing ethnic conflict.

In this article, I explore how patterns of cognitive behavior have become acceptable practice that not only institutionalize the conflict, but also militate against bringing the parties to the table to address underlying problems. The role of a third party is to create the right atmosphere that helps stakeholders to discover within themselves the strength to deinstitutionalize and find satisfactory solutions to their conflict.

Nigeria has had enough bloodshed and economic devastation and the moment is ripe for a new policy choice aimed at restoring ethnic harmony. The majority of Nigerians thirsts for an amicable resolution of the Niger Delta conflict but lack the conducive atmosphere to air their demands without fear of being arrested. In this vein, convening Sequential Interactive Forum in the country is a very important step. The literature shows such an interactive process will be cost effective, and will help reduce the intense competition for oil resources and accumulated hatred and mistrust in the region. The study will conclude that Nigeria risks a major ethnic conflict and disintegration if the government fails to convene a Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) to discuss major issues in the country and the Niger Delta conflict as soon as possible.

I will argue that the probability of successful resolution of the Niger Delta conflict is a function the country's capacities, and available local community capacities. In cognizance that effective policy action is inclusive, that offers an arena for leaders to explore differences in the society and empowers the communities and government officials to redefine, "reframe" (see Gray, 2004) and creatively find a solution to the Niger Delta conflict.

The first part of this article will present a brief overview of intractable conflict and how such conflicts are institutionalized. Secondly, it will examine the concept of Sequential Interactive Forum and the process. The third part will look into the historical background of the Niger Delta conflict with a view to understanding the parties and the causes of the conflict, as well as the patterns of interaction used in this violence. The fourth section will look into the requisite and application of SIF to the case study as a pragmatic and strategic mode of interaction and problem solving that empowers disputing parties to decide how to resolve their conflict satisfactorily. Literature for this paper is mainly from secondary sources, mostly books and journals relevant to this study among others.

The Nature of Intractable Conflict

The most difficult thing in conflict theory is the definition of conflict itself. Understanding conflict is important in order to identify kinds of human behavior that is conflictual as well as how to resolve it.

Conflict is defined as a struggle between social groups that see each other as incompatible. These social groups with different frames of mind, beliefs, perceptions, values, and feelings fight or compete with each other for their basic needs with the intention to "prevent, interfere, and injure" (see Deutsch 1973,p.10). In some instances, aggrieved communities will use any means at hand to attain their desired goals.

When groups are in conflict, they tend to think differently about the other side, and the causes underlying their dispute. The first thing that happens is the framing events around them and by so doing justifying whatever their actions might be as the right reaction. Absolute belief in one's behavior is reinforced by stereotyping and other inimical attitudes projected towards their opponents. The society in this situation is therefore; socialized to imbibe a particular imagined belief of superiority through, and distance from, other opposing views and interpretations. In this vein, the virtue of one's own group and worth reifies a more dominant attitude.

In conflict, major distortion of perceptions of the presumed enemy is prevalent. This behavior leads to the psychological need to dehumanize the other and create a "we" and "they" dichotomy. Furthermore, the enemies are stigmatized as outsiders, or those who do not belong to the community, power hungry folks, dominants, and evil incarnates. This social dichotomy and attitude belie the formation of national, ethnic or group identities and behavior as well as determine whether group relationship will be based on cooperation or conflict. Furthermore, the experience of communities and groups in the hands of a majority ethnic group plays a significant role in escalation of conflict. When the defeats, suffering and humiliation experienced are recalled, they affect how people and individuals interpret the present. This greatly influences the conflict giving it a connotation of a historic and intractable conflict.

Intractable conflicts are defined as conflicts that are persistent and destructive despite repeated attempts at resolution (Gray et al. 2007, 1416). According to Coleman (2000, p.430), these conflicts are deadlocked and resistance to escalation with the aim of doing harm on each other. In his earlier studies, Burton (1987) describes them as "deep rooted" conflicts, while Azar (1990) labeled it "protracted social conflict". Intractable conflicts though they are similar to other conflicts are probably the most complex and difficult to resolve because of being more divisive involving more layers of agencies and social organizations, weaving complex and overlapping issues and typically fostering destructive and self-perpetuating patterns of interaction (Putnam et al 2003).

The socio-psychological process that intractable conflicts set increases the possibilities of escalation of hostilities or violence. Conflicts act like a cancer worm that spreads faster to destroy social fabrics of a nation. In literature, protracted conflicts do not begin as intractable rather they can become destructive through escalation, negative sentiment, and hostile cognitions that change the interactions and dynamics of the conflict (Gray et al.2007, 1416). Some of these conflicts involve multiple stake holders (Coleman, 2000, 428), complex issues like religion, culture, identity and more especially "the satisfaction of basic needs such as those of recognition, and distributive justice" (Azar, 1990, 2).

The enduring antagonistic sets of perception and interactions between communal groups in conflict and the state, conditioned by fear, and other belief systems set a stage in which one group tries to out-scheme the other by using all available adversarial means, including armed force to eliminate the opponent.

Intractable conflicts also involve tangible or negotiable issues such as resource distribution disputes, or competition for power and self-determination. (Coleman, 2000, 2003; Kriesberg, 1999). In Africa and other third world, countries such conflict have surfaced and are threatening democratization and economic development. In extant literature, deep-rooted conflicts become intractable and complex when combined with other volatile cleavages like religion and culture. The conflict pervades all aspects of people's lives and they see no way to exit than to continue fighting until their opponents are incapacitated. Moreover, the destructive conflagrations especially those in Africa defy means and strategies to manage them. A case in point is the genocidal conflict in Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Darfur in Sudan.

Intractable conflicts also have destructive consequences. Over time the conflict if not resolved weakens the civil society, (Azar, 1990, pp.13-16) de-legitimizes governmental institutions, destroys the economy and frustrates developmental goals. As the situation worsen, poverty, crime, unemployment of youths, and lack of basic needs drives events on the ground to destructive paths or "relative deprivation, a precursor for ethnic conflict."

Additionally, any attempts made by different parties to distance themselves from one another leads to disruption of relationships, and impaired communication links between them. Mutual isolation and impaired communication creates distorted images of what the other side is like, its goals, demands, and strategies. Parties in intractable conflicts systematically construct the views of society members in a way presenting one's own society as being moral, just, and their opponents as immoral, belligerent, intransigent, irrational or extreme. As these destructive perceptions continue over time, they become ossified. "Meaningful communication between and among conflicting parties dries up, and ability to satisfy communal acceptance needs is severely diminished." (Azar, 1990, 17)

Good relationships and communication are very critical requirements in resolving conflicts and any strategy that fails to address these issues might not be effective in the end. Instead the psychological and social dynamics of group interaction that develop over a long period of time might produce a template for institutionalized behavior whereby people would feel that the way they treat others unlike themselves is normal and acceptable in the society.

Scholars agree that "behavior becomes institutionalized when the conscious cognitive process that underlies it become commonly used, taken for granted, and reciprocated by disputants" (Scott 2001, p.48 as cited in Gray et al 2007, p.1420). What this definition shows is the importance of seeking the causes of destructive conflicts through the prism of institutionalization that "reflect repetitive, habitual patterns of actions that are reinforced by social consensus" (ibid, 1421). Such behavior in a society is realizable through coercive mechanism such as shunning or shaming, through culturally prescribed norms of how to behave in the society (Scott, 2001). Scholars argue that institutionalized patterns of intractable conflicts

accounts for what keeps these conflicts in a virtual 'lockdown" state. Furthermore, this will guide towards finding strategies and means of resolving the conflict as well as de-institutionalize the habitual patterns of behavior.

In this respect, this article concurs with Coleman (2000, 449), that "our greatest hope in dealing with intractable conflicts is to find the means to avert them" and replace them with constructive regulation and institutionalized behavior capable of sustaining ethnic group co-existence.

If we understand conflict as a cancer worm that a society has developed, then it behooves us to conduct proper analysis and treat the cause of the conflict and not the symptoms. Beyond ascribed simplistic ideas of dealing with conflicts is the need for a strategy to resolve pertinent intangible and tangible needs involved. A major cog in the wheel of resolving conflict is the mindset that disputes could be resolved in the setting where they occur. In prolonged and intractable conflicts, where animosities, hatred, and emotions have accumulated over time, a new approach is required, one that is capable of addressing the entire psychological backlog generated.

Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) as a Dispute Resolution Tool for Intractable Conflicts

Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) is an interactive model of conflict resolution facilitated by a neutral third party in collective brain-storming, and analysis to bring about change in the behavior of disputants at the dialogue table. The presence of different types of unresolved conflict in Africa and elsewhere indicates that much has to be done in testing new models of problem solving not only in international conflicts but also in intra-ethnic group conflicts.

Previous scholars (e.g., Fisher, 1972) have introduced several problem-solving approaches that form the bedrock of major studies about resolving ethnic conflicts in the field. Most of these early scholars borrow from the pioneering work of John Burton (1969) who first applied it to his third party interpersonal level of analysis known as "controlled communication." Walton (1969) used it in his study on interpersonal peacemaking and third party consultation, while Satir (1967) applied it in her joint Family Therapy focusing on improved lines of communication, and reducing of threats among clients. At inter-group level of analysis Blake and Mouton (1961) used it in managing inter-group disputes in stressing on changing conflict situations from a win-lose intervention to collaborative problem solving. Levinson (1954) earlier used it as an inter-group model in area of community conflict workshop. Lakin (1972) applied this third party approach to the dispute between Arabs and Jews in Israel. Fisher (1972) as third party "consultation" borrowing from Burton developed its descriptive model. Following the success of the approach in conflict resolution Burton (1986, 1987) and his colleagues further

improved on it as "problem-solving".

Professor Herbert Kelman and colleagues have injected more energy to boost the study and application of the interactive problem-solving model especially in their popular work on Israeli and Palestinian conflict. (kelman and Cohen, 1976; kelman, 1979, 2002), and followed by the "problem-solving forum," (Edward Azar, 1990; Burton and Duke, 1990 Fisher, 1997; Mitchell, 2005); and "continuing workshop" (Kelman, and Ronhana, 1994).

Irrespective of different names these eminent scholars ascribed to their models, they have not differed much from common definition and characteristics of the concept. Interestingly, their work produced plausible strategies in conflict resolution that emphasize the process and roles of the third party mediator, behavior of participants and the type of environment where the dialogue will be convened. Uniquely, these models are non-agreement reaching oriented problem solving. However, they are tailored to identify commonalities among stakeholders and help them understand themselves by sincere and open communication, a prerequisite for making peace.

According to Fisher (1983, p.301, 1997) interactive conflict resolution is a strategy "for direct intervention in situations of inter-group conflict ... Consisted of small group's problem solving discussions organized by social scientists practitioners in the role of a third party." This discussion according to Fisher (1983) is not tailored only to help conflicting parties deal with the negative aspects of their dispute but help parties restore impaired relationships. While concurring with these views, Kelman (1997) added that it is also "a vehicle for change in national policies and in the larger conflict system."

Sequential Interactive Forum, therefore, is a model of problem solving that provides an unfettered climate and template for stakeholders and participants to attain the desired goal of reaching rapport and understanding instead of immediate resolution of dispute. This method of conflict resolution is not mediation, although it employs the expertise of mediators. It only serves as a foretaste for a future joint mediation process that is focused on reaching agreement. Scholars have made known and discussed some of these differences (See Fisher, 1972, 1983; Kelman, 2008) in comparing their "consultation", 'controlled communication" and "problem solving" methods with other traditional strategies of conflict resolution. Contrastingly, the novelty of the Sequential Interactive Forum "lies in human relation skills, of sharing feelings and perceptions understanding the dynamics and social relationships and being knowledgeable of the sources and processes of conflict and methods of resolution" (Fisher, 1983, p.305). The professionals must first establish trust in order to encourage sharing of participants' ideas about their perceptions and basic relationships. However irrespective of these differences in roles, scholars (Fisher, 1972; Wall, 1981 as cited in Fisher, 1983, 305) still believe that the professionals on both sides of the isle do almost the same thing, but with different approaches and methods.

This kind of interaction between groups or stakeholders in a dispute lays great emphasis on improving disjointed lines of communication that has contributed to the escalation of animosities, analyzing basic relationships between the groups and material resources in a way that might help resolve their problem, and influence public opinion. The approach is decidedly non-coercive, non-evaluative, relatively non-directive, and seeks exploration and creative problem solving with respect to basic relationships; rather than settlement of specific issues through negotiation."

Deep-rooted conflicts often involve intangible demands as well as tangibles, such as claims over scarce resources (Putnam and Wondolleck, 2003), distribution of economic and political benefits which is also associated with power imbalances. They are also based on a denial of basic needs of individuals or groups like identity, security and participation." Unless identity needs are met in multi-ethnic societies, unless in every social system there is distributive justice, a sense of control, and prospects for pursuit of all other human societal developmental needs, instability and conflict are inevitable" (Burton, 1991, p.21). Edward Azar explains that groups will do whatever is in their power to regain it. The complexity of such conflicts demands the use of SIF as an appropriate method of conflict resolution to prevent escalation, since indulging in litigation or arbitration does not resolve the intangible demands nor address the emotional problem of the disputants. In most conflict, people want their opinions to be heard and respected by the other side, and any ad hoc decision or rush towards resolution gives impetus to intensify agitation and violence. Any interactive forum dialogue needs time and cannot be rushed, and very importantly is an interaction between equals (Bohm, David 1991) where power relations need proper adjustment. It's worthwhile to note that the flexibility and objective of this sequential process of problem solving differentiates it from other conflict resolution models like arbitration. It takes the participants sequentially through conflict hurdles with a view to resolving one problem effectively before going to the next issue. SIF is therefore a change-oriented and analytical process of conflict resolution facilitated by unbiased and multi-cultural sensitive professional, social scientist, and mediator, who assist disputants in identifying salient issues in conflict. This is only realizable through good communication that leads the parties towards changing their attitudes and perceptions of themselves and repairing strained relationships.

Respective of circumstances and the nature of conflict, SIF, as a sociopsychological model of problem-solving is a continuing process, drawn over time to account for all major issues in conflict and especially to guarantee equal participation of all disputants and their representatives, giving them all chances to be heard. Though in some situations issues might be resolved in one meeting, under other conditions, this could demand persistence and continued dialogue, before a rapport can be reached to end hostilities.

SIF takes cognizance of all these while at the same time using each stage of the meeting to coach disputants and stakeholders separately on basic conflict resolution

skills that are necessary for the smooth facilitation of the process. This new quality is a combination that distinguishes this approach from the pioneering methods. Emphasis on coaching conflict resolution skills is a step in the right direction in the field that will help diffuse the prevalent "emotional climate" (de Rivera and Paez, 2007, 237) and produce a conducive atmosphere during the process. In the literature, pioneering scholars recognized the need for acquisition of these skills. In his study clarifying mediation techniques Clark Kerr (1954, as cited in Rehmus 1965, p.120) concluded that "one of the greatest contributions of mediation is to supply the parties negotiating skills which they lack to allow them to find areas of settlement that exist but which their own negotiating awkwardness prevents them from seeing or realizing." Another scholar Billikopf (2004) followed suit by popularizing this method of interpersonal conflict resolution in a pre-caucusing session. These are important skills parties will be using all the time in the future to resolve different kinds of community problems, family issues and inter-personal conflicts without the help of a mediator or third party (See Billikoff, Gregory, 2004, p.31). In view of the effects of emotional out bursts during the process, scholars agree that coaching stakeholders can present a "perspective using neutral and nonprovocative language" (Hobbs, 1999 cited in Billikopff, 2004, 118). In multiethnic and hierarchical societies, it is pertinent to be aware of the need for parties, especially the government officials to build and save face (Ting-Toomey, 2001, 17). Conflict resolution skills such as good communication, listening, acknowledgement of the other and controlling emotions prepare the parties to enter into a forum with confidence and without fear thus creating a harmonious atmosphere. The goal of SIF is to help solve problems non-violently.

Conflict resolution requires us to communicate effectively, appropriately, and creatively in different conflict interactive situations. It requires us to be knowledgeable and respectful of different worldviews and ways of dealing with a conflict situation (Toomey, 2001, pp.396-7). Emphasis on acquiring communication skills is a key to any successful problem solving. In intractable conflicts where ethnic groups relationships have been impaired, communication links broken, and emotions are running high, the pertinence of ensuring a harmonious atmosphere for the process and its successful out come cannot be overemphasized.

According to Gregorio Billikopf (2004) who applied the coaching method in interpersonal conflict resolution, "one mediator role is helping participants develop and strengthen these critical skills. These are the very skills they will need in the future, when they negotiate through conflicts without the help of a mediator" (Billikopf, 2004, p.31).

Participants who have some of these skills will participate cordially in any interactive forum, and be less likely to damage the process. Educating groups earlier will definitely add new values and quality to the over all process which might help defuse anger. Teaching parties how to communicate effectively while presenting a perspective without using provocative language and without causing

the other to lose face is considered paramount to understanding the issues in conflict.

The ability to listen to others is a skill that might assist clients to look inward and review their actions and decision. In a problem solving workshop listening creates an atmosphere of great respect which lets the other person know you hear and understand him or her. As far as building relationships are concerned, this skill of trying to understand others is useful. Good communication skills are required to encourage stakeholders to talk directly to each other showing empathy.

Though much emphasis is placed on basic communication skills, there are other "process management skills" (Harris, 2005, pp.149-50) that are useful. These are helping disputants talk in turns, restating, being non-judgmental and paraphrasing each other's statement. It suffices to state that incorporating coaching of skills in SIF not only will offer the parties tools of conflict resolution to be used all the time, but also will increase the probability of reaching rapport required for a joint agreement oriented mediation stage. Cultural insensitivity to the norms and values of the host society could jeopardize any interactive problem solving process. Understanding people's cultural behavior can assist in promoting better relations among cultural groups. Scholars concur that from culture we learn the language of relationships that connect us to others confirming our belonging and deepening our purpose. Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) as a model affirms the metaphor of culture as a life source that both animates and heals conflict (Lebaron, 2003, p.4) and at the same time informs the capacities, practices, and tools to resolve it.

Sue and colleagues have provided a comprehensive definition of multicultural competence to depict, "a helping professional having an awareness of his or her own assumptions, values, and biases; understanding of the world view of culturally distinct clients (parties), being able to develop appropriate intervention strategies and techniques ..." (Sue, et al. 1998 as cited in ibid, pp.63-64). According to Chen and Starosta (2000, 407), "intercultural competence concerns getting the job done and attaining communication goals through verbal and nonverbal behaviors in intercultural interaction".

In the literature on interactive problem solving, pioneering scholars drew attention to sensitivity of professionals and social scientists in the field (John Burton, 1969; Young, 1967). In his seminal work cited by Fisher (1972, p.75) John Burton posits, "Professional knowledge presumes knowledge in a number of areas conflict theory, group processes, perception communication, sensitivity training, attitude formation and change, conflict management practices, and general knowledge specifically related to the system within which the third party is working". Inducing "mutual positive motivations", treatment of issues in conflict, and regulating of the overall interaction of disputants are tied to sensitivity of the values and cultures of a given area among other things. This model is cognizance of norms, and cultural fluency as a tool for decoding and moving through conflicts that deepens a sense of collaborative problem solving, limiting escalation of violence or dispute and

transforming it into a learning experience for both disputants and professionals alike. Succinctly, LeBaron and Pillay (2006, p.12) concurs, "To be fluent with culture is to recognize it as a series of underground rivers that profoundly shape not only who we are but how we cooperate and engage conflict".

As a result, conflict resolution is based on the cultural fluency (LeBaron and Pillay, 2006,p.19) of practitioners, facilitators, social scientists, conflict management practitioners and mediators. Without cultural competency, the professionals will find it very difficult to build bridges and restore confidence especially in multiethnic societies.

The absence of a competent professional can affect the success of any process of conflict resolution. Conflict is a cultural challenge and challenges professional practitioners and mediators to sharpen their skills in working across cultures, recognizing that there is a wider community of interests and that the history of the dispute itself may provide many insights into how perceptions have formed and how to deal with them effectively rather than focusing on immediate resolution. SIF is useful for diagnosing and de-institutionalizing conflict focusing on creating a harmonious atmosphere for repairing strained relationships and impaired communication links.

Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) Process

Sequential Interactive Forum as problem solving strategy places much emphasis on the need for an unfettered communication among parties, as a means of managing intractable conflict. Its essence is learning something new from disputes based on analysis, a process that respects and permits hearing the opinions of participants from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Through such engaged interaction based on good communication and listening skills, shared rules, norms and structure, people can experience the "dual sensation" of experiencing themselves and simultaneously experiencing others (Martin Buber,1947) by so doing transforming their relationships. Convening an interactive problem-solving forum demands new approaches and strategy that includes, "efforts to coordinate autonomous organizations without the authority of a hierarchy" (Whetten and Bozeman, 1984, p.21).

SIF as a process of problem solving has the potential for changing perceptions and lives of disputants. It will affirm hope and help nurture bonds of relationships between groups and individuals through sincere and open communications. Rebuilding such relationships is not often easy, but requires a change of behavior, perseverance and tenacity to continue talking even when the results are not obvious. The model is informed by the context and nature of the dispute that is sometimes neglected by practitioners.

SIF is a third party facilitated interaction made up of small sequential forum of parties in conflict. These stage-by-stage meetings inspire and motivate disputants to talk about their differences and the relationships that underlie their anger towards one another. SIF can realize this goal only if disputants or stakeholders are ready for dialogue. The outcome of the problem-solving process is not necessarily aimed at reaching any agreement but rather to give disputants the opportunity to explore in detail their relationship, deinstitutionalize cognitive behaviors that inundate the dispute and decide to move to the next stage. It is worth taking into consideration that there might be several psychological and legitimate reasons why parties do not chose to reach agreement at a sitting. Probably the time is not ripe or they are not ready to face shame or loss that would enable them to move ahead. In some instances past historical experience and lack of confidence or trust may cause sessions of the problem-solving forum to be extended. The process of organizing a forum begins by setting the stage of the events.

Scholars concur that setting the stage for any problem solving is not an easy nut to crack. Surmounting the militating obstacle will depend on many factors that have gingered animosities which disputants themselves cannot overcome. According to Professor Gray (1995), "the obstacles include historical and ideological barriers, power disparities among stakeholders, societal level dynamics, and differing perceptions of the level of accepting risk, technical complexity, political and institutional norms". In the literature, many of these patterns are rooted in cognitive patterns of activities that produce a toxic brew of emotions and misperceptions that parties arm themselves with to justify their cause. Intractable conflict is therefore akin to cultivating "weeds" in the garden of our lives or society. The weeds we nurture will grow and turn into briars and become difficult to uproot. Through lack of visionary political designs and needs-sensitive policies, governments plant weeds of conflict in their societies that cost a lot of energy and resources to remove.

The Niger Delta Conflict

The contemporary history of the Niger Delta represents the predicament of minority groups in Nigeria since flag independence, that is, being "afraid of ethnic domination and discrimination in development" (Crowder, 1962, 264). These groups have allegedly suffered from 'marginalization" and relative deprivation from successive governments in Nigeria (See Suberu, 1996: Osaghae, 1998). In the literature, such deprivations and neglect often result in ethnic group mobilization to use all available means to fight for their unmet human needs.

Since 1990, a growing number of scholars and social scientists have developed interest in the study of the Niger Delta and the causes of the on-going conflict. Studies have paid attention to a) the patterns of accumulation surrounding oil wealth, poverty (Omeje, 2007, 44; Okonta, Ike and Douglas, 2002) and the implication for conflict, b) the Niger Delta communities and relations to oil

produced from their soil (Loola G., 1981; Watts, 1997, Suberu, 1996), c) petrol wealth and its problem (Watts, 1994, 1997; Khan, 1994; Karl T., 1997), and d) management of minority conflicts (Suberu,1996; Osaghae, 1998). There is, however, a consensus in the literature that lack of transparency in governance, corruption among government officials and poverty in the oil producing areas spurred the prevailing conflict. The story of Niger Delta is very complex and does not fit in to any one characterization. Scholars who see the conflict as rooted in oil and its distribution (Watts, 1994) which did not bring much needed "petrolic" modernization but economic underdevelopment and ecological catastrophe, might be right.

Ad-hoc policy choices made by former Nigerian military dictators and their sycophants who ruled Nigeria in the early 1980s and 90s to satisfy the demands of the oil-producing region sparked the flame of conflict that has engulfed the Niger Delta. Nigeria therefore seems to have fallen into the group of oil rich countries "where policy makers collectively fall into wealth induced stupors" (Salant, 1995, p.310). The abject neglect, marginalization, endemic poverty, and disease conditions that prevail in the Niger Delta area have sensitized the people, mobilized them to seek justice and human rights. The Niger Delta communities are demanding satisfaction of their tangible needs for good health care facilities, drinking water, and equal distribution of oil wealth, equipped schools, and job opportunities for the growing population of youths. These are all legitimate needs of a marginalized lot in a country blessed with mineral wealth.

Nigeria derives its wealth from oil. The country used to derive her foreign exchange from the sales of agricultural produce like palm oil, cocoa and groundnuts in the 1960s. The end of the Nigeria-Biafran civil war in 1970 brought about increased oil exploration and extraction from the creeks of the delta that prominently spurred vast economic and social development in the mid-seventies. Significantly, this was the time Nigeria earned a lot of foreign reserve and wealth from sales of crude oil following the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. The government used the proceeds from oil to develop some parts of the country but neglected southern regions defeated in the Nigeria-Biafra civil war. Nigeria oil earnings rose quickly from \$4.733 billion in 1975 to \$10 billion in 1979 and reached a windfall sum of \$15 billion in 1980 (Cyril, Obi 1998, 267). Since its independence in 1960, the Nigerian government accrued \$350 billion in oil reserves (Sala I. Martin and Subramanian 2003, 3). This era marks the beginning of the "locust years" or "natural resource curse" in Nigerian history. It was a period of oil politics and "squander mania", white elephant projects, corruption and ethnic conflicts.

Responsibility, good governance, and leadership did not match with the blessing of the newfound "black gold" (See Michael Watts, 1997) and as a result it seems to have become a "curse" on a country of well over 120 million citizens. This might be so because of the bitter and competitive politics it has heralded since then, which has pitted ethnic groups and individuals against each other as they struggle for resource control. A country's economic performance, if it were a blessing, would

have sustained positive ethnic group relationships and improved the well-being of the people. But contrarily, in Nigeria the wealth of this great nation was misappropriated and pocketed by greedy military administrators while neglecting the needs of the populace.

Following the carting away of barrels of crude oil for sale, and the huge amount accruing from this transaction, the oil producing communities awoke to remind the federal government of their special entitlement and privileges commensurate with the wealth coming from their land. The elites and community leaders were quick to point out the environmental and health hazards caused by the pollution of their soil and water because of intensive mining in the creeks. The Niger Delta elites have been stressing that to address the issues required, among other things, change of the guidelines by which government financial allocations are made to the oil producing states, favor the non-oil producing parts of the country. Additionally they argue for more federal government compensation for polluted agricultural lands due to oil exploitation.

More than 20 ethnic groups live in the Niger Delta area. The total area occupied by these communal groups is about 70,000 square kilometers, with more than 20 million inhabitants dispersed into nine of the 36 states in the federation. It is here that popular oil companies including Shell, Agip, Exxon Mobile, and Chevron (among others) have their operational bases.

These Delta communities whose livelihood depends on farming and fishing were afraid and concerned about their future survival and subsistence in the light of the ecological or environmental disaster. According to scholars, substantial, unfavorable changes in the environment are extremely disastrous to the vital economic activity of the populations (Kirill Kondrateyev, et al. 2000, ix). These environmentalists also explain that human beings could equally provoke such disasters by the use of technology or by dangerous natural phenomena (ibid, 2000, ix). In the case of the Niger Delta, the disaster was manmade as a result of intensive oil exploitation and spillages as well as disruption of oil pipelines by militants. The danger and consequences of this human ecological transgression is increasing in the form of waterborne diseases, water blindness, food shortages, lack of good drinking water, and endemic poverty, which contour the social fabric of the people in the Niger Delta. The failure of the Nigerian government to take measures that could change the oil boom from a liability to an asset for economic development and welfare of its people has become the most troubling part of the country's wealth. According to a World Bank estimate, only one percent of the population (i.e. the states and indigenous investors) because of corruption and predatory activities enjoy 80 per cent of the oil revenue (Omeje, 2007, p.44). Furthermore, a 2006 United Nations report placed Nigeria in the 159th out of 177 countries on its Human Development Index and reported that more than 70% of Nigerians live on less than US\$1 a day (UN 2006 as cited in ibid, 45). The grim picture in this region invoked further demands from leaders of the oil-bearing states related "to the disposition of mineral land rents, the application of the derivation principle to the

allocation of federally collected mineral revenues, the appropriate institutional and fiscal responses to the ecological problem of the oil producing areas, the responsibility of the oil prospecting companies to the oil producing communities and the appropriate arrangements for securing the integrity and autonomy of the oil producing communities within the present federal structure"(Suberu, 1996, 27). Amidst globalization, and the increase of modern goods streaming into the country, the Niger Delta communities feel neglected. They have a rising population and are among the poorest, least urbanized communities in the country. The problem is structural because of inarticulate government policies that were not tailored to address the demands of the oil-producing region of Nigeria.

Successive military and civilian administrations in the country since 1984 tried to resolve the burning issue of revenue allocation and resource distribution, based on the principle of fairness. For example, President Ibrahim Babangida took an appeasing first step by increasing appropriation to the oil producing states from 1.3 percent to 3 per cent of oil fund for development. The administration subsequently established the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) with special allocation for the development of communities in the Delta region. These measures did not satisfy the demands of the southern states and oil producing communities. Instead, it increased protests against government policy and demands for more. OMPADEC was accused of gross corruption, mismanagement, and award of contracts to agents of the military administration. The community leaders were demanding 50 per cent of the total revenue from oil as well as payment of accrued land rents from the oil prospecting corporations due to them.

In response, the military government led by Sani Abacha, made an increased provision of 13 percent of oil revenue to the region based on the principles of "derivation" in the revised Nigerian constitution. This increase in financial allocation also made provisions for addressing ecological pollution of the Ogoni soil and other areas where transnational oil companies, such as Dutch Shell and Chevron, are carrying out exploration.

Under the Abacha rule, corruption, personalized rule, over centralized fiscal policy, combined with the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), worsened the economic situation in the country, and made it quite difficult for the government to concede more to the oil producing ethnic communities of the Delta. This volatile situation of poverty and deprivation in Nigeria confirms "resource curse," theory and scholars view that in mineral rich countries, "policy makers unprepared to manage their new found wealth are invariably blanketed with advice from the world bank and other international organizations" (Salant, 1995, 310).

Economic hardship and increasing insecurity were reflected in growing social turmoil, manifest in a radical youth protest, workers' strikes, and mass demonstrations against governmental policies that neglected and denied people their basic needs. The region has become vulnerable to ethnic sensitivities over lack of

basic infrastructure, arable farmlands and economic development. Different groups in their varying demands used different "frames" and cognitive perceptions to fight for their rights. These include blaming and categorizing others as "indigenes" and none "indigenes" to bolster their self-concept and positions in the distribution of wealth. The engendered open political ferment among elites, warlords, and traditional leaders polarized the region, disrupted relationships, and blocked avenues of communication between ethnic groups and the government of Nigeria. The situation led to the formation of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP), the Ethnic Minority Organization of Africa (EMIROAF), and the Ijaw Ethnic Minority Rights Protection Organization and the Southern Minorities Movement (Obi, 2000, 269). These organizations are leading campaign to challenge Shell Oil Company for environmental compensation and the Nigerian state for direct control of the oil wealth from their soil. Many prominent Delta activists including Ken Sara Wiwo lost their lives in the struggle for the rights of the people in the oil-producing region.

The policies that led to the radicalization of the civil society are to blame for the violent events in the Niger Delta region through 1998-1999. This period also witnessed massive protest and mobilization against the military regime of General Sani Abacha by the Ijaw Youth Council, Ijaw National Council and Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw ethnic nationality. Allegation of marginalization of the ethnic minorities and denial of their demands for equal distribution of natural resources in the federal system escalated conflict in the Delta. In the literature of conflict resolution, denial of such basic needs like security and autonomy often sparks violent conflicts (John Burton, 1970). The demands of the oil producing communities later expanded to include autonomy in a new federal system, self determination and return to the old allocation formula based on the principle of "derivation" Instead of the current practice where population and territorial size and other criteria that favors the non oil producing regions, as well as federal compensation for the environmental pollution as a result of oil extractions. The movement (MOSOB) began as a non-violent civil society agitating for a peaceful resolution of the problems of the Niger Delta popularizing their views and anger through rallies, public enlightenment campaigns and seminars aimed at creating people's awareness about the suffering of their communities. They later mobilized using ethnic appeal and became radicalized as anti-state and transnational oil corporations. The group protested against the corruption and lack of transparency in the administration of OMPADEC and also strongly denounced the composition, which according to some of the members, allegedly excluded the representatives from other oil producing areas such as Ondo, Edo, and Delta states (see National Concord, 11 December 1992:B2 cited in Suberu, 1996, 36).

In Nigeria oil wealth that was supposed to be an expandable pie, became fixed with some people now intensively fighting to get a cut at all costs. The assumption that there could be more oil wealth to go around the country through good management and cooperation gave way instead to the belief that more for one group means less for others. While in some other oil rich countries resources have improved

economic development, it is causing havoc in Nigeria in the form of ethnic competition, conflict and disruption of relationships. The inability of Nigeria to address the Niger Delta issue stems from the absence of good governance along with the knowledge and expertise thereof. There is also a lack of adequate mechanism to manage conflicts. These are dimensions of governance (Dean, M.1999) needed to improve the economic wellbeing of the citizens amidst great wealth.

How Government Handled the Situtation

In the literature the scholarly notion that democracy contributes to inter-ethnic peace receives great attention (see Clark and Nordstrom, 2005, pp. 251-2). Nevertheless, this is also dependent on the type of regime, norms and institutions in a particular country. In Nigeria, the types of democratic dispensations and weak federal institutions that existed since independence fell short of possessing the required norms of peaceful resolution of inter-ethnic conflicts. The pseudo-democracy, which the military dictators created, was very autocratic and exclusive to a few privileged groups and individuals who don't have the interest of the country at heart. This could equally be said about the civilian administrations (1990-2007) that came to power through flawed electoral processes and as such lack popular support.

As far as managing the Niger Delta issue is concerned, the government has taken some steps, which were not acceptable to the communities. In his seminal work, Rotimi Suberu (1996) exposed the various strategies the military dictators have used to address the underlying issues in the Niger Delta conflict over the years. It might be pertinent to add that even after the return of Nigeria to democratic dispensation in 1999, the strategies of handling ethnic group conflicts and demands have not significantly changed. However, according to Suberu, government responses "have been redistributive, reorganization and/or regulative or repressive in nature. Redistributive state responses to ethnic minority grievances have involved token revision in federal revenue sharing arrangements to accommodate and assuage the stringent claims of oil producing communities to a significant proportion of economic resources obtained from their localities" (Suberu, 1996, xii). For example, the earlier mentioned increase in federal allocations to oil producing areas from 1.5 to 3 percent of federally accrued oil money was increased to 15 percent by the Abacha regime and the allocation of more funds for the treatment of the polluted farming lands was increased from 1 per cent to 2 per cent of federal account.

These distributive gestures did not help to assuage or satisfy the demands of the oil producing states and the communities who felt cheated by the federal government and oil producing companies. The Delta communities wanted more funds, arguing that the proposed allocation did not fully compensate for the ecological damage to their agricultural land the economic welfare of the region.

The immediate consequences of this were the routine kidnapping of foreign employees of the Transnational Oil Companies, and sabotage of oil companies and their installations by community activists and thugs, leading to further oil spillages and economic loses for both the government and the oil producing companies. Following the increased sabotage and violence, Shell Oil Company was forced to suspend operations in Ogoni-land in early 1993. In 1994 other oil producing companies like Elf and Agip reported loses worth millions of dollars as a result of community protests and disruptions (Cyril Obi, 2000, 271). In addition, between 1998 and 2003 there were more than 400 disruptions of oil pipes and installations in the Niger Delta. Within this period, the violence and attacks have cost the government a lump sum of \$6.8 billion in revenue accruing from oil sales.

It is vital to address the importance of leadership and choice of policies before such a volatile situation escalates. According to Richard Samuels, articulate leaders "will demonstrate a range of creative ways to combine resources and ideas and to seize opportunity" (as cited in Nanneri Keohane, 2005, pp.705-6) and find realistic solutions to groups' problems. Instead, the military dictators in Nigeria preferred the use of military force as a strategy of conflict resolution maintaining what Dean (1999) calls 'authoritarian governmentality.' An articulation of generalized uses of the instrument of repression with bio-politics "regards its subjects capacity for action as subordinate to the expectation of obedience" (Dean, 1999, 209).

In 1992, President Babangida dissolved many cultural associations and groups, which were agitating for their human needs and rights in the Niger Delta (Suberu 1996, pp. 43-44). By enacting decrees government agents were giving impetus to scout for and arrest leaders of these associations like Ken Sara Wiwo, in order to intimidate and stop their mobilization efforts in the region. The government also reacted to the demands of the communities by choosing the adversarial method of conflict resolution. It uses litigation, ad hoc tribunals, judicial commissions of inquiry, and military decrees to discourage protests. Litigation and ad hoc tribunals may serve the interest of the government and some supporters, but as far as conflict management of the Niger Delta conflict is concerned, it stops short of satisfying all stake holders. What the communities want is a sequential interactive forum for equal participation and unfettered dialogue that has eluded the Delta people and Nigerians as a whole since independence. Failure to grant the communities a chance to be heard, the government has continued to fan the embers of violent disruptions and conflict in the area. The Nigerian leadership was authoritarian, and by harassing citizens they not only hampered transition to democracy but also impeded consolidation of democracy in the country. The "military regimes typically favor apolitical solutions To ethnic problems, subordinate human rights to omnipotent decrees, and regard even the mildest redress-seeking ethnic movement as a direct challenge or threat to authority, to be put down by violent means" (Eghosa Osaghae, 1998, 13). In any civilized country dispute resolution is best addressed collaboratively and consensually by being empathic, listening to the people's side of the story with a view to making the right decisions.

However, although the Nigerian government used limited force indiscriminately to subdue agitators, it's pertinent to concede that such strategy is usually applied when issues like territory, prestige and survival of a regime are at stake. The government considered the threat to the source of the country's livelihood (oil installation and companies), the demand for territorial autonomy and loss of human lives as highly "salient" issues under contention. For the government, the cost of inaction might have been greater.

Since we believe that force is not the appropriate approach to managing a group's anger, the saliency of the problem should also be closely examined. This understanding does not exonerate officials from the despicable strategy of banning and the use of force.

However, the use of military force exposes the bankruptcy of any effective conflict resolution policy and viable security mechanism to address group animosity. The government's militarization policy in the Delta is being misconstrued by the Niger Delta communities as a way of protecting the interests of the multinational oil companies and predators operating in the creeks. This also explains why militant groups target security forces patrolling the waters in the creeks. This situation has also created an air of suspicion, insecurity, and lack of trust among the community leaders and government officials.

The federal government has also tried to stem the violence by meeting some of the demands of the communities in the Niger Delta which include among other things the creation of state and local government authorities. This design was tailored to appease those communities clamoring for federal presence in their areas and also to address the "disproportionate contribution to national wealth and equally disproportionate suffering of its people" (The Guardian, 20 March 1992, 11, cited in Suberu 1996, 41). In the new democratic dispensation, the former president Olusegun Obasanjo also took steps to manage the conflict by appointing Niger Delta indigenes to high government positions. Projects have been initiated to improve social and economic infrastructures, pay compensation and provide educational scholarships for youths in the region. Special bodies such as Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB), the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), and the Consolidated Council on Social and Economic Development of Coastal States (COSEND) were established to oversee development projects in the Delta. Nevertheless, irrespective of these, the Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta declared that government needed to do more for them commensurate with the amount of oil wealth the Delta soil produces for the country. The militant movement opined that the commissions, so far established were conduit pipes for government and its agents to divert public funds for personal gains. What the communities are agitating for is a type of localized control of oil resources and rent for the development of their region (Ukoha, 2009). Moreover, they are threatening to continue violence, disruption of oil pipelines, and kidnapping of oil workers until their whole demands are met.

The Need for a Conflict Resolution Process

The importance of managing this conflict cannot be over emphasized. Democratization in Nigeria will lose its gains and can only be sustained when plural mechanisms for addressing expected grievances or conflicts are established and utilized. Thus in Nigeria the need for conflict resolution process is guided by the necessity of keeping community or people together avoiding disintegration. What is important is not who is right or wrong but understanding through active listening with each other to find solutions to the problems. What SIF offers is a pathway to social justice and transformation, which comes through unfettered exchanges or interactions.

Common sense and vision demand change in the way all sides frame this conflict, and seek an effective strategy to resolve the conflict collaboratively, restoring strained relationships and trusts. The government and officials need a face-saving exit and dialogue without which the country will continue to fan the embers of conflict. According to Otite (1999, 8), "Conflict resolution performs a healing function in societies. It provides opportunities for the examination of alternative pay-offs in a situation of positioned disagreement and restores normalcy in societies by facilitating discussions and placing parties in conflict, in situations in which they can chose alternative positive decisions to resolve differences"

The Niger Delta is like a volcano in the heart of Nigeria and a sore in the mind of the present leadership. The present level of conflict could be likened to a steam from the volcano site. The question Nigerians should not be asking is whether this volcano will erupt, but when. As far as conflict management is concerned Nigeria has never fared very well, and past strategies implemented to resolve disputes have failed because of lack of will from a predatory regime, and collaborating elites feeding on oil rent.

The most important determinant for Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) is the ripeness of the moment to initiate interactive problem solving forum of the stakeholders. Professional advice from Richard Holbrooke (1998) in this regard is worth taking note of. According to him, "the best time to hit a serve is when the ball is suspended in the air, neither rising nor falling. We felt that the equilibrium has arrived, or was about to ..." (as cited in Michael Greig 2001, 691).

In tune with that sports allegory the ripe moment for the resolution of the Niger Delta conflict has come as evidenced in the perception of losses weighing on all the stakeholders in the dispute. In the literature, scholars believe that resolution will be more successful when conflict costs have become intolerable and both sides realize that they may lose too much by continuing their disputes (Pruitt 1981, Berkovitch and Langley, 1993). The suffering and continuing loss of revenue and devastation has reached such an alarming level that government and the communities are signaling intention to discuss underlying issues that spurred the violence.

Exploitation and mining in the Niger Creek have paradoxically increased human hardship and deprived many households in the area of their basic sources of subsistence and livelihood. The pollution of the environment and oil spillage in farming fields does not bode well for a poverty-stricken region. The potential impact of these transgressions by Transnational Oil Companies and the federal government against the fish farmers equals little catches for the market and family subsistence. The ugly sight of floating dead fishes on the riverbanks only increases the anger of the Ijaws and Ogonis who are known for their acumen in fishery. The lack of good source of drinking water and festering waterborne diseases would have sent a message to a caring administration to give priority to the lives and well-being of its people. Therefore, compounded by the spillages on farming lands, the Delta people had all the impetus to protest for a halt and change of government behavior towards them. Unfortunately, there seems to be a lack of will by government agents to study the reasons for the communities' anger, hence the explosion of violence to attract attention to their plights. The soil of the Niger Delta is good for some staple food and vegetable farming, but with the present situation and worsening armed violence in the region, many families have abandoned farming. Youths who could not farm to subsist were routinely vulnerable to recruitment by warlords and militias competing for rent appropriations from the oil companies. In summary, all the deprivation, poverty and government neglect in this region was responsible for violent mobilization in the Niger Delta region. However, scholars in the area indicate that the number of the people that want to dialogue and resolve the dispute now, outnumbers those who want to gain from the booties of flaring conflict and disorder. The efforts by local communities to dialogue and reconcile their minor differences (i.e the Pereambiri conflict resolution brokered by the Nembe Peace and Reconciliation Committee) is a momentum for initiating a Joint Interactive Mediation to assist these moderate voices in search of peace and transformation.

Another impetus for SIF came in June 2006 barely a few weeks after taking the oath of office; the newly elected leader of Nigeria Musa Yar'Adua dispatched his vice President Jonathan Goodluck abroad to seek assistance in resolving the Niger Delta conflict. In his earlier speech the president had promised to use every resource available to address this conflict in the spirit of fairness and justice (The Nigerian Guardian June 1,2007). Another moment of ripeness was the setting up of the Niger Delta Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee, which was inaugurated on July 2, 2007 by Vice President Goodluck Jonathan in the Delta city of Port Harcourt.

The committee was expected to liaise with the groups in the region, including security agencies, and report back recommendations for stemming violence to the federal government (see http://www.Nigeriafirst.org/printer_7476.5html.july3, 2007). In his own statement, the chair of the committee, Senator David Brigidi echoed, "this activity (the violence) is impacting on our economy" (ibid.).

On the local or community level, community organizations, youth groups and NGOs, some of which have affiliations abroad, are discussing the Niger Delta conflict and how to manage it but none has come up with a strategy to resolve the

issues underlying the community agitations and demands. The activities of some of these are well intentioned, and most pertinently signal a ripe moment for applying Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) strategy to manage the conflict. What is required in this direction is proper diagnosis of the conflict by neutral experts and mediators in order to facilitate the sequential interactive meetings of stakeholders.

It is our belief that litigation and perhaps biased judicial inquiries might not be the best strategy to manage the conflict if parties want satisfactory resolution. This is because in the process not all stakeholders' voices are heard and the contexts in which disputes arise has not been well addressed. Because of this adversarial approach of conflict resolution, what remained was deep the psychological need to dichotomize and establish "indigenes and non-indigenes", "enemies and allies" (see Folger, J.P., and Jones, T.S., 1994).

The road to stemming hostilities in the Delta might not be an easy task considering the very nature of the enduring militant groups, with their legacy of mutual mistrust and pains that have been hindering calls for resolution. The situation in the Niger Delta therefore calls for a pragmatic and transformative interaction tailored to mending relationships between all stakeholders, allowing venting of emotions and restoring strained communication links.

SIF: A Case of Niger Delta Conflict

This study tries to show that the conflict in the Niger Delta continues because institutional strategies (Gray et a. 2007, Pruitt and Rubin, 1986) of conflict management in Nigeria are not effective in addressing fundamental issues. Failure to understand the dynamics in the Delta conflict led to applying wrong strategies and tools to it. The strategy of dispatching more security forces to the area to quell violence might not be the best solution, though it will in a short term discourage violent attacks on the oil installations and offices of the foreign oil companies.

The government has in recent times inspired or organized local meetings in the region to resolve some of the issues. It is feared that some of these local activities, which are not well coordinated, have become part of the problem rather than the solution. Government initiatives to negotiate with the militants and community leaders failed to yield the expected result and have not restrained violent militancy and kidnapping of oil workers. Hence, the suggestion is that SIF will engender trust and confidence required for a collaborative joint analysis of the contending issues in conflict.

This kind of interactive "ping-pong" brings to the table a wealth of ideas and experience for the resolution and transformation of the dynamics of a complex conflict from a lose-win to a win-win situation. This knowledge drawn from

professionals of different skills and discipline also helps to illuminate the intractable nature of the conflict and cognitive behavior of disputants. The Niger Delta conflict did not start overnight. It has been lingering over time "unregulated" (Deutsch, 2005), "volatile" (Gricar and Brown, 1981) and lawless. Moreover, the disputants' behavior that reflects repetitive, habitual patterns of actions that sometimes are reinforced by social consensus (see Gray, et al 2007, 1421) has equally institutionalized the conflict and militates against resolution. As this article has shown, conflict in the oil producing region of Nigeria brought along psychological baggage such as fear, insecurity, emotional out-bursts and misperception of the others. This live ammunition should be diffused to ensure harmonious deliberations. In other words, psychological safety of the disputants is equally cardinal to SIF as a model for resolving intractable conflicts. Due to the quality and diversity of shared information during these unofficial forums, participants and stakeholders may "reframe" their formally held views about the conflict, also a necessary step to deinstitutionalizing the conflict. This change is the driveway to reaching common ground opening the channel for a joint negotiation session in future if the parties are willing to do so.

SIF Acknowledges Cultural Diversity and Inclusion in Niger Delta

As earlier stated, SIF differs from pioneering works on problem solving because it lays emphasis on cultural inclusion and competency. This cultural saliency is sequel to the dynamics, diverse forces and developments, as well as social integration and interaction, which emphasizes cultural diversity in our society. The Sequential Interactive Forum model of problem solving is not oblivious to the synergy between culture and conflict in Niger Delta. As the importance of problem solving increases today, practitioners and third party mediators focus on cultural inclusion and not only on diversity of the Niger Delta people.

This model also recognizes the complexity of the conflict with so many ethnic groups and stakeholders involved, competing for turf and oil rent in the region. This model ensures the provision of a good deliberation environment for the stakeholders to participate freely without fear of any type of government intimidation or power imbalance during the process. Parties to the interactive forum will be treated equally. The process will not allow room for ethical doubts and suspicion which might torpedo the sessions. The process is tailored to encourage mutual confidentiality among participants and as well discourage any forms of bias or partiality from mediators or expert practitioners.

The Niger Delta is home to well over twenty ethnic and linguistic groups spread into nine of the thirty-six states of the federation. Competent problem solving in the society must take cognizance of this reality and require professionals to be sensitive to differences as well as similarities of the people. The additional "cultural fluency" (Tatsushi Arai, 2006, p.58) of professionals in SIF will generate an atmosphere of openness and trust, a prerequisite for building peace among disputants. Through initial interviews and analysis of the Niger Delta conflict, social scientists and

conflict management professionals have to identify major beliefs and behaviors that influence the problem setting and outcome of the process. Furthermore, the cultural competency of third party professionals in interactive problem solving forum sensitizes them to be aware of their own biases when making quick decisions about the conflict styles of others (Stella Toomey, 2001). SIF provides an adequate and harmonious interactive environment and opportunity for conflict resolution within the party's cultural context. The application of this model will tend to move beyond cultural awareness in practice and be acclaimed as an approach of problem solving capable of respecting the cultures of the various communities and stakeholders in the Niger Delta conflict.

SIF Recognizes Wider Stakeholders' Participation

In Niger Delta, multiple stakeholders have emerged following the escalation of conflict claiming to represent and protect the interests of their communities. But through proper stakeholder analysis and mapping, third party professionals will be able to identify and invite only those influential representatives of their people, government and oil companies to the interactive forum. Stakeholders mapping also assists in accommodating formally marginalized groups whose absence might jeopardize peace-building moves. Moreover, the complexity, the number and diversity of parties who are involved in the conflict is a force to be reckoned with in problem solving (Jeff Conklin. http://www.cognexus.org/wpf/wickedproblems.pdf). The neutral professionals and mediators in this process employ the use of openended questionnaires to determine the willingness of disputants to participate in the dialogue and identify organizational handicaps that might impact on the success of any Sequential Interactive Forum process. Additionally, adequate analysis of parties and their affiliations and interests gives the mediators and professionals the knowledge base to advice parties on the viability and different approaches to their conflict. Scholars believe that at this stage "the group can then create a mission statement, frame the issues, and develop technical information that will guide the deliberation for a long time" (Susskind, McKearnan,& Thomas-Lamer, 1999). Problem solving or negotiations have failed primarily because professionals do not start by collecting and analyzing stake holder's data and information about the dispute. In unofficial interactive forum, experts consider stakeholder analysis as a continuing process until the end of the forum because of how it might influence the dynamics of the situation. Applied to the Niger Delta conflict, SIF will also recognize the equality of all parties in brainstorming and problem analysis aimed at uncovering the root causes of the on-going dispute.

Commitment to the process

One of the determining factors to a successful forum in Niger Delta will be the level of commitment invested in the process by the professional mediators and experts. Viable peace in the region is therefore possible if the facilitators are well dug-in in the process. This commitment is necessary to move the sequential forum forward taking cognizance of the cost of abandoning the dialogue because of any flimsy reasons. In a complex and emotion-laden conflict like the Delta situation professionals are advised to put more time in the forum to show a high sense of

responsibility and determination to see the parties reach rapport by improving communication links. By engaging the stakeholders and encouraging continuing dialogue, communities of the Niger Delta and government officials alike, will find creative ways to resolve pertinent selected issues on the table. All parties to the forum may have different expectations about the length and outcome of the process. Therefore, the object of fruitful deliberation is not to achieve success at all costs, but a commitment to "modest expectation about what is achievable and what constitutes success" (Hampson, 1997, pp. 749-50). Some government orchestrated talks to resolve the dispute over resource distribution failed partly because officials lacked the knack and dexterity to dig in to the end. Hampson notes "lack of 'staying power' or inability to muster the resources that are needed to build a secure foundation for settlement or some process of inter-communal re-conciliation" (Hampson, 1997, 749). While staying committed to help disputants is emphasized, the professionals should not place the goals so high or low so as to attract criticism and give the other party impetus to withdraw when the assignment is almost done. Unlike any government organized meeting or conference, SIF provides all parties the opportunity to vent emotion, save face, reframe the issues in conflict and make suggestions about how to stop the violence in their communities.

Ethical challenges during the process

Third party professionals facilitating Sequential Interactive Forum in Niger Delta will be confronted with the issue of ethical behavior. Professionalism demands that parties be treated with utmost respect, fairness and equality without any sign of favor. We are aware of the controversy in the field of conflict resolution concerning whether a mediator or professional should remain "neutral" or "impartial". An overview of states' code of ethics in some American states by McCorkle (2005, 170) informs, "Neutrality refers to the relationship that the mediator has with the participants. If the mediator feels, or any one of the parties or their attorneys states that the mediator's background or personal experiences would prejudice the mediator's performance, the mediator should withdraw from mediation unless all parties agree to proceed." While we try to avoid the "murky" waters of ethical ambiguity in conflict resolution, we prefer to use the word "impartiality" in this process that according to Cohen and his colleagues means "unbiased relationship with each disputant" (Cohen, et al.1999, 342 as cited in McCorkle, 2005, 166).

The problem solving Forum shall be composed mainly experts whose ethnic identities are impartial in the eyes of all participants. Pertinently, and as practitioners share information with parties, great emphasis is placed on confidentiality. This is a prerequisite for building trust among participants. No confidential information will be disclosed without the permission of the party concerned. Because the forum will concentrate in leading the parties to understanding their dispute and restoring relationships, documents that parties will like to keep confidential will not be discussed.

In view of the intractability of the conflict in the Niger Delta, these professionals will also strictly avoid any conflict of interest at any stage of the forum. Problem-

solving experts and mediator assistants will therefore strive to avoid any dealing or relationship that might be misconstrued as biased behavior. Such unethical behaviors that will compromise or appear to compromise third parties' impartiality are capable of constipating the harmonious flow of the interactive exchange between stakeholders. The process will be harmonious and free of acrimony when third party professionals declare early on any relationships and connection they might have with the parties and their representatives that will raise eyebrows during the forum. Sequel to this the parties will therefore decide whether to continue the deliberation or not, in order to maintain the integrity of the forum.

Analysis and Conclusion

The Niger Delta conflict exposes weakness in the capacity of institutions and the state to manage such intractable violence. The obvious of these weaknesses is the state's reactive, rather than proactive efforts. Despite warning signs of environmental disaster, poverty and underdevelopment with the probability that it will lead to violence, the military dictators and successive governments in Nigeria did not do much to avert conflict. In order to become proactive, government and politicians should have to change their policies of "piece meal" and militaristic approaches to conflict management. The hostilities generated by human suffering, casualties and disruption of means of subsistence as a result of the activities of warlords and government armed forces, further complicate any moves to bring parties to a problem solving table. It is therefore necessary that the government engage the warlords and community leaders constructively to identify solutions to the ongoing violence in the Niger Delta.

Successful resolution of the Niger Delta conflict requires a more effective and pragmatic decision making procedure which prevents citizens from trying to resolve disputes through violent means, and increase the pressure on the state government to respect the human rights and demands of the citizens. This article, suggests the potential and relevance of Sequential Interactive Forum as an approach to resolving the Niger Delta conflict. I am sure that the institutionalization and application of SIF will help illuminate contours and underlying causes of the violence, as well as become a template for addressing ethnic groups' demands in the country. The effectiveness of the model might mean a lot for Nigeria and other societies in Africa experiencing protracted conflicts. In fact, it is my belief that most of the frenzied or ad-hoc attempts by successive military regimes in the country to manage the conflict were merely cosmetic and, as a result, exacerbated the violence.

Sequential Interactive Forum will be effective when combined with coaching in conflict resolution skills, cultural competency and commitment of the facilitators and stakeholders to the process. As a problem-solving instrument, it will help disputants and stakeholders to address the attendant persistent and regularized patterns of interaction that characterized the conflict through unfettered dialogue

sequentially organized. This includes de-institutionalizing the conflict, fraught with moral sanctions, norms and other inimical cognitive behaviors used by various communities and some government officials. The Niger Delta conflict did not start recently; it has lingered and simmered for years without being managed by government because of some military leaders exploiting it for their own benefits. Over time, the conflict has produced a toxic brew of emotions, hatred, stereotypes, prejudice, mistrust and enmity. These psychological backlogs of problems often left unresolved in any adversarial process block avenues to address problems in the region.

The strategy outlined in this article, if well conducted, can be useful in repairing strained ethnic groups' relationships and impaired lines of communication links between different competing groups on one hand, and with government officials on the other hand. This is a critical necessary step towards managing the dispute effectively.

Analysis of the conflict from the socio-psychological level has shown that the violence in the region stems from the episodes of structurally-based disparities institutionalized in the society, and denial of people's basic human needs (Burton, 1979). This point of view also reflects the opinion of other scholars who believe that such a conflict has root in structure-based inequalities that worsened the living conditions in the oil producing areas. These types of depraved conditions in a multiethnic community often "give rise to psychological processes including destructive inter-group ideologies" (Staub, 1999 as cited in Christe, 2007, 7). The most difficult conflicts to resolve are those involving competing ethnically legitimated claims to the same resources and land, as in the case of the Urhobo and Ishekiri conflict mentioned in this article. However, the existing claims of land or more oil resource rent in the Niger Delta does not account for the magnitude of the human carnage and devastation that has occurred. This is attributed to the establishment of ethnically defined administrations in Nigeria that failed to recognize ethnic minority communities as equal partners in the democratic process.

The Sequential Interactive Forum can be a much more useful tool to encourage indept analysis of the conflict, and explore alternative solutions to the needs and demands of the various communities in the oil-producing area. These techniques and other professional skills of the appointed third parties will also encourage the acknowledgement of parties' negative cognitive perceptions (Lewicki, et al. 2003), norms and moral sanctions that were applied over time in the conflict, and help them change their attitude towards each other. Pertinently, the stakeholders are facilitated to diffuse emotions, and reduce stereotyping each other, and see commonality in their vulnerability in the conflict. The ongoing violence, human carnage, and economic sabotage in the form of oil pipe disruption and kidnapping of oil company workers in the creeks is taking its toll on the economic development of the country and global oil supplies.

The Niger Delta conflict resembles the proverbial small finger stained by palm oil that might spread to the other four fingers. To avoid the spread of this conflict, honesty and accountability in leadership are needed for managing oil revenues and dealing with the people's agitation. Nigeria is at a crossroads in history and citizens' expectations have never been so high. The literature suggests that conflict in itself is not bad, and people need not avoid it or pretend it does not exist. It only signals that something is wrong in our relationship with others. For visionary leaders, conflict could mean an opportunity to be creative and reason with other stakeholders to face a particular challenge. This common venture could be "a superordinate goal." The existence of a common goal based on a common interest may be useful in preventing conflict escalation if such goal is valid, valued highly by all the stakeholders, urgent, demanding of immediate action, and worthy of joint efforts.

In Nigeria, there may be many definitions and assumptions about what kind of super-ordinate goal is acceptable to all. Some people might consider economic development for Niger Delta communities and the country as a whole to be a primary goal. However, for others, economic development stops short of having sufficient motivating power to stop agitations because such development is nothing new in Nigeria. Another example of a common goal might be to preserve national unity. This also might raise the dust of controversy in some regions... though it is a salient point. Successive governments in the country have over 'flogged' the issue while at the same time perpetuating conflict to divert attention from failures in leadership and from intractable social and economic problems (see Richardson and Wang, 1992).

Irrespective of how the disputants and government define the conflict in the oil-producing region, it is very clear that the majority of Nigerians would like a government which is sensitive to and will guarantee the satisfaction of peoples' basic human needs. This might be a 'super-ordinate goal', which has been lacking in the country since independence. Resolving the Delta conflict, will involve taking steps to disrupt different cognitive interpretations of the situation, which means giving up culturally accepted meaning systems and practices that tend to distance and marginalize ethnic groups in the region. It will also mean relaxing the coercive use of force and other adversarial methods that block the exploration of alternative behavior (Gray, et al. 2007).

This study has shown that Nigeria faces the grim conflict of resource distribution. The prevalent and endemic poverty, ecological disaster and youth frustration, especially at a time of huge financial windfall because of high oil sales shall continue to be a mobilizing force for the communities and militant groups agitating for oil resource ownership. The emotional climate in the Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole will not be diffused so easily without participants sitting together to reframe issues of "derivation" as a strategy of oil wealth distribution and also the burning question of citizenship in Nigeria. These two key issues cannot be disregarded, as their resolution will determine the unity of the country and will

continue to generate further discussion among scholars and policy makers alike. Studying the Niger Delta conflict, I have recognized that this conflict has the propensity or potential to threaten the federal structure of Nigeria and spark off a wider ethnic conflagration if it is not resolved. Any escalation will attract the presence of the international forces to protect free flow of crude oil to the market, a situation Nigeria would not like to witness at this time.

This justifies the suggestion of a process of problem solving facilitated by neutral, multicultural competent professional third parties as a plausible panacea for the Niger Delta conflict. The third party in this process should be persons with great negotiation skills, prestige and knowledge about the conflict, and commanding certain social and political strength and commitment in resolving the conflict. SIF will be successful when the third party facilitators come from Nigeria and not from outside the country because of the complexity of the conflict. Instead, Nigeria has to look within and select men and women of wisdom from both sides of the conflict, capable of examining situations objectively from different perspectives without bias. Although this method is not flawless, if applied, it will offer Nigerians the opportunity to explore some of the main issues in the conflict, for example, issues of oil rent ownership, resource distribution in Nigeria, and the environmental pollution problem caused by oil extraction and spillages in the Niger Delta.

The attractiveness of SIF as a conflict resolution method has been presented in this article as a stepping-stone towards developing a pragmatic tool for helping communities and leaders analyze conflict and come out with creative solutions themselves. The process will inspire political leaders, militant warlords and the Delta community to loosen their cognitive barriers by permitting a shift in how they perceive the others, especially those tagged and marginalized as "non-indigenes". The pre-negotiating forums will be suitable template to address these and other institutionalized behavioral issues that might be a cog-in-the-wheel of problem solving. This is because the forums offer an environment for parties to save face and discuss without fear and intimidation.

While conceding that the successive regimes that ruled this country for more than two decades have done something to appease the oil producing communities, the strategies used were adversarial. The shortcoming of adversarial methods is that they do not address the emotional problems of the parties, nor give equal hearing to all the stakeholders. This often leads to a win-lose situation where one party tends to dominate the process because of its position of power and resources. The outcomes of tribunal inquiries, court actions, and official inquiries initiated by governments in Nigeria were never satisfactory nor were they able to meet the demands of the communities because of corruption, and politicized ethnicity. Since the Niger Delta conflict could not be resolved through official conferences, litigation, by the use of force, SIF as an alternative strategy is hereby suggested to stem further human carnage in this oil-producing region. Past efforts to convene national discussions on the fate of the Federation of Nigeria and oil resource distribution failed even before it began. The failure was because of lack of analysis

of the causes of conflict, poor communication, poor stakeholders' participation, corruption and to an extent cultural insensitivity.

Since independence, Nigerians have never had any responsible and meaningful dialogue with their leaders that would establish trust or even permit "verbalizing unexpected expectations" from different cultural and ethnic groups. This prosperous African country needs an "interactive democracy" that offers citizens, policy-makers, the media, civil society, and elected officials the equal chance for a healthy and sincere exchange, especially when it comes to decisions affecting peoples lives, basic needs, and security. The common practice of muzzling communities' voice and neglect of their demands for justice, and equality in the present dispensation is a denial of people's inalienable basic needs, and a precursor for ethnic conflict (Burton, 1970, 1979).

From the perspective of governance and conflict resolution, the policies of Olusegun Obasanjo and President Umaru Yar'Adua's governments have failed to reverse the top-down strategy of addressing social grievances, which has affected the emotional health of Nigerian citizens. Nigeria needs governance with responsibility and commitment that will restore people's confidence in their leadership. A responsive government geared towards alleviating poverty, providing education, basic infrastructures and jobs for youths is needed in the Niger Delta and in the country as a whole. To resolve conflict effectively Nigeria needs leadership and governance that strictly adheres to the democratic principle of dialogue and equal participation in decision-making. This kind of leadership and governance does not come easily but should be negotiated, tested and adjusted to the Nigerian realities. Sequential Interactive Forum (SIF) equally provides opportunity for Nigerians to discuss questions of good governance and political decision-making reforms, which will prevent conflicts in the Niger Delta and other parts of the country. Convening SIF today will leave the impression of an "open door" democracy where citizens freely sit down face to face to settle their differences nonviolently.

In this study, the brief historical overview of the Niger Delta region and its cultural diversity accentuates the need for a model of conflict resolution that will analyze and identify various cultural assumptions about choice and decision, the process of adapting to intercultural stress and choice of areas of deliberation. The importance of combining cultural competency to the model of problem solving stems from the belief that the success of the process will be great as a result of mutual knowledge of values and origins in relation to the cultures of the participants, which is an important ingredient for building trust and confidence.

The Nigeria government seems overwhelmed by the conflict in the Niger Delta because the conflict has defied all mechanisms to manage it. The weakness of different institutions of mediation like the judiciary and police and other security apparatus, because of favoritism and corruption, poses a great security problem for the country, and has equally exposed the bankruptcy of conflict management

capabilities. Nigeria should undertake an urgent review of these institutions and adjust them to meet basic human needs of the citizens in order to avoid disintegration. The reality of the country's multiethnic composition is enough to sensitize the leadership to a) see the challenges posed by the Niger Delta conflict as an opportunity to change its militaristic and adversarial politics that negate problem solving and b) embrace more collaborative decision-making policy that empower citizens' partnership with oil resource management in Nigeria.

The Sequential Interactive Forum does not replace functions of other institutions of democracy. Instead, its application is complementary and introduces new ways to interact and resolve conflicts in a democratic dispensation to avoid conflict. While studies on problem solving or conflict resolution will remain the concern of scholars in years to come, application of Sequential Interactive Forum process will be a template for creating a culture of peace in Nigeria and other developing countries.

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Albino Killings in Tanzania: Implications for Security

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ALBINO KILLINGS IN TANZANIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY

Introduction

'Like a hunted animal run to ground, the little girl was cornered. Branded a 'ghost' on account of her striking white skin, Mariam Emmanuel had been chased through her village, in a remote corner of Tanzania, by a bloodthirsty mob. Exhausted and terrified, the five year old slumped in the dust at the end of an alley. She whimpered and cowered while the adults surrounded her and sharpened their knives and machetes.

Then they set to work, butchering her and dividing her remains between themselves. She was killed like an animal, by grown men who showed no compassion for another human being. Mariam's crime? She was an albino (see Malone, 2009).

The above paints a gory and vivid picture of a worrisome and sullying trend which is the killing of albinos in Tanzania, an East African country located on the Indian Ocean, bordered on the north by Uganda and Kenya, on the west by Burundi, Rwanda and Congo, and on the south by Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi. According to 2009 estimates, Tanzania has a population of about 41 million. It is relatively a peaceful country having been spared from the spate of violent conflicts witnessed by its neighbors like Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Congo.

Beyond infringing on their fundamental human rights as enshrined in Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the scale of the ongoing atrocities being leveled against albinos in Tanzania today, if left unchecked, may soon qualify as the first campaign of genocide in the 21st Century.

By definition, an albino is a person with a pale skin, eyes and hair as a result of genetic condition that impairs normal skin pigmentation. Albinos are often shunned as outcasts and some of them die of skin cancer before the age of 30 (Garcia, 2008). Albinism is a genetic deficiency of melanin pigment production. Melanin production is rarely totally absent but perhaps 1 to 10% of normal. It is usually inherited as a recessive condition (Draper, 2009). Albinos are easily identified with their pale white skin and since it is a hereditary condition, it means that it is a condition that one cannot control. At least, there is no vaccine yet for the prevention of albinism in human beings.

Albinos in Tanzania are a vulnerable group of people who are under the threat of extinction as they are being killed with impunity, based on the belief that the potion made from their body parts can bring good luck, wealth and success. This has sparked angry protests, condemnations and outcries by the citizens who perceive that the government's response to the threat against the lives of the albinos are inadequate as the number of trials and convictions have not been commensurate with the number of killings. The phenomenon is also attracting international attention as there is a public and international outcry against it. This means that efforts need to be intensified both locally and internationally to check the scourge.

In early 2009 during a visit to the country's capital, the United Nations Secretary General: Ban Ki Moon decried the killings and conveyed the United Nations condemnation of same.6 However, much more than condemnations and outcries are needed to address the issue of these killings which constitute serious crimes. It will go a long way if proper attempts are made at tackling the root causes of the problem.

The importance of the paper topic stems from the fact that security is central to the study of international relations and has been defined in different ways. Mostly, security is equated with the safety of the state from attack, with the possibility of war and with questions relating to the threat, actual use and management of military force (Terriff, *et all*, 1999, 179-181). These were the traditional angles to security studies; and considerations for the study of security in the Cold War era where most armed conflicts were inter-state in nature.

With the end of the cold war, security has been viewed as being much more complex than this traditional angle to it. There is no agreed definition yet on the concept of security in the post-Cold War era.

According to Buzan who outlined 12 definitions of security, the concept defies the pursuit of an agreed upon definition and has been viewed as one of the most ambiguous and value-laden terms in social science. He developed the concept by arguing for a broader understanding of it based on the contention that human

collectivities are affected in 5 sectors viz: military, political, economic, social and environmental. For instance, the military sector to which the traditional angle of the study of security is based on is concerned with the 2 levels of interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states and perceptions of each other's intentions. He suggested that security is integrative and a comprehensive understanding must include all levels and sectors (Buzan, 1991, 19-20). Some other scholars view the concept of security from an individual point of view. This signaled a change from the traditional state-based formulations of security focusing on the individuals need to be made safe; it broadened the question of what is to be secured.

Peace studies in its contemporary variants focuses on the security of the individual, pointing to class and economic disparities within the global system as core issues which need to be addressed if positive peace is to be achieved. Some perspectives under individual security argue that it is violence that individuals need to be protected against. Be it organized violence such as that used by the state, structural or criminal violence, (albino killings fall under criminal violence) the emphasis on violence provides a link to those state centered perspectives that focus their concern on the need to protect the state against violence (Terriff, *et all*, 1999, 179-181).

Other perspectives, however, argue that the individual may be harmed by more than just violence and that they need to be secured in their health as well as from being economically, politically and socially marginalized and be free from oppression (Ibid). The killing of albinos places a restraint on the social aspects of their existence because the people now live in dread. This is a form of oppression against a group of people for the mere fact of skin color, and it needs international collaboration and cooperation to curb it. This human angle focuses on the protection of the vital core of individuals' lives from critical and pervasive threats as opposed to the traditional concept of security that focused mainly on external threats and more specifically on external military threats. This protection of the vital core of individuals' lives hinges on the fact that people are threatened by events well beyond their control as is the case with the albinos who are born with such condition.

The traditional and individual arguments on security are not the only arguments or schools of thought on security. Environmentalists amongst so many others have also come up with the notion of environmental security.

However, for the purposes of the paper, albino killing is a topic that falls under the individual (human) aspect of security. In this regard therefore, the paper agrees that the notion of security focused on military balances and capabilities need to be broadened to include safety from chronic threats like hunger, disease, repression and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily life.

Causative Factors and Trends in Albino Killings in Tanzania

Since 2007, over 50 albinos have lost their lives in Tanzania. The victims were caught, mutilated and their organs and body part harvested and sold to witchdoctors. Relatedly, dead albinos have been exhumed from their graves in order to make use of their body parts (Kiishweko, 2008). Disgustingly, some parents have been accused of complicity in the crimes even against their own children. Some families see albinos as the result of a curse placed on such families and these acts reduce them to animals that can be butchered at will (O'Toole, 2009).

The belief in curses accounts largely for the killing of albinos in Tanzania. Like many other African states, Tanzania is still largely steeped in traditional and superstitious beliefs though many of the citizenry adhere to the Christian and Islamic religious faiths. In the Mwanza, (Magabe, 2009; The Task.net, 2010) Shinyanga, (Tamric Agency, 2000) and Mara regions notorious for albino killings, the people are largely religious and adhere to traditional, Islamic and various sects of the Christian religion but are still very rooted in superstitious beliefs. This paper intends to inspire further research into the nexus between religion and human security in Africa.

Apart from superstitious rationalizations, the trade in albino body parts also represents a very lucrative enterprise. Body parts from an albino are said to fetch thousands of dollars (Magram, 2009). Given that Tanzania is a poor country, the trade in Albino body parts presents itself as an alternative way of making quick money. This "get rich quick" syndrome shows that people do not want to do regular jobs through which they will save but want quick fixes where money is concerned.

There are also indications that foreigners collaborate in and profit from these crimes in Tanzania. Some Kenyans, for example, were arrested in Tanzania in connection with the murder of albinos (Yusuf, 2008), suggesting that the slaughters may assume a regional dimension.

Nevertheless, the traditional witch doctors are fingered as being largely responsible for the killing of albinos in Tanzania. The witch doctors also direct the perpetrators on how to go about the killings, operating as the heads of gangs with middle men that help them carry out the killings in a loosely organized form of criminal activity.

The Mwanza region of Tanzania has not only witnessed the largest number of albinos murdered, it also contains 3,000 registered witch doctors, making it the region with the highest proliferation of witch doctors in the country (Mushi, 2009). Most of the people there earn their livelihoods in either the fishing or mining industries. As a largely rural region, with little or no contact with the more modernized urban centers of the country, Mwanza suffers extremely high rates of both poverty and illiteracy, with the people being rooted in traditional beliefs and more inclined to defer to the authority of witch doctors in explaining the sources of their hardships or misfortunes in their businesses (Magessa, 2008). A recent boom

in the fishing and mining industries has only bolstered their authority and the popularity of their albino potions (IDEAS, 2009, 20). Many fishermen and mineworkers viewed the boom as evidence of the potency of the witch doctors' potions. In turn, the demand for potion drives the demand for the albino body parts from which it is made.

The above buttresses the fact that superstitious beliefs in the rural areas largely account for the killing of albinos as the high number of killings portrays. These cultural undertones steeped in superstitious beliefs make it a difficult case for the police to effectively check as the police constitute part and parcel of the seemingly traditional and cultural belief systems; a system that is still relevant in spite of the presence of Islamic and Christian religions.

National Response to Albino Killings

In its attempts at curbing the incident of albino killings, the Tanzanian government banned and withdrew the licenses of traditional witch doctors from practicing. Further to the ban, many of the witch doctors have been arrested and some have been remanded in custody (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009). Subsequent to banning the witchdoctors, the Tanzania government has made the killing of albinos a capital crime and this has led to an exodus of some of the witch doctors to neighbouring countries like Burundi where they hope to reestablish their practices (Lugungulo, 2009).

Furthermore, in its bid to check the current wave of albino killings in Tanzania, President Jakaya Kikwete called on Tanzanians to make available any information they might have about the perpetrators of such acts. In a secret referendum, the government invited the citizens to write down the names of suspected albino killers. Such names were gathered and handed over to the police (European Union @ United Nations, 2008)

There are concerns that the process may be flawed and exploited. Innocent people could be framed up by their perceived enemies just to settle old scores. This calls for proper investigation with regards to the information given to the police.

The government also mobilized officers to draw up a list of people affected with albinism as a form of census (Auken, 2009). They also introduced police escorts for albino children and set up emergency hotlines and a program to distribute free cell phones to all albinos (Lapidos, 2009). However, the issue with the introduction of police escorts lies in its sustainability whereas that of the census is in its accuracy.

Al-Shaymaa J. Kwegyir, an albino woman, was sponsored by government and incorporated into the parliament in 2008 to show that albinos can live a normal life

like everyone else and she has been active in trying to find lasting solutions to the problem (Gettleman, 2009).

In September 2009, 3 men were sentenced to death for the killing of a 14 year old albino boy in December 2008 (Omolo, 2009). This is the first conviction and while some may see the death sentence as too harsh, it may help in deterring the murder of albinos.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Hundreds of Tanzanian albinos are being uprooted from their homes, creating disruptions in familial relations. In some cases, where women have been forced to choose between their albino child and their husband, it has divided and broken families. Whether for their own personal security or that of their child, many have chosen to flee from the remote parts of Tanzania to the country's urban centers. Others have sought refuge in neighboring countries such as Kenya and Burundi (Mango, 2008). Such refuge, however, has proven to offer little security. Not only have the murders of albinos been reported in both countries, but the murderers claim to have had ties to witch doctors back in Tanzania (Obulutsa, 2009). This clearly points to the fact that the killing of albinos for rituals, as well as profits, is spreading beyond the borders of Tanzania throughout East Africa and the Great Lakes region. As albinos and their families flee Tanzania to other countries, the organized criminal gangs follow them, like predators following the vast herds of zebra and wildebeest across the African plains. This defeats the point of seeking refuge (Natukunda and Ngatya, 2008).

While strict prosecution and stiff sentencing of the murderers of albinos might help deter some of the killings, the government of Tanzania must do much more. Greater accessibility to education in the nation's rural areas could play a pivotal role moving people away from the various forms of irrational belief that help drive the ritual practice of killing albinos for their body parts. Public enlightenment strategies to deal with the issue and sensitize the populace should be strengthened. But there is no denying the fact that it will take more than awareness and education to stop superstitious discrimination and stigma. It is a challenging task to completely filter out the more destructive and dehumanizing elements of peoples' cultural backgrounds and belief systems. Good governance that will cater for the basic needs of its people should also be encouraged. Tanzania is a poor country where 36% percent of its citizens live below the poverty line. Thus, the government needs to do much more to deal with poverty, unemployment and illiteracy as it will go a long way in deterring people from resorting to a life of crime such as the killing of albinos.

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Barriers to Inclusion of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

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BARRIERS TO INCLUSION OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

Introduction

Changing demographics predict that by 2040, more than half of the K-12 school population in the U.S. will be from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) populations increased diversity has meant that a significant number of students speak a first language (L1) other than English. Researchers have noted that despite these changing demographics, there is a dearth of research about culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students and disparity in providing appropriate education for these students (Leake & Black, 2005; Falconer, 2005 & Brynes, 2003). There is even less scholarship about CLD students with disabilities.

While it is a given that all students with disabilities have to overcome significant challenges not faced by their peers without disabilities, these challenges are especially difficult for students with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds. Therefore, when compared to non-CLD students with disabilities, the CLD students with disabilities are more likely to face barriers to success based upon language and social differences, negative effects of having grown up in poverty, and difficulty processing 'standard English' oral and written information, all of which contribute to their risk of school failure (Leake & Cholymay, 2004; Greene & Nefsky, 1999). It has also been argued that students with disabilities comprise a CLD group whose members, like members of other minorities, are often stereotyped and subjected to negative perceptions and low expectations. From this perspective, many CLD persons with disabilities face a double burden of discrimination (Fine & Asch, 1988).

Sonia Neito (1996) writes that educational equity can be framed in terms of both equal opportunities and outcomes, including both the contexts in which students participate in educational experiences and the extent to which those experiences enable their academic growth. Therefore, it is imperative that we recognize not only the dearth of research in the area of educating CLD students without disabilities, it becomes even more important to recognize the needs of educating CLD students with disabilities and to challenge some of the special education polices for their inherent exclusionary practices (Ferri & Connor, 2005). Only then can we aim to educate "all" children for participation in democracy (Giroux & Schmidt, 2004; Furman and Shields, 2003). In this article, I outline the major challenges faced by CLD students with disabilities and how these challenges create barriers to school success and prevent success after school. It is therefore imperative to interrupt these practices and to furnish a different "way of talking that can unpack, inform, critique but still imagine what could be" (Fine, 1991, p. xiii) in education of CLD students.

Equity and the Challenges Faced by CLD Students with Disabilities

As this population grows nationally (Census, 2000), many CLD students exhibit significant needs that can impact school success including: low socio-economic status, English as a second language, disabilities, first generation to consider postsecondary education, and cultural/familial differences. These concerns become monumental tasks to overcome for many of the CLD students with disabilities. The barriers to success for the CLD students have also acquired a new intensity and urgency, particularly in light of: 1) the increased competitiveness caused by globalization and pluralism of Western industrialized societies; 2) the increased diversity in school populations (Furman and Shields, 2003; Goldring & Greenfield, 2002); 3) the inadequate preparation of teachers to meet the needs of CLD students (Carrol, 2003); and 4) the achievement and economic gaps between mainstream and CLD students with and without disabilities (Coleman, 1990; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Valenzuela, 1999). To further complicate this, the National Longitudinal Transition Study found that compared to non-CLD students with disabilities, the CLD student with disabilities achieve significantly poorer transition outcomes, lower employment rates, lower average wages, and lower postsecondary education participation rates (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). As a result, these barriers for the CLD student with and without disabilities make the concepts of equity, social justice and democracy even more important concerns in schooling and education.

Over-representation of CLD Students in Special Education

One of the most complex issues in the field of special education today, and has been a concern for nearly four decades, is 'disproportionality' which refers to the 'overrepresentation' and 'under-representation' (e.g., gifted programs) of a particular demographic group in special education programs relative to the presence of this group in the overall student population. The recent reiteration of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1997, the IDEA of 2004 legislation attempts to address this need by requiring that all States must develop a plan, establish targets and meet them in the provision of a free appropriate education, general supervision, transition services, and address the disproportionate representation of CLD students in special education or who are identified as special education students. It has also dictated that Nondiscriminatory Assessment be conducted with CLD students in consideration for Special Education services. However, when it come to the CLD student population, they continued to be over identified and placed in special education at rates that are significantly higher than the overall national rate. In additional, appropriate culturally relevant assessment tools have yet to be developed.

In an effort to identify factors related to disproportionality, researchers have examined relationships between the school district or student and family characteristics and special education enrollment (Artiles, 2003). One of the correlates to disproportional over-identification in the literature suggests: the levels of poverty in the school district (Coutinho, Oswald, Best, & Forness; Donovan & Cross, 2002), including the level of White poverty (Eitle, 2002); percentage of CLD teachers (Serwatka, T., Deering, S., & Grant, P., 1995), teacher credentials and student-teacher ratios (McDermott, 1994); and school desegregation politics (Eitle, 2002). This disproportionality exists in various forms and at different levels and can be present in any or all of the following ways (NICHCY, 2007):

- National, state, and district level over-identification of CLD students as disabled;
- Higher incidence rates for certain CLD populations in specific special education categories, such as mental retardation or emotional disturbance;
- Significant differences in the proportion of CLD students who are receiving special education services in more restrictive or segregated programs;
- Excessive incidence, duration, and types of disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions, experienced by CLD students.

There is further documented evidence pointing to the over-representation of academically low achieving CLD students that are disproportionally placed in special education (Daunic, Correa, and Reyes-Blanes, 2004). For example, in 1992, Black students accounted for 16% of the total U.S. population, but represented 32% of students in programs for mild mental retardation (Burnette, 1998). Yet, relatively little is known about the percentages of CLD and ELL students in special education, however, recent research points to a greater chance of placement in more segregated educational settings than did their peers. These inequities are troubling

and suggest that CLD students who are placed in special education classes have restricted access to general education and miss important opportunities to interact with peers who can provide appropriate language models for English language development.

Additional factors in the overrepresentation of CLD students in special education, include the racialized notions of ability (Ferri & Connor, 2005), as well as, the growing injustices in schools, i.e., national policies of accountability, high stakes standardized testing (Hursh, 2008), No Child Left Behind (Gabbard, 2004; Macrine, 2004); and the neoliberal polices of privatizing, downsizing and retrenchment (Pothier and Devlin, 2006; Furman and Shields, 2003; Larson & Ovando, 2001; Macedo, 1994).

Inclusion

While persons with disabilities are marginalized, the intent of reasonable accommodations continues to be misunderstood, and the existence of the CLD group with disabilities in education is barely acknowledged (Rocco, 2002). Inclusion is supposed to provide equity and access for all students with mental and physical disabilities, both academically and socially, in the general education classroom but for the CLD student the likelihood of being included is difficult for a number of reasons.

Historically, disabled students were segregated and, mostly, housed in institutions. A policy shift toward more options for inclusion for special needs students, who were denied access to the mainstream, came about through concerted efforts by parents, legislators (Miller, Strain, Boyd, Hunsicker, & Wu, 1992), and professional organizations (Division for Early Childhood, 1993). In 1975, Congress had determined that millions of disabled students were still not receiving an appropriate education, noting that more than half of the handicapped students did not receive the services which would enable them to have equal opportunity (EAHCA, 1998) To fix this situation Public Law 94-142 of 1975 was passed, providing all students with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and funding for disabled students in Least Restrictive Environments (LRE) in special education programs.

Mainstreaming was adopted in an attempt to keep the LRE requirement in P.L. 94-142 and included disabled students participating in the nonacademic portions of the general education curriculum (CEC, 2003). Students with special needs would receive their academic instruction in special classes and would spend lunch, art, recess, etc... with their non-disabled peers. However, advocates for special education noted that mainstreaming provided far too little regular instruction, support, or accommodations for students with special needs (CEC, 2003).

In response, legislation called the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997," or IDEA 97 (now Public Law 105-17) stated that students could not be excluded from the regular education classrooms because of their disabilities. The law requires that a continuum of services be made available for every student (CEC, 2003). Out of this legislation the 'inclusion' of students with disabilities in regular classrooms in the least restrictive environments (LEA) evolved (CEC, 2003). Inclusion meant that there would be a commitment to every child, to the maximum extent, to be included in the classroom he/she would regularly attend (Stainback & Stainback, 1990) – rather than pulling out the child for these services. So, inclusion was supposed to encompass all of the needs of every student with disabilities within the regular classroom (Hollaway, 2001). However, there have been a number of problems associated with special education diagnosis and placement in inclusive classrooms based on race, class, and gender.

Exclusion of CLD Students

The disproportionate number of culturally and linguistically diverse students is among the most significant and intransigent problems of special education according to the National Research Council (2002). CLD students (particularly male) and poor students are over-identified as having special needs, including: Learning Disability (LD), Mild or Moderate Mental Retardation (MMR) or Emotional Disturbance (ED), and as a result, they are then easily deemed inappropriate for inclusion. Disabled students of color also experience inadequate special education services, low-quality curriculum and instruction, and unnecessary isolation from their non-disabled peers (Johnson, 2004). Moreover, inappropriate practices in both general and special education classrooms have resulted in overrepresentation, misclassification, and hardship for CLD students, particularly black children (NRC). The continued significance of race as a predictor of special education disability identification, regardless of controls for a variety of other variables, leads to the contention that the process of special education referral and identification remains discriminatory (Ladner & Hammons, 2001; Losen & Orfield, 2002).

To achieve success many CLD students have to learn cues and have middle-class experiences in order to have school success (Grant & Sachs, 1995). CLD students, it seems, must transform cultural struggles to coincide with rules of existing institutional arrangements. In other words, the multicultural student must appropriate the ways of the dominant culture in order to survive. Indeed, the current American educational system serves primarily only to prepare middle-class children to participate in their own culture (Macrine, 2006; Saville-Troike, 1991; McLaren & Lankshear, 1993; Giroux, 1994), thus inadvertently subordinating other cultures not of the same ilk. Consequently, the quality of education that marginalized students receive can be predicted based upon gender, race, parents' income and

social class. The few students that succeed do so in spite of our educational agendas.

Social class or economic status also plays a significant role in over-representation of CLD students in special education. It follows that CLD students are disproportionately poor, and poverty is associated with higher rates of exposure to harmful toxins, including lead, alcohol, and tobacco, in early stages of development. Poor children are also more likely to be born with low birth-weight, have poorer nutrition, and environments less supportive of early cognitive and emotional development than their majority counterparts. The 18th Annual Report on Special Education to Congress suggested that poverty, and not ethnicity, is the most important factor influencing disproportion. Oakes and her colleagues explored how assumptions about race and class pervade school-based notions of ability as she quotes one teacher," We all know that [tracking] has been a masquerade....for institutional racism" (Oakes, Wells, Jones, & Datnow, 1997, p. 482).

Since the NCR report, much has changed in both general and special education. The proportion of CLD students in special education has risen dramatically—to 35 percent in 2000 and an associated increase in the number of children served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Many more of these students are receiving special education and related services in general education classrooms. Therefore, race, class and gender play an important role in the construction of learning disabilities.

Segregation

To examine special education's exclusionary practices that segregate CLD studetns, we need to review the unfulfilled promises of two milestone pieces of legislation. Within the last five years, we have marked the 50th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education (1954) and the 30th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1975). The Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education (1954) decision concluded that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place and that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. However, the Supreme Court left two glaring holes – it did not abolish segregation in other public areas, (i.e., restaurants and restrooms), nor did it require the desegregation of public schools by any specific time. It did declare the mandatory segregation that existed at that time in 21 states, unconstitutional.

IDEA (1975), taking its cue from Brown v. Board of Education, was enacted to eliminate the public school segregation of children with developmental disabilities. Before Congress passed the IDEA, nearly half of the nation's approximately four million disabled children were not receiving a public education (Losen & Orfield, 2002). The most recent reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 highlights the complex and

contentious issues of over identification and the disproportion number of CLD students in special education.

The illegal practice of racial segregation in schools was challenged; and dividing students according to ability has become a normalized category of marginalization for CLD students (Ferri & Connor, 2003; Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995). Furthermore, CLD students are over-represented in 9 of the 13 disability categories, and are more likely than white students to be placed in highly restrictive (exclusionary) educational settings (Losen & Orfield, 2002).

While race and disability histories overlap, they are distinct and support inclusion without connecting it to racial integration (Ferris & Connor, 2003). For example, white privilege and racialized concepts of ability have historically masked racial segregation. Today, CLD students still face increased segregation, with most attending sub-standard schools in economically disadvantaged areas (Macrine, 2006; Orfield & Eaton, 1996). Brown V. Board of Education highlighted the fact that segregation was indeed harmful and unequal. Unfortunately, recent statistics are not encouraging and suggest that many gains in desegregation have been lost (Ferri & Connor, 2005). Despite the United States becoming more diverse, schools have become more racially/culturally segregated (Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003). The desegregation of CLD students and students of color, which increased continuously from the 1950s to the late 1980s, has now receded to levels not seen in three decades (Orfield, 2001). School desegregation and special education policies have both been criticized for contributing to two largely 'separate and unequal' school systems (Linton, 1998; Lipsky and Gartner, 1996).

Nearly 30 years after the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142), many disabled students, especially a disproportionate number of CLD students, remain separated from their peers because of culturally biased intelligence testing and unfair standardized achievement tests. According to Ferri and Connor (2003), overt racial/cultural segregating school practices have led to covert forms of racism, including some special education practices, for example, in the over identification of students of CLD students as disabled. Furthermore, racism and ability discourses have converged, permitting racial segregation to continue to exist under the guise of "disability." Ferri and Connor (2005) locate the over-representation of CLD students in segregated special education classrooms to the connected discourses of segregation and exclusion. Recent efforts to increase inclusion of disabled students in regular classrooms have resulted in similar resistance to school desegregation shortly after Brown. So even with the push for 'inclusion' practices the CLD students are still out in the cold.

Disability triggers cultural and racially disparate outcomes (Ferri & Connor, 2005). For white students, special education eligibility is more likely to guarantee access to extra support services, maintenance in general education classrooms, and accommodation for high-status examinations (Parrish, 2002). For CLD students, however, the opposite can be the case (Oswald, Coutinho, & Best, 2002; Parrish,

2002; Fierros, & Conroy, 2002; Osher, Woodruff, & Sims, 2002; Artiles et al., 2002). These different and disparate outcomes are particularly problematic given the disproportionate number of Black and Latino students identified as disabled and placed in highly segregated settings (Losen, & Orfield, 2002). The intertwined histories of school desegregation and special education, argue that race and disability should be understood as interactive social constructs and not distinct biological markers (Ferri and Connor, 2005). To address these concerns, it is appropriate for IDEA to give increased attention to racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity to prevent inappropriate overrepresentation or under representation of CLD children in special education.

Some overrepresentation of CLD students in special education may be due to the well-documented link between poverty and disability. However, overrepresentation of CLD students in some categories of disability significantly exceeds what would be predicted by the impact of poverty. Students must be served based on their educational needs. Since 1997, states are required to collect cultural/racial data and to intervene where overrepresentation is identified. Furthermore, there is no financial incentive in the law to over-identify students for special education. All students are required to have appropriate access to the general curriculum and to participate in local and state accountability systems.

Gender

Gender has been treated either as a non-issue or an organizational pathology in much of the disability literature (Blackmore & Kenway, 1995, p. 237). Black and Latino males are more than twice as likely as whites to be labeled mentally retarded (MR) in 38 states, emotionally disturbed (ED) in 29 states, and learning disabled in 8 states (Parrish, 2002). These labels continue to be overly ascribed to CLD students, particularly Black and Latino males (Osher et al., 2002). As a result, they are far more likely to be removed from regular classrooms (Fierros & Conroy, 2002). In analyzing nationwide data collected by the Office of Civil Rights, Parrish (2002) concludes that white students are generally, "only placed in more restrictive self-contained classes when they need intensive services. CLD students, however, may be more likely to be placed in the restrictive settings whether they require intensive services or not" (p. 26).

Cultural Politics

The socio-political context of education, particularly in light of the recent rise of the neoconservative tide, assumes that schools should produce human capital, while

legitimizing dominant definitions of knowledge and competence (Apple, 1996). Neoconservative reformers reason that, in an era of global competition, schools must produce skilled and competitive labor force. Implied in this position is that schools will have winners and losers (Apple, 1996; Varenne & McDermott, 1999). These polices have had dreadful consequences as they become embodied in what some call "backlash pedagogies" with little awareness of human capacities and possibilities (Gutierrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002).

As a result, schools and teachers have negative assumptions about students with disabilities in general and CLD students with disabilities in particular. Disability is currently seen as a medical condition that prevents students from achieving high academic standards. Viewing disability as a medical condition that exists within the individual student, leads to a pathological approach to assessment, diagnosis, prognosis and intervention as necessary to identify and manage the disability (Burden, 1996; Kriegler & Skuy, 1996; Archer & Green, 1996). In other words, the assumption is that we are already dealing with a defective individual who... is subjected to diagnostic classification, regulation and treatment (Slee, 1997). Adding to this notion of the defective individual, Naicker (1999: 13) states that the medical model constructs disability as an objective attribute, not a social construct and as a natural and irremediable characteristic of the person. The medical discourse model links impairment with disability and leads to exclusion because the persons with the disabilities are seen as inadequate human beings who are unfit to be included in mainstream economic and social life. (Naicker, 1999).

While some scholars address inclusion, their focus is on pluralism without examining the underlying power relations of how race, class, culture language and disability plays out in schools. Some disability educators have tried to address this concern (Johnson, 2004). Thousand et al. (1999) argue that Freirean perspectives can be used to promote inclusive education by eliciting voice from "students with special educational needs [who] often feel disempowered, disenfranchised, or silenced in school" (p. 324). Furman & Shields (2003), when critiquing the role of schools in perpetuating inequality, argue that: Injustice occurs when there is no space created into which students bring their lived experiences, their whole selves inquisitive worlds and the words, when some voices are silenced privileged (p. 17).

The interconnection of disability, race, class, gender, culture, language and sexuality is becoming more evident. Successful education of all students must based on the belief that, with commitment, all students can learn. Belief is not dictated by policy, it is based on experience, values, and a commitment to the success of all students (McGhie-Troff, 1999). By understanding the ways in which these identities/locations/markers are constructed and positioned within the social structure of the US, can help to create understandings of social, political, and economic inequality. The emphasis will be on investigating how the different systems of inequality interact with each other.

Conclusions

For full emancipation, the issues of the CLD student and the disability culture, overall, must be relieved of the assumptions that marginalize them (Galvin, 2005). The paradox of concerns for the CLD student and the disability culture may be stated as follows: How can we develop social justice models of equity and access regarding inclusive schooling for CLD students with and without disabilities without falling into the same exclusionary practices that have served to create our divisive identifications in the first place? Conversely, how can we relinquish the practices (Galvin, 2005) of over-identification without losing the ability to claim identities? I argue that by extricating disabilities and inclusive school practices from their origins in essentialist assumptions, disability culture and inclusive school practices can be reinvigorated and positively identified. Ultimately, creating educational experiences to educate "all" children to fully participate in democracy.

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Critical Race Practice in the Era of Standards-based Reform: The Story of One Elementary School

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CRITICAL RACE PRACTICE IN THE ERA OF STANDARDS-BASED REFORM: THE STORY OF ONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Introduction

I worked as an English-as-second-language (ESL) teacher at Southern Elementary (a pseudonym), a racially diverse school in a small, largely affluent district in suburban, central North Carolina during the 2006-2007 school year. Like much of the region, the district had experienced a rapid increase in its Latino immigrant population and thus an increased number of English language learners (ELLs) in schools. Perhaps the most striking phenomena in the district for me, however, was not the increased number of ELLs in the schools but rather the increased energy placed on standardized forms of assessment. I had taught in the district 5 years earlier, before the federal enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). After going back to graduate school, I returned to teach public school, this time after NCLB. I had studied racial disparity from critical race, sociological and ethnographic standpoints and was now returning to be a full participant in public schools; and I was returning highly attuned to the way in which racial disparity played out in schools. Very quickly I became aware of the barriers to an equal education, particularly for my Latino ELL students. I report on those barriers in another publication (Blaisdell, forthcoming), where I make the overarching argument that the increased standardization of curriculum and assessment can lead to school practices that marginalize Latino ELLs by increasingly segregating and remediating the education that these students receive.

In this article, I employ a critical race analysis to describe how schools that respond uncritically to standards-based reform create a school culture that perpetuates institutional racism. My analysis focuses on how this culture of standardization creates and/or bolsters racialized systems of categorization that affect students' access to an equitably rich and rigorous education. My understanding of the concept of systems of categorization comes from Delgado and Stefancic's (2000, 2001) discussions of structural determinism in law, where they describe how the categories that are created and used within social institutions function to maintain the status quo of those institutions. In education, like in law, current systems of categorization have limited educators in how they see both the causes of and solutions to racial disparity and have caused them to rely on practices that actually perpetuate that disparity. Just as Delgado and Stefancic (2000) believe that understanding these categories can us "escape their sway" (p. 213), I also describe how CRT enabled me to both see the marginalizing nature of these categorization practices and to begin to resist them. Perhaps more importantly, I use CRT—and particularly the analysis of property—to describe the efforts of two teachers who were even better able to resist those marginalizing practices. I end with a discussion how CRT helped these teachers and me discuss how to promote more racially conscious practices in a standards-based reform context.

Political and Critical Race Analyses

In their description of political race theory, Guinier and Torres (2002) describe how the effects of institutional racism on people of color can highlight social, institutional subjugation of people of all races. In an educational context, this can mean that analyzing the institutional marginalizing effects of certain school practice on students of color can actually point out how those practices actually harm all students. Toward that end, I use the analysis of the effects of standards-based reform on Latino English language learners (ELLs) at one elementary school to bring to light the detrimental effects of standards based reform more broadly. To focus on how this reform can particularly affect Latino ELLs, I use CRT. Specifically, property analysis helps me expose how institutional school practices that stem from a culture of standardization limit the access of Latinos ELLs to rigorous curricula.

Harris (1995/1993) discusses that one of the characteristics of property is that is bestows on people the right to use and enjoy certain privileges. Historically, the ownership of land afforded people certain rights of citizenship, such as the right to vote. These rights give people privileges and power that help them more easily acquire more property, a process that favors those with property over those without. When we look at curriculum as property, a similar process occurs. Students who score higher scores on standardized assessments are viewed to have acquired a certain "amount" of curriculum, i.e., a certain amount of property. This ownership gives them the right to use and enjoy more rigorous curricula. They have better access to more property because they are given better texts and complex learning activities, put into higher-level classes, and given gifted education services. Students like my ELL students, on the other hand, have not done well on those

assessments. In turn, they do not have the right to use and enjoy more rigorous curricula. In fact, the school has a "right to exclude" (Harris, 1995/1993) those students from such activities. Since they have not acquired certain amount of curriculum as determined by the standardized assessments, the school—following the institutionalized practices of the district—only gives them to a more limited type of curricula, a less valuable form of property.

The acquisition of curricular property is linked to whiteness. Harris' (1995/1993) article lays out how whiteness has the characteristics of property. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) summarize that article and describe that one characteristic of property is its alienability, or transferability. "When students are awarded only for perceived 'white norms' or sanctioned for cultural practices (e.g., dress, speech patterns, unauthorized conceptions of knowledge), white property is being rendered alienable" (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, 59). Those who "possess" whiteness have the rights to use and enjoy and to exclude; i.e., those who are either white or at least who adhere to white norms can access its privileges. Because of their racial privilege, whites have easier access to that curricular knowledge. Schools use systems of categorization that privilege white ways of knowing and white cultural practices, creating a "official knowledge" (Apple 2000) that is based on white culture, experiences and privilege and that fail to recognize the "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez 1992) that non-white students bring to school. Furthermore, these "unauthorized conceptions of knowledge" (Apple 2000) that Latino ELLs, for example, bring to school are not acknowledged by standardized assessments. The reliance on standardized assessments to gauge student knowledge compounds both the advantages whites have and the limitations put on non-whites. Below I use an analysis of curriculum as property that draws on the concepts of whiteness as property to show how Southern Elementary limited the access of Latino ELLs to an equitably rigorous and meaningful curriculum.

Such analysis can illuminate how some teachers effectively resist institutionalized racial inequity. By telling the story of two culturally responsive teachers at Southern, I show how CRT can highlight what is effective about teacher resistance to standardization. In addition to briefly describing how it helped me revision my own teaching practice during the school year, I show how CRT helped me talk with teachers about how to better resist a culture of standardization. In my interviews with the two teachers in this study, I used language from CRT to help identify and analyze both the barriers to racial equity and the practices that teachers can employ to promote racial equity. I make the conclusion that from such inquiry, education scholars can then work with teachers to construct counter-practices, practices that challenge the status quo of curricular distribution and racial disparity.

The data and quotes in this article come from three sources. First are my fieldnotes. During the school year, I carried a notebook to document my experience at Southern. I compiled these fieldnotes weekly. Second, I journaled several times a week, using both my fieldnotes and further reflections on what I experienced at school as a white, male teachers of Latino ELLs. This journal was shared and

revised with a colleague (a teacher and fellow academic) each week or two. Third, after the school year was over, I conducted a series of interviews with two teachers at Southern who I identified as being culturally responsive teachers. These interviews focused on what these teachers saw to be the barriers to racial equity, the impact of standardization, and the ways they were still able to work towards racial equity.

A Culture of Standardization

I started working at Southern in the Fall of 2006, four and a half years after the No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law. North Carolina schools had had a standardized assessment system in place, and I remember many of the regulations in place when I had taught at high school in the same district 5 years earlier. However, I was shocked (maybe naively) by the increased presence that standardized assessment had when I got to Southern. For the students this meant that many instructional activities were centered on specific curricular goals—often in isolation—from the standard course of study and were in the format closely linked to the state-wide end-of-grade (EOG) test. For my students, instruction was even more limited by those practices than the majority of their peers.

In the class I get the feeling that [two of the Mexican immigrant ELL boys] could really benefit from integrated, project-based activities. So much of their time scheduled for literacy is focused on reading out loud (guided reading), decoding words, answering pre-selected comprehension questions and making limited observations about the plot and characters of books. From my perspective there is little chance for them to think more globally or holistically about stories. What would really benefit these kids is gifted education. Because of being below grade level in reading, neither kid would test into gifted services. – Journal Entry, 12/7/06

When I contrasted those reading activities with those that students in higher level reading groups, I saw that those higher-level students not only read more difficult books, but that in their groups they had the chance to discuss the text more openly, make personal connections to the content, and have their book be linked more closely to other projects in the class, all practices that would actually benefit ELLs (Ovando, Combs and Collier 2006; Garcia 2002; Gibbons 2002). The teachers did not intentionally want to limit the time these two boys spent on more interactive activities that promoted higher-level thinking. However, by feeling the constraints of getting these students to perform well on the standardized assessments, they limited the students' access to such activities and to more rigorous curricula. As I

¹ This accountability system was called the ABCs. It was started in 1995 but was developed and delineated over the next several years (North Carolina's Department of Education website, accessed on June 17, 2008 from: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/abc/2006-07/abcevolution.pdf).

have written about in another piece (Blaisdell, forthcoming[a]), such a response to standardization can have the effect of categorizing Latino ELL students as remedial.

I fear that these boys are being ghetto-ized by the school—mostly unintentionally. What I mean by this is that they receive remedial (versus "gifted") instruction a lot of the time and the specialists and resource teachers that work with them work on basic skills. They are pulled from class to work on shorter reading passages that are not connected thematically or contextually to the rest of his instruction. In addition, they are in a more basic level math class... I feel that the instructional approach they receive unintentionally positions them as remedial students. Journal Entry, 1/7/07

By being categorized as remedial students—or "fragile learners"—my Latino ELL students were in essence denied the right to use and enjoy the privileges that those students categorized as higher-level readers could.

The Categorization of Students as "Fragile Learners"

The reliance on standardized assessments had a particularly negative affect on my students, as these tests did not adequately measure the academic abilities of ELLs. The teachers and administrators used the testing system to categorize my students as below grade-level. Furthermore, based on test scores, teachers at Southern often talked about both the Latino ELL students and the African American students as "fragile learners," a euphemistic term used by teachers at the school to describe students who did not do well academically. This type of categorization practice does not take into consideration how the institution itself prevents certain students from succeeding academically and perpetuates the further marginalization of students of color (Delgado and Stefancic 2001) because it influences teachers to limit the quality of education they are given access to. The students who were categorized as fragile learners at Southern received a markedly different education than their classmates did.³

I do not disagree that curricular standards can be used as a guide to help assure that students have access to an equitable education. However, I also believe there is a difference between having high standards and an over-reliance on standardization, especially when standardization is linked closely with high-stakes testing. By allowing academic rigor to be interpreted only as standardized lists of standards and indicators that can be quantifiably measured, educators participate in the creation in institutionalized practices that limit a more holistic view of quality education and make it easier for standardized high-stakes testing to be implemented. For example,

² Throughout the rest of the article I use the term without quotes but maintain an understanding of it as a highly problematic label.

³ While I discuss the educational practices for the Latino ELLs, many of the African American students received the same practices, particularly in terms of segregated and remediated instruction.

early in the school year at Southern, I received training in the standardized test that the district used to assess the English language proficiency of the ELL students, tests that were increasingly being used to make decisions about the ELL students' right to receive accommodations on end-of-grade tests and to track their academic progress.

In the training, we [teachers] were told that the test is valid because it has been researched. I believe the actual language used in the training meeting was "research shows"... Why is it that we—the ESL teachers and supposedly the experts on ESL teaching and assessment—do not also get access to the research that was used to make that determination. "Research" here is used as a tool of control. In a similar way, the word "expert" is used. "The tests were evaluated by a team of experts." We—apparently not the experts—are supposed to take this at face value. Journal Entry, 9/7/06

When such logic prevents teacher from being allowed to critically examine the standardization process, institutional practices can be put in place that negatively effect already marginalized students. Though not designed as summative assessments, these tests were being used more and more as indicators of the ELL's progress in the acquisition of English. When they did not make a certain amount of progress on those tests, the students were seen as fragile learners and the scores were often used as justification to place the students in lower level math classes and reading groups. This was just one example of how regulating access to curricula based on scores on standardized assessments can have a particularly negative effect on students who have not done well academically. In other words, these students, because they were categorized as fragile learners, received instruction that further limited their access to equitable curriculum and instruction.

Such practices did nothing to alleviate the academic achievement gap at Southern. A school with a little over 500 students, Southern had moderate racial diversity. 54% of the students were White, 23% African American, 16% Latino, and 4% Asian. In addition, 36% of the students were on free and reduced lunch. The ELL population was roughly 20%. The racial achievement gap on the EOG tests was large, especially in math. On the reading test 99% of the white students, 82% of the African American, and 80% of the ELL students passed, and on the math EOG 90% of the white students, only 33% of the African American students, and 52% of the ELL students passed. The following year, the percentage of ELL students passing the both the reading and math tests decreased significantly the, to 62% and 33% respectively. While not the only cause, I believe the over-reliance on standardized assessments did contribute to this academic disparity.

The negative effects of over-relying on standardized assessments were not just evident in the EOG tests. The report cards used for quarterly grades had become standardized as well, and there was a similar disparity in grades. All of the elementary schools in the district, including Southern, used a standardized report card. The structure of the report card did not easily allow the English language

proficiency of ELLs to be taken into consideration in assigning grades. For each content area that could affect grade level retention—reading, writing, and math at the time of the study—a student could receive a score from 1 to 4, with 3 and 4 being passing grades. For a student to get a 3 or 4 they would have to show mastery or near mastery of a list of skills. Teachers often used district-wide standardized assessments to determine the students' levels of mastery. As with the EOG tests, report card grades showed a substantial racial achievement gap, with it again being particularly acute in math. In reading, over 95% of white students were at or above grade level based on report card grades, while only 79% of African American, 78% of Latino, and 80% of ELL students were at or above grade level. In math, 88.0 of white students were at or above grade level. But only 33% of African American, 47% of Latino, and 52% or ELL students were at or above grade level.

Many ELLs, even though they might have improved dramatically throughout the grading period and might have shown the ability to perform those skills in contexts that were adequately and appropriately modified for the needs of ELLs, could not show mastery on the standardized assessments which were decontextualized and on which only basic accommodations were provided. Furthermore, they could not show mastery in the same way that the non-ELL population could. As was shown above, the report card results of the ELL students were substantially lower than those for the white students.

When I brought up this issue of the report cards with the principal, she told me that she understood the dilemma but that the district wanted to use the standardized grading practice so that they could tell where the students "actually are" in the skills as compared to other students and that it would not be used punitively against the students. However, when promotion decisions came around, the ELL students' low scores in fact were used punitively when classroom teachers, using the report card scores, would not recommend those students for promotion to then next grade level, and the principal herself often supported those decisions based on the same scores.

My Students – Remediation and Segregation

Let me briefly describe a typical day for my 3rd grade students so I can point out how they received less access to meaningful and rigorous curricula. The school day officially started at 7:50. For the first 10 minutes the students got their bags and folders organized, worked on worksheets and listened to morning announcements. At 8:00, they went to their specials classes (art, music, Spanish, or physical education depending on the day). At 9:00, they returned to their classroom and did individual work for an hour. Most often, this consisted of worksheets on literacy activities, usually reading. Occasionally they would write about a picture they drew

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⁴ I focus on the students on the third grade her because I had the largest number of Latino ELLs in that grade (I also worked with grade two through five) and it is in that grade where the biggest gap in achievement between the my students and the white students occurred.

using a sentence format presented by the teacher. At 10:00, all 3rd grade students went to leveled math classes for one hour. The levels of each class were determined by district-wide standardized tests (in English) on material that they would learn in the upcoming quarter (i.e., the students had not seen this material in class, yet). All of my Latino ELLs were in the lowest level math class. After math class, at 11:00, the students had break, returned to their regular classes to continue their individual work and got ready for lunch. They had lunch at 11:30 and then recess at 12:00. At 12:30, the 2-hour literacy block was supposed to start but the students rarely got to class before 12:45 and rarely started work until close to 1:00. It was during the literacy block where I was supposed to work with the students. I will describe their literacy activities more a little later on, but in addition to me working with the students at this time, the students who scored low on standardized reading tests were pulled out of class individually or in small groups (depending on their test scores) to work with a reading specialist, usually for 20 to 30 minutes. At 2:00, the students had either social studies or science for about 20 minutes.⁵ Then the students packed up their things and cleaned up for dismissal at 2:30.

Even though I have not given any detail on what occurred during the students' math class, literacy block or reading pull-out time, it should already be evident that the instruction my students received was limited in rigor. In effect, my students (and particularly my Latino students, who had lower test scores) did not have access to the same curriculum as most of the other students in class. None of the third grade teachers intentionally remediated instruction for these students. However, except for one teacher, they did rely heavily on standardized classroom assessments of their reading to determine what the students would read, what individual skills they would focus on, and the activities that they deemed the students were capable of handling.

In one class in particular, the class where I had a cluster of 7 Latino ELLs, this reliance on test-prep reading activities dominated the Latino ELLs' literacy block time in class. The usual routine was that the students completed worksheets connected to word-building textbook. After they completed these exercises—which used rhyming activities, guessing games, and fill in the blank passages to help kids recognize the new words for the chapter—the students could move to their book groups or independent reading. My Latino ELL students were either placed in their own book groups or in groups for students with the lower level scores on the periodic class assessments. In either case, they read easier books and were grouped with students who were less proficient readers according to test scores. In these groups, they completed activities that addressed basic, rather than advanced, literacy skills. These activities helped them advance their reading at a slow pace but they did not involve more integrated tasks—such as making connections between the texts and their lives or completing projects that would allow them to extend

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⁵ In the class with the biggest cluster of ELLs, the teacher assistant was put in charge of social studies because the teacher did not like the subject area.

their understand of the text⁶—and they did not help the students catch up to their white peers.

In contrast, the higher-level reading groups often had more open-ended discussions and more difficult questions about character motivation and author intention, and they often worked with a gifted education teacher on projects that connected their reading to other subject areas. Even when those higher-level groups had similar worksheets with basic questions, they often completed those worksheets quickly and were allowed to go onto independent reading of books of their choice. When my students had independent reading, they, too, were allowed to select their own books, but—as was the practice of the district-wide literacy program—their choice was controlled by the teachers, who only let them read books that matched the level they received on the periodic assessments. Research has been done about the need for ELLs to be challenged by higher-order thinking skills to learn best and about the importance of context-embedded text in to best scaffold their learning (Walqui 2006; Gibbons 2002; Cummins 2001). The leveled reading groups and the limited types of exercises that my students participated in did not follow this research. Rather, my students were, in effect, segregated from the rest of the class because they were categorized as lower-level readers, or fragile learners, based on standardized assessments.

As I mentioned above, the school did have reading teachers who worked with the readers who scored lower on the reading tests, and the stated goal of these teachers was to help students like mine catch up with their higher-scoring peers. While these teachers employed methods that have had success with ELLs (e.g., reading recovery), how they were employed in the school fed the culture of standardization and positioned the Latino ELLs as remedial. They worked with students who they and the classroom teachers determined to need the most help because they were either below grade level or because they were behind the other students in their classes. Again, this determination was made primarily based on the students' scores on standardized in-class assessments. While I believe it is commendable that a school would provide extra resources to help students who have had less success to improve, these reading teachers were not integrated into the classrooms in way that helped most of the ELLs to close the gap between themselves and their peers.

First of all, the students were pulled from class, often to work on books separate from what they rest of the class was working on. Secondly, the reading teachers commonly only worked on skills in isolation. While those skills are necessary to become better readers, they were not practiced within the context of the students' other classroom activities and projects. As I mentioned above, contextualization is key in ELLs acquiring language and literacy skills (Gibbons 2002; Cummins 2001). Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, this segregation and decontextualization perpetuated the categorization of the Latino ELL students in negative ways. As they were already categorized as below grade-level and needing remediation by the

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⁶ For example, Walqui (2006) discusses how ELLs benefit from being able to re-present text in multiple formats.

classroom teachers (based on their scores on standardized assessments), they were further and similarly categorized as low-level readers by the reading teachers. Both the reading and classroom teachers would even meet once every quarter to use the students' assigned reading levels to compare students within each class. Those students who had the low-level reading scores each quarter would be the ones that would receive extra attention from the reading teachers. While it is good that they would receive extra attention, the strategies proposed in these meetings almost always involved working with those students individually on skills and never included any restructuring of the class to make those students' experiences and background knowledge central to the curriculum, a practice that is an important aspect of being successful with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Garcia 2002; Gibbons 2002).

"Accommodating" English Language Learners

Many of the teachers I worked with, including the third grade teachers I discuss above, wanted their Latino ELL students to be successful. They did not start off the year thinking these students were less intelligent or capable, and certainly they cared for these students. However, what teachers were doing for their Latino ELL students to be successful academically was not sufficient to enable them to close the gap with their white peers. One of the biggest problems was that most of these teachers did not take a critical approach to the curricular and instructional choices they made. That is to say, they focused much of their attention—particularly in reading and math—on teaching to the lists of goals and objectives that were in the standard course of study. The needs of Latino ELL students were usually incorporated after these curricular decisions were made. As I stated above, making the students' experiences and background knowledge central to the curriculum—a necessity for Latino ELLs (Walqui 2006; Ovando, Combs and Collier 2006; Garcia 2002)—was not done.

In addition, the teachers looked for solutions to each student's lack of academic success on an individual basis. For example, and as I briefly stated above, when students were identified as below-grade-level because of their scores on periodic literacy assessments, a team of grade-level and reading teachers would meet together to brainstorm on strategies to use with each of those children. In those meetings, the teachers would go through each identified child one by one. The team brainstormed a bunch of strategies to use with the student and the classroom teacher chose a few to use with the identified student. I was involved in several of these meetings and almost every suggested activity was one that was easily integrated into the teachers' existing classroom structures. For example, some of the strategies were to use index cards to help build vocabulary, to attach pre-printed messages to the student to get him or her to focus on silent reading, or using a timer to let the student know how long he or she had to read for. Rarely did a strategy arise that suggested the teacher change his or her teaching in any dramatic way. When I tried

to get teachers to make the students' lives central to the curricula of their classes or integrate the students who scored low on their tests the same access to class projects (with my guidance), the teachers either never chose those approaches or the suggestions were put down by teachers who said the students were not ready for that type of material.

This individual attention to structural inequity was also evident in the somewhat standardized way that was in place to accommodate for ELLs' English language proficiency on both in-class assignment and end-of-grade tests. For example, a few of the sanctioned accommodations for official tests included ELLs being allowed to have extra time on the test, being allowed to take the test in a different room, or being allowed to take the test in more than one sitting. Accommodations for in-class assignments were a little more involved. The most common ones used by teachers included being allowed to answer fewer problems, being allowed to use a dictionary, and being allowed to receive help from a teacher or peer (though assignments with this last accommodation could not be used in their end-of-grade portfolios). However, even these accommodations were only marginally effective at getting the students to score on par with their non-ELL peers. None of the accommodations had an effect on altering the overall curriculum and pedagogy of the classroom in any substantial way. In addition, most sanctioned accommodations for ELLs do not actually address the linguistic need of ELLs (Holmes, Hedlund and Nickerson 2000; Menken 2000). Furthermore, when the accommodations might address the students' linguistic needs, they often left the assignments devoid of the critical and higher order thinking skills that these students needed to catch up to their peers. Therefore, this student-by-student accommodation system failed to give the Latino ELL students access to a curriculum as rigorous and meaningful as most of the non-ELL students.

Furthermore, except for the two teachers I discuss later, few of the teachers worked from a culturally responsive framework. This is not to say that all of their teaching was bad. Many classroom practices drew on cooperative learning and often the teachers tried to be at least culturally competent⁸ in their use of texts and materials. However, as their curriculum centered on the standard course of study and their goals for student achievement focused too heavily on standardized assessments, the overall instructional styles and core curricula were not culturally competent. Using the standards and indicators as guides, the teachers relied on a pre-determined definition of a quality education. What was lacking from most of the teachers was a critical consciousness regarding school norms, particularly as they pertained to less academically successful students. Ladson-Billings (1995) describes critical consciousness as a "broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows [students] to critique the cultural values, norms, mores, and institutions that produce and

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⁷ Based on their scores on the aforementioned English language proficiency test and their length of time in U.S. schools, ELLs could receive official "accommodations" and "modifications" both in class and on standardized tests.

⁸ I borrow the term culturally competent from Ladson-Billings (1995), who describes it as one of the three necessary components to culturally responsive teaching.

maintain social inequities" (162) and as one of the three keys to culturally responsive teaching. While many of the teachers openly disdained the high-stakes testing system in place, they were unaware of their complicity in reifying the culture of standardization that such a system promoted. They often did not make the link to how an over-reliance on homogeneous reading groups, pull-out skills work, and separate math classes help sustain the racial achievement gap. Therefore, most of the teachers could not develop a critical consciousness in their students because they had not developed it in themselves.

Property Analysis Revisited

Liberalism dominates the ideology of schools (Apple 2004), especially with regard to how school personnel perceive and respond to racial disparity (Blaisdell 2009; Blaisdell forthcoming). Liberal interpretations of the cause of racism in school contexts frame it an individual phenomenon, as mainly coming from the actual victims of racism—i.e., people of color—and as stemming from sources outside of the school itself (Kailin 1999; Blaisdell 2009; Apple 2004). Such interpretations tend limit responses to racial disparity to those that involve working with individual students who are seen as having problems. The culture of standardization at Southern conformed with and perpetuated a liberal account of the racial disparity at the school. The students who were not successful on standardized tests were disproportionately students of color and ELLs. Teachers and administrators interpreted their lack of success as stemming from some kind of deficiency—either cultural or experiential—that the students came to school with. So, because they did not do as well on their tests as compared to their white and English language dominant classmates, they were categorized as fragile learners. The designation of fragile learners placed the cause of their lack of academic success on them, their families, and their home environments⁹ and diverted the responsibility for academic disparity away from the institution itself. Therefore, the primary responses to this problem were individualistic as well. As the principal said at one faculty meeting, "We are a very good school district. If we have to give our teachers strategies to work with the students who aren't working well, then we'll do that." Those strategies involved teaching the students "who aren't working well" apart from other students, focusing on the skills the students were not able to accomplish in comparison to their classmates (versus recognizing what abilities they did bring to the class).

In this way, the majority of the teachers at Southern employed systems of categorization that contributed to their Latino ELL students' lack of access to rigorous curriculum and instruction. The culture of standardization that these teachers adhered to set up a competitive system (based on assessments) that

⁹ It was common in faculty meetings and one-on-one conversations for me to hear about the Latino ELL students as not caring about their education, not having supportive families or not having in favorable home lives that were conducive to being good students.

disadvantaged culturally and linguistically diverse students, whose education was then remediated and segregated and whose access to an equally rigorous and meaningful curriculum was restricted. Rogers and Mosley (2006) discuss standardized assessments, especially literacy tests, "continue to function as a replacement of property as a means of preserving the rights of citizenship for whites" (462). In fact, these tests function as institutionalized means to represent what type of curricular property students have acquired. Because most of the Latino ELLs have not had the same access to curriculum that would enable them to do well on those tests, they in face do more poorly than their white peers. Then, once these students do not score well, their status as fragile learners did not give them the right to use and enjoy the privileges of such a curriculum to enable them to success in the future. Teachers even had the right to exclude them from such curricula because of the students did not own the same "rights of citizenship" (e.g., the same skill set, background knowledge and cultural capital) as students from the dominant white culture.

HOPE: Racially Conscious Teachers

As I mentioned early in this paper, two teachers at Southern were able to overcome the barriers to the pursuit of racial equity. While the two I focus on here did so in different ways and to what I would consider varying degrees of success, they each pursued racial equity at some point in their practice. In addition, both made headway in addressing the racial achievement gap in their classrooms. As I discuss these two teachers, I highlight the some of the characteristics that I believe made their accomplishments possible. First, they had a complex and critical understanding of race and institutional racism, an understanding that was not limited my liberalism. Second, they maintained a critical consciousness of how students of color were positioned in school and were able to communicate that consciousness to their students. Third, they created and sustained academically rigorous classrooms. These characteristics line up closely to Ladson-Billings' (1995) qualities of culturally responsive teachers. As I discuss how the teachers portrayed these characteristics, I will also explain how they helped the teachers positively affect their students' access to quality curricula.

Katherine

Katherine was a white woman in her late 20s who had been teaching for five years. She had taught exceptional children and 1st grade but was a 4th grade teacher at the time of the study. She was also licensed to teach ESL, though she only had three ELLs in her class the year I worked at Southern (the classes with largest numbers had eight). That she had ELLs in her class, however, gave me the opportunity to work in her class and observe her teaching. As I have often commented to my friends, Katherine is perhaps the most culturally responsive teacher I had ever seen. She fore-fronted cultural and racial equity in almost all aspects of her practice. She

thought about, reflected on, and even took courses on culturally responsive teaching; and she always pushed herself to be more culturally responsive.

Katherine: ...what I've noticed when I started focusing on really incorporating more really culturally relevant strategies in my teaching three years ago, there's some strategies that you feel are easier to incorporate, and some of them are just not who you are as a teacher. And then reflecting over last years classes, and coming up with a list of things that I don't naturally do and things that may not be as easy or can potentially be more uncomfortable for me as a teacher, that's the list that I came up with to choose from when I'm designing my lessons. Again, it's trying to force myself to step outside of that comfort zone. And to continually keep improving.

Katherine also had a complex understanding of race. One of the ways this manifested itself was in her ability to challenge herself on how she viewed and subsequently worked with her non-white students.

Katherine: Looking at that famous question, "What is culturally relevant teaching?" and looking at my kids...and what they bring to the classroom. You know I have these two Latino boys and they love army figures and I taught perimeter using the army figures... So we talked about if you're patrolling the outside of this rectangle, how many steps is this army figure going to take to get around the rectangle. And at that point they were really careful about making sure that they hit both sides of that corner cube. And they loved it! Now is an army figure necessarily a Latino male culturally relevant strategy? No, but it was my kids' culture in the classroom. It's their culture. And trying to incorporate that in there instead of my preset ideas of making sure I include their culture into the lessons. That was an interesting growing point for me.

Part of cultural competence in culturally responsive teaching is "utilizing students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (Ladson-Billings 1995, 161). By seeing beyond essentialized notions of race and culture allowed Katherine to move past simple or individual understandings of how to address racial disparity.

Katherine: It's interesting because when I first started to do a lot of the equity work through the school system, [at first it was] having that idea of finding the perfect thing for each kid, that's how it started, but after working with it and doing a lot of reading and talking to other teachers, it's not necessarily... there's not a fix-it-all. And that's how my teaching's evolved. It's even more...the ability to examine everything that happens the classroom, every interaction, every textbook, every article, every time that a volunteer interacts with a kid, every time a kid interacts with a kid, there's not going to be necessarily one answer. But to me race in the classroom is when you're going to able to address all those individual little things that happen. It's a constant process in the classroom. There is no endpoint.

By going beyond looking for simple solutions to the issue of race, Katherine was able to address the issue much more broadly. Culturally responsiveness was part of the "philosophical and ideological underpinning of [her] practice" (Ladson-Billings 1995, 162), so she was not hindered by any obsession to find the one right teaching method or an easy fix.

Katherine's understanding of race fit into her critical consciousness about how the school positioned her students of color as fragile learners. She was able to see that is was not the students but rather institutional barriers that prevented her students of color from receiving an equal education. When I talked to Katherine about what she believed the main barriers to racial equity to be, her comments immediately focused on the administration.

Katherine: It is the administration...and the fear of standards. A lot of the reason the administration is the way they are is the fear of being judged. I understand that they have a job and they have two years to prove themselves before their contract is renewed.

Her assessment of and frustration with the administration stemmed from the fact that they not only feared being judged but that they used the standard policies in an uncritical, unreflective way. In addition, when Katherine was judged negatively by the administrators, it was often precisely because of her overtly culturally responsive approach. On two of her reviews from the administrators she had been written up as being too "informal" in her interactions with the students and as lacking professionalism in her discourse style. As Katherine explained to me, she often used what appeared to be a relaxed style in her class in part because she thought teaching was fun and she wanted to share that enthusiasm with her students but also largely because she was consciously trying to communicate in ways that would help her get to know her students better and that would help them be able to work in interactive, cooperative groups, an approach that she actually studied both in school and at district-organized professional development focused on teaching for racial equity.

Katherine: What's so interesting is that they [the administrators] are the leaders of the school equity team and they really don't encourage what they go to conferences and sit and hear about. They'll think it's a good idea when they hear it, but when it comes down to it and you try to take what you learn and make it work in the classroom, what you need to do is not very accepted by them.

In this way, Katherine was very astute about how the administration's adherence to standardized practices prevented them from supporting the practices that would help promote the racial equity they actually believed in.

In addition to her issue with the administration, Katherine talked extensively about the affect of standardized tests on her students and her teaching.

Katherine: I think about things that work well as far as racial differences in the classroom keep getting put up or juxtaposed against all of the testing... So here you are in a classroom and the kids are making great progress and you spend a lot of time with a group that hasn't necessarily seen a lot of success...and you're making progress and they're feeling good about themselves and then you turn around and give them a standardized test that may not exactly address their needs or address their writing/learning styles, and then you're held accountable... So it's this constant you're feeling good and the kids are feeling good and then this test shows up and it's—you're both being judged on it...and you have that hope and faith that what you are doing in the classroom and the kids that are making progress that at the end of the year that it's going to be enough to let them shine on those tests, because ultimately they still will be judged by those tests no matter what happens. You know you get the kids for 180 days they start feeling good about themselves...

Ben: And at the end of those 180 days?

Katherine: They're given a number based on a test.

This shows how standards-based reform can negatively influence the practice of teachers' daily practices. However, Katherine was able to limit this negative influence. For example, she did spend some time on test preparation because she thought the students would need that exposure, but she spent more time on what she thought was more meaningful learning.

Katherine: ...whenever I plan my lessons, I do an hour and 15 minutes of math everyday, the first 15, 20, 25 minutes is dedicated to problem-solving in the style that they see on the end-of-grade test because I feel it's still my responsibility to expose them to that style of question and answer. And then after that, in my mind I say that's when the real math starts...the kids are able to talk together, work together, the materials are on the table, or if they need to hop up on the computer and do something there that's fine, using big paper, just really enjoying it. I'm enjoying it, the kids are enjoying it, and really learning stuff.

In addition, not only was the majority of her teaching time spent on activities that were more interactive—when the students were "really learning stuff"—she adapted the content of many of those activities on topics that were reflective of the cultural, family and experiential backgrounds of her students. Furthermore, she continually tried to learn what that type of incorporation meant and to do it in a way that did not work from essentialized notions of her students of color.

Katherine: ...as aware as I wanted to be, the [culturally responsive] strategies that I was coming up with subconsciously were really stereotypical...Like with doing double digit math, you know I could talk about pesos and whatnot [she laughs], and I realized that this is not really my students. So, in writing and really trying to figure out how I was going to take these strategies and incorporate the kids' culture into my classroom, it was a growing point for me that whenever I saw that I was

including stereotypical cultural points into my lessons. That's what I had come up with and I realized that this is not going to address my kids. You really need to get to know the kids.

Ladson-Billings (1995) describes the culturally relevant teachers she studied as being able to adapt to their students and not assume that they knew everything about them: "The teachers kept the relations between themselves and their students fluid and equitable. They encouraged the students to act as teachers and they, themselves, often functioned as learners in the classroom" (163). In a similar way, Katherine put herself in the learner position. She gave up her own assumptions so she could better know, care for, and teach her students. As she said to me once, "A culturally sensitive teacher is someone who will shut up and listen."

Even with her culturally responsive approach, Katherine did find the standardized testing system to be a burden. In this aspect, Katherine—like every other teacher at Southern—had few options. The district and school mandated certain skills and content to be taught at certain times and these skills and content lined up with what would be on the end of grade tests. This took on toll on her.

Katherine: One of my African American female students was stressed out about math all year, and she slowly started to really develop mathematical thinking—you know strategies that she would pull out and use to solve problems. I was her cheerleader... She was feeling good about herself, and then she failed the [standardized] test at the end of the year, and she was in absolute tears. So here you are, after cheering a kid on all year saying "you're doing great, you're doing great!" then you have to tell them that they have to retake this test again. So, then they take the test again and they miss it by one point. And they're looking for that validation and you just hope that after all that work that they don't give up the next year and that they really do have resiliency the next year, and even though that one specific girl made a year and a half of progress [in one year], it still wasn't enough to pass that test, and just knowing how far behind she was, it's hard. And you want to know if you had played the game a little more and given them more straight up test prep if it would have been just enough to get them passing, or if knowing that you really helped them develop mathematical sense, that when they get that new information next year they're going to know how to process it. It's the challenge in the classroom that I constantly have as far as doing culturally what's right and doing what you need to help them pass the test.

Yet, despite such frustrations, Katherine was also a successful teacher, both in terms of test scores and more appropriately in terms of the deeper, more holistic learning of her students. In the year I taught with Katherine, the test scores of all of her kids was among the highest two or three teachers in the school. Her students of color made the highest gains on the tests compared to every other teacher. In the year after I left, when she had a cluster of Latino ELLs, these students made an average of a year and half of progress in math and all but one passed both the reading and math tests on the first try. Many of those same students had failed those tests after

two tries the year before. Beyond test scores, Katherine maintained an atmosphere of academic rigor at all times in her class. For example, she always pushed bilingualism for all of her students, not just her ELLs. When I was in her class, she always included Spanish or French (her second language) vocabulary into lessons, no matter the content area. She drew on the native speakers of those two languages teach the words and expressions to the class, positioning these students not as fragile learners but rather as intelligent, capable learners.

Rather than heading the categories given to her students (based on their reading, writing and math scores), she focused on what the students knew and on how to use it to push them further. For example, with one Latino ELL boy got in trouble on the bus and then lied to his parents about what happened, she had him use the story he told his parents in on of his writing assignments. This enabled this student, who a semester earlier had difficulty writing complete sentences, to write a complete, coherent story. Similarly, when another Latino ELL boy was deemed by other teachers (like the reading teachers) to be obsessed with drawing and writing about violence, Katherine learned that he was very into video games (albeit somewhat violent ones) and had him use those images and writings to write extended stories using the characters in the games he played. On the 4th-grade writing test, this student—who had only been in the country for about 2 years—scored a four out of four.

The effect Katherine's view of her students and her teaching was that, more than any other class in the school, her students had access to both a rigorous curriculum and a meaningful one. She not only saw the standardized categorizations of students as detrimental to students of color but also resisted following those categorizations in her own practices. Therefore, she did not use them to determine what kind of curriculum and instruction her students would get. We will see a similar practice in Bradley, her colleague and friend.

Bradley

Bradley was a black Caribbean man in his early thirties and had lived a lot of his life in New York City. He came to North Carolina to teach in the district and was in his 5th year. He had taught third and fourth grades. Like Katherine, Bradley was a very culturally responsive teacher, and he also used a lot of the terminology from literature on culturally responsive pedagogy. In fact, one of Bradley's motivations to be interviewed was to try and gain a deeper understanding of what culturally responsive teaching meant. He commented that he often found the literature on the subject vague.

What was clear, however, was that Bradley had thought a lot about what culturally responsive teaching means. A large aspect of it to him involved critical consciousness.

Bradley: For me, a classroom that is culturally responsive should acknowledge that you're in a school; it's an institution. Here's what it represents. Because the community that you're coming from, there are things that you might do in the community that you can share with the school, and some things you leave there. There are things that you can do that home that you can share at school, and there are things that you just can't. Some things you have to just learn how to switch, not in a sense of what is right or wrong, but kind of like that "when in Rome"... So it's developing an understanding for yourself. I think for some students, like a white students coming in, the white student's home life, community life, and school life may be very similar, whereas for some other students they have to negotiate that whole set of boundaries, and I think the culturally responsive teacher will engage some of that as well as their own historical and cultural pieces.

Not only does Bradley have a critical consciousness about the institution of school (and I will discuss that more shortly) but also he thinks it is the teachers' responsibility to impart that consciousness to his students. In addition to a general sense of school as an institution, Bradley was also able to talk about the specifics of how the school promoted and supported white cultural norms.

Bradley: ...there's a set of norms that's unspoken, like how you should dress, how you should walk, and some of them are pretty valid. It is an institution and you should conduct yourself a certain way, but at the same time, you know the kid who comes in with dreadlocks isn't going to be looked at the same way as the kid who comes in with your typical short cut, cropped hair. You know the children in the corner saying "aw-ight" aren't going to be looked at in the same way as the kid who says [putting on "proper" accent] "alright, I'm going to do it this way." They're not things that are completely expressed as "you have to do things this way in the environment." It's just because the teachers come in with their understanding of what things are, and most of teachers are predominantly white female teachers, and the administration is predominantly white.

Bradley saw that when students did not fit into white cultural norms of appearance or discourse styles they were treated differently than the white students. The non-white students who did not conform to white cultural norms were denied the privileges of whiteness, including the same level of respect and care from many of their primarily white teachers.

Bradley: ...the students come into the classroom and they are really proud of their culture, their heritage, and their identity, and then the classroom completely shuts that down. I think when that happens to someone they no longer will be as enthusiastic or perform to their potential. It's like cutting away some of your basic needs of recognizing your identity and validating that you can be who you are and that you can be successful being who you are and...in whatever cultural environment you may enter.

In Bradley's experience, many of his non-white students were devalued by many of their white teachers, even if unintentionally. Furthermore, it was his opinion that it was the teacher's responsibility to resist such practices by consciously trying not to privilege whiteness.

Bradley: So the question that comes up is how much of dominant white culture are you as a teacher conveying to your class. There's that issue that you have to solve while you're tying to be responsive to the other students that come in and create an environment that in some way meets their needs.

He thought that both white and non-white teachers took part in this conveying of dominant white culture and it was the responsibility of both to resist that normalization of whiteness.

One of the main ways Bradley undertook such resistance was to construct a curriculum that represented the cultural backgrounds of all of his students. Often, this meant him going out of his way to find resources and to obtain information that was not easily available. The result that of his efforts was that diversity was not an add-on to what he did but a central aspect of what he taught. Furthermore, it meant that he often taught a knowledge base that did not adhere to dominant interpretations of history. Rather he used an understanding that revisioned American history, for example, from a perspective that validated the contributions and identities of non-whites.

Bradley: Even something like the concept of slavery, which is introduced in fourth grade, you've got the text introducing it as African Americans came over as slaves, and I like to change that idea a little bit because that's not how it started out. African Americans came over as freed men, as indentured servants, and eventually this institution developed. With the stories, traditions or myths, once you start a tradition, it becomes this popular lore and everyone "knows" it and then everyone thinks it's right, but it's not necessarily so. Whenever you hear the talk of African American history, it starts with "slavery." So, most people think African Americans came to this country as slaves and that that it their only history.

Bradley understood how dominant interpretations of history were created. Furthermore, he understood the effect this could have on his students from non-dominant background. So, he attempted to structure a curriculum that was meaningful to his non-white students in way that positioned non-whites culture not as nice additions to the dominant culture but as equally central to the formation of the county.

Bradley: You look at the textbook and you would think that there are no Asians, no Hispanic people at all. But then you look at a map and you start talking about American history, and it's like well, Texas didn't used to be part of the United States or how come you have states with names like Colorado, or cities like Los Angeles, where those things come from.

What was also interesting about Bradley's approach is that he enacted it a way that was meaningful for all of his students. Often the perception of multicultural education is only for students of color (Nieto 1999). However, Bradley showed how when racial and cultural diversity is incorporated in a way that includes critical consciousness that it can reach white and non-white students alike.

Researcher: How does that approach go over with your students?

Bradley: I think the students like it because it fills in a void. It order to have good comprehension of certain things, you need to have background knowledge... You know there are students who may not be interested in science but may be interested in the people behind it, and because they get to understand the person, they may understand the science more.

Ben: When you're speaking of students, you're speaking of both white and non-white students?

Bradley: Yep. Because I think that white students can tend to feel really comfortable with things or completely uncomfortable, and I've seen both. For example, when we're reading the Ruby Bridges book, there are some white girls who come out and have these conversations and they're willing to be bold enough to speak...and there are some people who just clam up. You can see that they are very uncomfortable. It's something that they are interested in understanding but they're just uncomfortable. It's worth the experience in the sense there are people that they are dealing with everyday and they don't understand and they may be doing things which they might think is alright but for someone else it's not. So, how do they go about being able to say, "Well, in my family we do things this way and I didn't know you did it this way and this is disrespectful and maybe we can work out something," as opposed to "This is the way we do it and this is the way it's supposed to be done..."?

In a very nuanced way, Bradley could articulate culturally responsive teaching in a way that attended to the needs of his white students without merely re-centering their experiences and ways of being and without sacrificing the needs or his non-white students. He was able to put together a curriculum that was meaningful to all of his students. In doing so, he was able to give all of his students' access to a rigorous curriculum.

One way he maintained rigor was by making sure all of his students were able to perform the same skills, which he differentiated from content. In other words, students would have do the same type of work, but they might use different resources to accomplish the tasks involved.

Bradley: The skill thing is how you navigate all those things [teaching of content], and the skill thing is something I will never skip over. The skills are very measurable. Content stuff is measurable too but it's a little bit flakier. I think a strong skill would be: "How do you read a non-fiction textbook?" "How are you able to take notes on that?" The content understanding would be like the big idea of immigration, population change, or social movements. Those are good to understand, but you could

teach NC history in terms of the Native American perspective, African American migration, European settlers, different groups of European settlers...which one are you going to focus on? ... So the content is a little bit more flexible in terms of how you want to approach things, but the skills—reading, research, the ability to answer questions, the ability to ask questions, maybe to present what you've learned and how you go about doing that—those are things that develop yearly and grow in depth with students.

So, even if he would adapt the specific details of content depending on student interests and backgrounds, he would make sure all of his students were able to show the same types of skills, which they would be assessed and judged on, and he made sure they covered the same overarching themes. In this way, Bradley did not feel limited by the standard course of study and the standardized assessments.

In addition, like Katherine's, Bradley's students did well on their test scores, and his students of color and ELLs closed their achievement gap with white students more quickly than students did in other third grade classes. One reason was that academic rigor was important to him. He made conscious efforts to make sure that his students of color, who had usually received lower scores on their math and reading assessments coming into his class, caught up to their peers. He often did this by not following what was considered best practice for students that had been categorized as below grade-level, who were disproportionately his African American and Latino students. This was most notable in his approach to literacy instruction. For example, here is his response when I asked him if his approach was successful with his students of color.

Bradley: In literacy, yes but they have to work harder. You can't run at the same pace and think you are going to catch up. You have to run faster. So, for African American students I might choose a book that's two grade levels above where they are, but it's a high interest book. They're really interested in it, so they're going to want to persevere. In the end, they come out and are like, "Wow I can actually read this thing!" So, I'll choose another one. And basically I'll have this guided reading group that I'll see more frequently. I'll keep track of how they're doing a whole lot more to monitor their progress, but at the same time they're not reading text that's at their grade level. They're reading something a grade level or two above, so when they return back to something at their grade level, they think, "Oh, this is not a problem."

This approach was counter to the school-wide literacy approach advocated by the classroom and reading teachers, the approach where students read text just one step above their current reading level as determined by standardized assessments. It is also an approach that ran against these students' labels as below-grade-level or fragile learners. Bradley did not adhere to these labels when working with his students and he actively worked against what was considered "best practice" and reifying those categorizations. I even asked him about the normalized reading

approach in the school, where students worked with reading at or just above their current assigned level.

Bradley: I don't think that's going to work. If someone's reading below grade level, you can't teach them below grade level and expect them to get ahead. If you want them to really get ahead, boost them up two or three grade levels. Support their understanding of the text and then test them at that and see how they're doing. To me there's no way around it.

So, Bradley did not deny these students access to a rigorous curriculum because of how they were categorized. In addition, he understood that the normalized practices of teaching reading at the school did just that. Instead, he worked from a sense of equity—of getting all of his students to succeed. In fact, his approach to teaching reading is actually supported by the literature on teaching reading to ELLs, where reading is a social act and where scaffolding is used to expand students zone of proximal development (Walqui 2006). As I stated earlier, Bradley was also successful with his approach. More than any other teacher except Katherine, he closed the achievement gap between his students of color and his white students, and he did so while still maintaining among the highest reading scores in the school for all of his students (debunking any myth that attending to equity will hurt the more successful students).

So, Bradley was able to address the curricular and even assessment standards and not feel limited by them. This is not to say, however, that the culture of standardization did not affect him at all. Bradley often mentioned how he felt the need to go out of his way to pursue a culturally responsive practice. He discussed how he had to go looking for resources that were not available at the school. Furthermore, Bradley felt the need to isolate himself from other teachers, and especially from the administration. He liked to keep his door close and follow the approach he saw best fit the needs of his students. In this way, his portrayed himself very much as an outsider with regards to the school and the other faculty.

Bradley: I don't go advertising saying, "Hey I'm doing this, do you want to come and look?" I don't ask, "Hey, can I do this?" Ill just go ahead and do it. It's one of the detriments of teaching that you've got four walls and yourself. You're isolated. At the same time because you are isolated, you are able to do certain things which you just go ahead and do it as opposed to asking permission to do it.

From Racial Consciousness to Critical Race Practice

In fact, both Katherine and Bradley portrayed themselves as outsiders when compared with the rest of the faculty. This perspective came from different sources. For Katherine, her father was a big influence. Even growing up in the rural mountains of North Carolina predominantly surrounded by other whites, she had

often heard him talk about not judging people based on their racial and cultural backgrounds and practices. He had always encouraged her to learn about people for herself. For Bradley, being non-American and non-Southern gave him experiences not common to many white Americans in the district. He spoke a different dialect of English and felt he was still learning the customs of the United States and the U.S. educational system. He used this to identify with his students who did not come from dominant cultural backgrounds and to push a global view of race, culture, and language in the classroom. The trait that both teachers shared, however, was that they used their outsider status to pursue practices that countered institutional norms. Because they both did not like the way they had been categorized had affected them at times in their personal and professional lives, they resisted a similar process of categorization with their students. Both Katherine and Bradley were very slow to come to any judgments about their students. It was extremely rare to here either of them make a comment that was in any way negative about one of their students.

In addition, both Katherine and Bradley resisted as much as possible a culture of standardization that relied on and reified categorizations that denied equitable access to a meaningful and rigorous education for their students of color. Their critical understandings of race helped them develop this resistance to standardization. In addition, their critical awareness of race helped their actual teaching practices to be culturally responsive not only in terms of cultural awareness but also in terms of academic rigor. They understood the ways in which the normalized institutional practices led to racial disparity and developed counter practices, where they were able to both center their students' experiences in class and to attend to the daily skills that the students would need to perform on their assessments.

In fact, being able to work with Katherine and Bradley during the year helped my own teaching. My work with my students early in the year was similar to the approach the reading teachers used, i.e., I worked with my students separately and used texts (usually the same leveled-readers the reading teachers used) and activities not linked to what the students were doing in their regular classrooms. It was not until I began to reflect on my practice and analyze the education they were receiving more broadly and more critically, that I began to change my teaching practice and work towards giving the students better access to rigorous curricula. Seeing the limited access that my students had to interesting, meaningful reading and activities that involved higher-order thinking skills helped me see how I, too, was complicit in categorizing the students as fragile learners.

Teachers have to (or at least think they have to) do so much that they don't have time to critique (in a way that has impact) what is going on around them structurally speaking...But interestingly enough, I have been so caught up with testing and placing students and determining modifications for official purposes that I am falling into the same trap/pattern. I go through the day following the procedures. Journal Entry, 9/7/06

When examined individually and acontextually, the school-wide literacy practices appeared to be the best methods to help my students advance. The CRT analysis of access to property helped me see how these practices in fact helped sustain a system that creates the category of low-level reader based on standardized assessments.

It is not that I didn't have these ideas before when I taught. Rather, now I have a language to help describe the feelings and issues I had before. I have analytical tools. Journal Entry, 9/14/06

My realization of my complicity in this practice enabled me to shift my teaching practice towards an approach that positioned my students as gifted, intelligent learners and that gave them better access to a curriculum that included higher-order thinking skills and more meaningful contextual text.

The [school-wide] approach to literacy ... is too focused on skills. So, I have decided to worry less about those goals—they just end up working towards the tests—and to practice more holistic teaching. I am setting up more project-based activities that focus on interests and life backgrounds of my students. I will not ignore skills but they will be used to support broader goals. I will have to see how this affects the students' academic success and will also have to be sure to document their success in ways that the existing assessments do not. Journal Entry, 1/4/07

A key reason why I was able to refocus my teaching was because of my observations of and discussions with Katherine and Bradley. Even though I did not formally interview them until after the school year was over, during the school year I did see how they were able to give our students access to curriculum in ways that most teachers, including myself, were not. I was able to see how they worked with all students who were marginalized by the institutionalized system of categorization and the standardization process. By interpreting their practices through CRT, I was better able to understand and then articulate how teachers can employ culturally responsive approaches to teaching even in schools dominated by standardization and high-stakes testing.

Implications for Culturally Responsive Teaching in Schools

Since I was introduced to CRT, the field has helped me develop an understanding of how teachers are complicit in the construction of institutionalized racism in their day-to-day practices. Ladson-Billings (1998) has rightfully cautioned educational scholars not to take up the field of CRT for only scholarly purposes and not to actually use it to effect change for students of color. However, CRT helped me develop a more critical perspective on institutional racism, which enabled me to begin to transform my teaching, even if only modestly at first. I was able to uncover how Southern denied access to an equal education for my Latino ELL students via

sanctioned segregation and remediation based on an over-reliance on standardized assessments.

Furthermore, CRT helped me uncover what was particularly effective about culturally responsive teachers who work against complicity in institutional racism. I could tell the story of two teachers who worked in a school dominated by a culture of standardization but who were also able to resist how much that culture marginalized their students of color. CRT has helped me put their approaches in terms systems of categorization and access to curriculum. In this way, CRT can help researchers enhance the discussion about what makes a culturally responsive teacher. Rich literature exists on effective teaching for African American students (Irvine 1991; Delpit 1995; Ladson-Billings 1994; just to reference a few) and for ELLs (Ovando, Combs and Collier 2006; Garcia 2002; Gibbons 2002). CRT can further this type of scholarship by helping to tell the stories of teachers in ways that emphasize their ability to understand and also counter institutional practices. Therefore, along with the critique it offers, CRT can help shed light on practices that work with traditionally marginalized students.

I try to imagine what a school would look like when all the classrooms looked like Katherine's and Bradley's. I can't help but think that my third grade Latino students' days might be dramatically different and more rewarding. I have no illusions that racial disparity would be eradicated completely, but I cannot help but imagine that it would be better than it is now, that it might go a long way to realizing a more substantial form of racial consciousness and equity. CRT can help, and has helped, tell the stories of remediation and segregation in school. It can also tell the stories of culturally responsive teachers. A next step for educational researchers is to develop a more emancipatory research stance by using CRT in alliance with teachers who are attempting to work against racial disparity.

If educational researchers are to operate from epistemologies of emancipation—with frameworks that are transformative (as opposed to accommodative) in nature—and engage in methodologies that encourage participants to challenge and change the world, then the purpose of data collection in educational research would be fundamentally different. Rather than collect data for data's sake, research would become a conscious political, economic, and personal conduit for empowerment. Educational research could then be a catalyst to support and complement larger struggles for liberation. (Tyson 2003, 24).

CRT has just such an emancipatory goal in its exposition of and challenge to institutional racism. In a very small way I have attempted to use the research of this school and these two teachers to help support that larger struggle. From my perspective as a white, male academic I shared my perspectives on the institutionalization of racial disparity with Katherine and Bradley, practicing teachers from different gender and racial backgrounds. I continue to meet with them and other teachers, both to gain a better understanding of how teachers can counter that institutional racism and to help them think through their practices, with the

hope that our conversations will empower them in their pursuit of equity. By analyzing the systems of categorization that work against students of color and by working with teachers to critically challenge that process, educational researchers can use CRT and help work towards its emancipatory goals for students, like my Latino ELLs, who are marginalized by standardized school practices.

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The Outlook for Social Justice in Our Compulsory Schools: An Anarchist Forecast

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THE OUTLOOK FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN OUR COMPULSORY SCHOOLS: AN ANARCHIST FORECAST

Writing for Salon.com in May of 2007, Gary Kamiya pondered how George W. Bush, in light of his administration's incessant abuses of power, had avoided impeachment during his Presidency. Bush's "problems go far beyond Iraq," Kamiya wrote. "His administration has been dogged by one massive scandal after the other, from the Katrina debacle, to Bush's approval of illegal wiretapping and torture, to his unparalleled use of "signing statements" to disobey laws that he disagreed with, to the outrageous Gonzales and U.S. attorneys affair" (Kamiya, 2007). So, why wasn't he impeached?

For Kamiya, the main reason was obvious when viewed from the perspective of realpolitik. The Democrats, with their narrow majority in Congress at the time, did not have the political will to do so. In weighing the potential costs and benefits of such a move, they feared that impeachment could backfire on them. They preferred to give Bush enough rope to hang the Republican Party in the 2008 elections.

Kamiya, however, also identified a deeper and more troubling reason that Bush was not impeached. This reason had less to do with either Bush or the Democratic Party, and more with us – the American people. "Bush's warmongering," Kamiya contended,

spoke to something deep in our national psyche. The emotional force behind America's support for the Iraq war, the molten core of an angry, resentful patriotism, is still too hot for Congress, the media and even many Americans who oppose the war, to confront directly. It's a national myth. It's John Wayne. To impeach Bush would force us to directly confront our national core of violent self-righteousness – come to terms with it, understand it and reject it. And we're not ready to do that (emphasis added).

In coming to terms with and understanding our national core of violent selfrighteous, we would have to acknowledge what underlies it. We would have to recognize, as Cornel West argues in Democracy Matters, that

the American democratic experiment is unique in human history not because we are God's chosen people to lead the world, nor because we are always a force for good in the world, but because of our refusal to acknowledge the deeply racist and imperial roots of our democratic project. We are exceptional because of our denial of the antidemocratic foundation stones of American democracy. No other democratic nation revels so blatantly in such self-deceptive innocence, such self-paralyzing reluctance to confront the night-side of its own history. This sentimental flight from history – or adolescent escape from painful truths about ourselves – means that even as we grow old, grow big, and grow powerful, we have yet to grow up. (2004, 41).

And whereas Kamiya simply asserts, "we need therapy," West offers a more specific prescription. West calls for the enactment of "democratic paideia – the cultivation of an active, informed citizenry – in order to preserve and deepen our democratic experiment," (Ibid) coupled with parrhesia – frank and fearless speech – that is the lifeblood of any democracy" (Ibid, 209). Such measures are necessary, he contends, if we are to escape "our self-deceptive innocence" and our "self-paralyzing reluctance to confront the night-side of [our] own history."

Educators committed to a pedagogy of social justice would eagerly answer West's call for fearless speech in service of what they hold to be one of the most important missions of America's schools – "the cultivation of an active, informed citizenry." Tragically, however, no one knows the sting of America's "violent selfrighteousness" better than those same educators. Even before Bill O'Reilly of Fox News Channel, the official network of violent self-righteousness, launched the national demonization campaign against University of Colorado Professor Ward Churchill, the Monroe County Community Schools Corporation in Bloomington, Indiana declined to renew the contract of Deborah Mayer, an elementary school teacher. Mayer's transgression occurred while discussing the December 13, 2002 issue Time for Kids, a children's version of Time magazine that was a regular part of the curriculum. That issue contained a story covering a peace march in Washington D.C. protesting the pending U.S. invasion of Iraq, which led a student to ask Mayer if she "would ever be in a peace march." Mayer informed the class that whenever she drove past marchers holding up signs asking motorists to "Honk For Peace" that she honked. She also told the children that she thought people "should seek peaceful solutions before going to war." The class then discussed a conflict resolution program at their own school, and they dropped the subject. Shortly afterward, however, a Bush-supporting parent brought a complaint against Mayer before the building principal, and the district later refused to renew her contract (Egelko, 2007).

Judge Sarah Evans Barker ruled against Mayer in her wrongful termination suit, arguing "teachers, including Ms. Mayer, do not have a right under the First Amendment to express their opinions during the instructional period" (Global Research, 2006). Later, in the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, famed neoliberal jurist and Chief Judge Frank H. Easterbrook upheld Barker's ruling. "Expression," Easterbrook wrote, "is a teacher's stock in trade, the commodity she sells to her employer in exchange for a salary" (emphasis added) (Egelko, 2007). Though she plans a further appeal, Mayer holds little optimism that the Supreme Court will take her case. If the decision stands, particularly in light of the neoliberal logic found in Easterbrook's ruling, we can abandon all but the slimmest of hopes that schools will ever become sites for pursuing social justice. In that case, perhaps the time has arrived for us to take the anarchist critique of education more seriously and recognize the futility of pushing for democratic educational reforms. Maybe we should begin considering the possibility that we might best pursue social justice, not by reforming schools, but by resisting statecontrolled systems of compulsory schooling altogether.

The Anarchist Critique

When he published What is Property in 1840, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon became the first person to call himself an anarchist. He was not, however, the first person to call for the abolition of the state. For this reason, scholarship traces the anarchist tradition back to William Godwin. Credited with developing the first comprehensive anarchist critique of government schools in his Enquiry Concerning Political Justice in 1793, Godwin viewed freedom of thought as fundamental to political liberty. As Joel Spring explains, Godwin believed that "since people constantly improve their reasoning power and their understanding of nature, their understanding of the best form of government is constantly changing" (Spring, 1994, 42). While he recognized that education was crucial toward the development of individuals' powers of rational thought that would guide them in selfgovernment, Godwin also, Spring notes, "considered national systems of education one of the foremost dangers to freedom and liberty" (cited in Spring, 1983, 68). "Before we put so powerful a machine (education) under the direction of so ambiguous an agent (government)," Godwin warned, "it behooves us to consider well what it is we do. Government will not fail to employ it, to strengthen its hands, and perpetuate its institutions." (cited in Spring, 1994, 42).

Indeed, Godwin's warning gives us good reason to question whether government-controlled schools can ever function as sites where students cultivate their powers of reasoning in the service of social justice. Furthermore, Godwin also provokes us

to consider the extent to which schools, as instruments of state power, have contributed more to what Kamiya identifies as our "our national core of violent self-righteousness" than they have to cultivating the "active, informed citizenry" called for by Cornel West.

Echoing Godwin's concerns and armed with 200 years of historical hindsight, contemporary anarchist theorist Noam Chomsky describes "the basic institutional role and function of the schools" as providing "an ideological service: there's a real selection for obedience and conformity" (Chomsky, 2003, 27-28). In Chomsky's analysis, compulsory government schooling brings children at a very early age into an indoctrination system "that works against independent thought in favor of obedience" with the goal of keeping people "from asking questions that matter about important issues that directly affect them and others" (Chomsky and Macedo, 2000, 24). In Deborah Mayer's case, of course, the important issue was the pending invasion of Iraq. Keep in mind that a student initiated the conversation concerning Mayer's participation in peace marches. Therefore, the decision of the school board and courts' rulings on that decision sent a clear message to students as well as teachers: "We don't discuss 'questions that matter' about issues that might interest you." That message, of course, underscores Chomsky's thesis that schools function to discourage independent inquiry and promote obedience and conformity.

Emma Goldman made similar observations early in the 20th Century. "What, then, is the school of today?" she asked. "It is for the child what the prison is for the convict and the barracks for the soldier – a place where everything is being used to break the will of the child, and then to pound, knead, and shape it into a being utterly foreign to itself.... It is but part of a system which can maintain itself only through absolute discipline and uniformity" (Goldman, 1912).

Goldman's description of schools receives considerable support in the more heavily analytic writings of Michel Foucault. In books such as Madness and Civilization (1988) and Discipline and Punish (1995), Foucault points out for us a very peculiar historical oddity. Systems of government-sponsored compulsory schooling did, in fact, begin to emerge at the same point in history as the modern prison, and each was modeled on the Army barracks. Compulsory schooling of the masses has always had less to do with education and more to do with discipline. By "discipline", Foucault refers to a form of treatment that

Increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes those same forces (in terms of political obedience). In short, it disassociates powers from the body; on the one hand it turns it into an 'aptitude,' a 'capacity,' which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjugation. If economic exploitation separates the force of and the product of labor, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination. (Ibid, 141).

Moreover, compulsory schooling functions to discipline individuals in a manner that increases the productive power that their bodies offer to the economic system while simultaneously diminishing their power to resist economic exploitation and the political system that initiates that exploitation by compelling students to attend school in the first place.

The writings of Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and recognized "father of American psychiatry", are particularly illuminative of how the early advocates of compulsory schooling viewed the importance of diminishing individuals' powers of resistance by building up their emotional attachments to the state. Rush wrote his "Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic" in 1786 – just seven years before Godwin wrote his Enquiry Concerning Political Justice. Rush declared "the principle of patriotism stands in need of the reinforcement of prejudice, and it is well known that our strongest prejudices in favor of our country are formed in the first one and twenty years of our lives Our schools of learning," he argued, "by producing one general and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more homogeneous and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government" (Rush, 1793). The quotes below come from the same document:

In order more effectually to secure to our youth the advantages of a religious education, it is necessary to impose upon them the doctrines and discipline of a particular church. Man is naturally an ungovernable animal, and observations on particular societies and countries will teach us that when we add the restraints of ecclesiastical to those of domestic and civil government, we produce in him the highest degrees of order and virtue . . .

Let our pupil be taught that he does not belong to himself, but that he is public property. Let him be taught to love his family, but let him be taught at the same time that he must forsake and even forget them when the welfare of his country requires it

In the education of youth, let the authority of our masters be as absolute as possible. The government of schools like the government of private families should be arbitrary, that it may not be severe. By this mode of education, we prepare our youth for the subordination of laws and thereby qualify them for becoming good citizens of the republic. I am satisfied that the most useful citizens have been formed from those youth who have never known or felt their own wills till they were one and twenty years of age, and I have often thought that society owes a great deal of its order and happiness to the deficiencies of parental government being supplied by those habits of obedience and subordination which are contracted at schools

From the observations that have been made it is plain that I consider it as possible to convert men into republican machines. This must be done if we expect them to perform their parts properly in the great machine of the government of the state. (Rush, 1793)

Noah Webster, known as "the schoolmaster of America," could not have agreed more. "Good republicans," Webster wrote, "are formed by a singular machinery in the body politic, which takes the child as soon as he can speak, checks his natural independence and passions, makes him subordinate to superior age, to the laws of the state, to town and parochial institutions" (Spring 2005, 48-49). Webster's real significance as a force in shaping the direction of American education and culture rests with his creation of a series of books that were the major school texts in 19th century America, selling over a million and a half copies by 1801 and 75 million copies by 1875. As Webster's biographer, Harry Warfel, characterized them, "this series of unified textbooks effectually shaped the destiny of American education for a century. Imitators sprang up by the dozens, and each echoed the Websterian nationalism. The word 'American became indispensable in all textbook titles; all vied in patriotic eloquence" (Ibid, 48).

We are able to trace, then, the roots of Kamiya's "national core of violent self-righteousness" right back to the very beginnings of America's experiment with compulsory schooling. "Our schools," wrote a veteran schoolteacher in 1910, "have failed because they rest on compulsion and constraint. . . It is deemed possible and important that all should be interested in the same things, in the same sequence, and at the same time. . . Under the circumstances (of 1910) teachers are mere tools, automatons who perpetuate a machine that turns out automatons" (Goldman, 1912).

Under the conditions of 2007, nearly a hundred years later, how little has changed. With Emma Goldman, we should recognize that under the enduring conditions of government-sponsored, compulsory schooling, "the child becomes stunted, that its mind is dulled, and that its very being is warped, thus making it unfit to take its place in the social struggle as an independent factor. Indeed, there is nothing so hated so much in the world today as independent factors in whatever line" (Ibid).

Room for Hope?

The anarchist critique of compulsory schooling leaves us little room for hope that our schools will ever promote social justice. Given the contemporary neoliberal push to privatize the management of schools, however, even that small glimmer of hope is fading quickly.

Rather than focusing our efforts to transform schools so heavily on the direct empowerment of teachers, perhaps we should take a lesson from the playbook of the political right. They have grown effective in gaining control of democratically elected, local school boards. Educators interested creating schools as democratic, public spheres for the advancement of social justice must begin working locally to change the face, as well as the democratic dispositions, of our local school boards to allow our teachers greater freedom to teach, and our students greater freedom to learn.

As severe as the rulings of Judges Barker and Easterbrook may sound to our ears, they merely stated that teachers must adhere to the curricular policies set by their employer. Except in those districts where curricular decisions are now effectively controlled by private management firms (educational management organizations or EMOs), that "employer" is a democratically elected, school board. Only when local school boards begin recognizing and acknowledging the crucial link between education and democracy, through concrete policy decisions on curriculum and other matters, will schools ever be able to meaningfully address issue of social justice.

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