The concept of experience: a transformation in "the politics of educational method"

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In John Berger's book "King" we are led to a place we haven't been - from where few stories come. We are led to a wasteland beside the motorway. Here at the end of the twentieth century, amongst smashed lorries, old boilers and broken washing machines live the homeless. This time, with this book, it is the homeless people Berger is forcing us to see. John Berger is the storyteller of the marginalised: peasants, migrants and the homeless.

I will try to lead him into the quarters of social science convinced that he belongs here, too. The main purpose is to discuss the problem of communicating experience. I believe the learning process, even for the intellectuals, basically is an act of mimicry. The scientists’ mimetic “factories” might probably be the universities, colleges or the research centers. John Berger has mimed - Walter Benjamin - the German philosopher, essayist and European vagabond in the nineteen twenties and thirties. The fact that the latter lacked and the former is lacking, specific scientific community support and direction are not what I had in mind. Comparing the one with the other, we find in relation to experience and the communication of experience, them both to have similar comprehension. In that respect I think John Berger has demonstrated that he is in possession of what Walter Benjamin (1979 a,b) once called "the forgotten mimetic faculty of becoming similar".

John Berger's main ambition with his writing has been to help us find a way "home" in times when that would be an impossible endeavor. Just listen to what he tells us about "home" and the effect of homelessness. The book that perhaps comes closest to be labeled theoretical and from were some theoretical position might be extracted would be: "And Our faces, my heart, brief as photos." (1984 p55-57) In a part of this book, John Berger's narration focuses on the ancient human beings and their nomadic activity. Mircea Eliade (1969) has demonstrated that in these ancient/ archaic societies the word "home" (Old Norwegian heimr) was synonymous with a place where the world might be founded. A "home" originally meant the center of the world – not in geographical, but in ontological sense. A home was established at the heart of the real. In these traditional societies everything that made sense of the world was real. The surrounding chaos existed and was threatening, but it was threatening because it was unreal. Without a home where reality was, the man was not only without shelter, but also lost in non-being, in unreality. Without “home” everything was fragmentation.

Berger draws a horizontal line representing the nomadic traffic of the world, and a vertical line connecting the gods in heaven and the dead in the under world. Home was the center of the world because it was the place were the vertical line crossed with the horizontal one - the coordinates of the human beings reality. Wherever they moved along the horizontal line they carried their vertical line with them, as they might carry a tent pole. This pole supporting their tent made "home" become more than a shelter. It became the center of the earth - the space of reality - the place where the past and the future is connected by the dead in the underworld, the gods in heaven and their own activity in time and space.
Reality was the space of activity. The surroundings were frightening and without meaning. It was unreal. John Berger’s conception of man seems to be in correspondence with theories related to pragmatism or activity theory (Enerstvedt 1982). No wonder – old Marxist that he is. It is through activity – praxis - that knowledge, conscience, meaning and identity develop. John Berger’s point is that it is of fundamental importance for man to find home in the original meaning of the word. The amount of wars, mass deportations and exploitation of people in the modern world has rendered the safeguarding, the establishing and the reconstruction of home as “the center of the world” an impossible task. Man never finds a place where the two lifelines cross. The vertical line exists no more; there is no longer any local continuity between him and the dead, the dead no simply disappear; and the gods have become inaccessible. The vertical line has been twisted into the individual biographical circle, which lead nowhere but only encloses. As for the horizontal lines, because there are no longer any fixed points as bearings, they are elided into a plain and pure distance, across which everything is swept. At its most brutal, home is no more than one’s name – whilst to most people one is nameless. Homeless meaninglessness rules. Loss of meaning and loss of home is parts of the same matter in John Berger’s conception.

John Berger the storyteller has learned from, mimed, Walter Benjamin the philosopher and essayist understanding of experience and communication of experience. Let us see what Walter Benjamin, in his essay “The storyteller” published in 1936, tells us about the storyteller and the relation between storytelling and experience.

The storyteller is dead. In the modern society there is no longer room for his existence. The original storyteller, his stories and his role, was created from to lines of development. The one in the image of the farmer: The man with long and close contact with the local community – knowing the histories and the local condition of life. The other in the image of the sailor: The man who told stories from above the ocean. The former communicated along the vertical line and the latter along the horizontal one. The images of the farmer and the sailor represent the foundation of two different categories of stories still traceable although they melted into one storytelling figure. He was embodied in the craftsmen of the medieval. Benjamin says something like this: “If the farmer and the sailor were the old masters of stories – then the rank of craftsmen represented the university of stories.” It is this storytelling figure and the faculties he developed that are disappearing. With it the human being looses its ability to communicate experience. Experience is devaluated. It is concurred by new from of communication of the high-capitalistic society – information. Information has to be understandable in itself; it demands almost an immediate verification and high level of abstraction.

The story or the communications of experience on the other hand have practical interests. Benjamin states as a fact that the real stories always openly or disguised contain something useful. The usefulness might be a moral statement or a practical one. The storyteller has advice for the listener. But what is an advice in Benjamin’s mind?

“Advice is not as much an answer to a question as it is a suggestion concerning a story – a story that unfolds whether the advice is taken or not. To give this advice you have to know how to tell the story. (How a man conceives advice depends on his ability to see his own situation clearly.)”
The art of storytelling is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out. Wisdom, for Benjamin, is advice woven with living life. The ability to listen to stories is lost. To tell a story is the art of reproducing and this ability is lost when there is no-one remembering. The story does not focus the matter “an sich” as it is with information and reporting. The story dips the matter into the narrator’s life. When it is later brought up again the story contains the narrators “fingerprints”. When the listener becomes narrator the story will be imprinted with his experience and may even have had an effect upon his life as advice.

I think Walter Benjamin (1975) with his essay “The Storyteller” conceived the “narratory principle” in social theory and in social science. “The narrative-tradition” has lately been influential on the debate in social science generally (Sarbin 1986, Chambers 1984) and in educational research specifically (Eisner & Peshkin 1990, Eisner 1992). The theme is wide drawing on literature and a vast body of discourse from the field of social science. I will try to bring some central points into focus. The Russian Formalists were the first to state that the study of all stories, every meaningful text, was possible with the aid of the distinction between fabula and susjett (Shklovsky 1969 p245). In English the distinction was translated to story and discourse. (Culler 1981) Story is a “sequence of actions or events, conceived as independent of their manifestations”. Discourse on the other hand is “the discursive presentation or narration of events.”(p169)

As Culler (1981 p187) has pointed out the distinction between story and discourse is a tricky one. On the one hand the analysis of story/fabula is founded on a common sense assumption that the events or actions logically and temporally exists before their presentation in the discourse/susjett. Analysis of discourse on the other hand has demonstrated that the narrated events or the actions of the narrative quite often are the product of discursive forces. They seem to be constructions supporting demands from the discourse. The one who selects and describes events or actions is under the influence of a discursive idea. This makes an impact on both the selection and description. Discourse/susjett is activated both earlier in the process and activated differently from what one first believed to be true. This means that neither the analysis of discourse/susjett nor story/fabula are standing for themselves. They are mutually dependent on each other, but at the same time incomparable. These observations render no hope for the construction of a narratology.

The process of pointing out two components or aspect believed to be a unit as incomparable but mutually dependent, are usually associated with the deconstructive practice of post-structuralism. The strokes of post-structuralism have not only been on narratology, reducing it to a critical practice, they might even have reduced causation to narrative. The fundament of deconstructive practice – the fragment from “Will to power”(Nietzsche 1966 p804) where Nietzsche demonstrates causation to be a rhetorical figuration called metonymy might be the best example. Culler summarize the argumentation this way:

Causation involves a narrative structure in which we posit first the presence of a cause and then the production of an effect. Indeed, the very notion of a plot, as E. M. Foster taught us, is based on causation: "The king died, then the queen died" is not a narrative, although "the king died, then the queen died of grief" is.... First, there is cause: Then there is effect; first a mosquito bites one’s arm, then one feels pain. But, says Nietzsche, this sequence is not given; it is constructed
by rhetorical operation. What happens may be, for example, that we feel a pain and then look around for some factor we can treat as cause. The "real" causal may be: first pain, then mosquito. It is the effect that causes us to produce a cause; a tropological operation then reorders the sequence pain-mosquito as mosquito-pain. This latter sequence is product of discursive forces, but we treat them as given, as the true order.

But what about the transition from listener to narrator when the narrative is transformed from spoken words into text. When Ricoeur (1991) treats this topic he makes a distinction between the text’s meaning and the text’s significance. Instead of choosing side in the controversy about whether the content of the text is due to its internal structure or its reference to the world, he mediates this contradiction by focusing on the one side on meaning (content as structure) and on the other side significance (content as reference). As opposed to speech, where meaning melts with significance, in text there is an interruption between meaning and significance. The text detaches from speech by being anonymous, free of its author once it has been created. The text looses its subject. To take a text seriously, it is not enough to explain it: We must also understand it. A reading aiming at understanding revokes the indecisiveness and fulfills the text in discourse – leads it back to living communication. When that happens the autonomous text has found its subject and the subject is the reader, not the author or the sender, as in case of speech. The text has reached the world and has become anchored in the ground of lived experience. To read is to link the text’s meaning to another meaning – the reader’s experience.

How meaningful might this be for social science? Research is based upon observations of actions/events/facts. One might say that facts in social science represent selections of moments. Moments observed by a person making notes of the facts. The notes are analyzed and arranged into a meaningful whole. Facts do always follow a route from moment to text. The observer does both select events/actions/facts and transform it into text. These texts are material for analysis bringing us the scientific insight.

The narrative tradition recognizes similarities between this process and narration. The texts of the observed events have the function of story/fabula and the way they are put together or arranged - the analysis/theory/truth – has a discoursive function. The theory is a susjett/discourse (Sarbin 1986 p66). Scientific theories concerning social issues, seen from this perspective, are narratives and have to be evaluated as thus, too. Since an increasing number of scientists are in support of this position, the critic against the distinction between fabula and discourse and the argument stating causation to be a rhetorical figuration called metonymy, have caused unease and disorder in social science.

The narrative argumentation has a bearing on the question of scientific truth. The problem of validity in the narrative tradition is comparable with pragmatism. The argumentation would be similar. In activity theory it is impossible to think of facts without meaning or meaning without facts. Both in natural science and in social sciences meaning are constructed in human communication. The difference between them is mostly the object of scientific research. In natural science the objects of research are objects while in social science the objects of research are subjects or collective subjects. The truth of the objects of science is constructed amongst scientists. The rules are decided upon in the scientific community. Validity is a question for scientists and not for the objects of science. The meanings are constructed in a community of
human beings. The objects of social science are human beings - subjects or collective subjects. It seems to be a paradox that they are no part of the validating communication. Some suggestions have been made to use the word validity as a general conception of “the aspect of practical and theoretical activity in which the pragmatic meaning of truth is constructed. In this framework, the different kind of validity, i.e. the practical and logical criteria of truth, also are constructed.” (Enerstvedt 1989 p156) Validity seems always to represent the pragmatic aspect of truth.

A suggestion might be that two different communities decide upon the validity of social research. The one is the scientific community discussing whether the research procedures in the study at hand seem to be good or bad. The other is a discussion between scientists and those mostly forgotten – the objects of research. In social science the object always are subjects or collective subject. They must be given the opportunity to have their say or more precisely, be part of the construction of the scientific research’s validity. That would be the radical position. “Social science, when all is said and done, is the communicative activity of exploring, revealing, and thereby constructing meaning and self-insight in the collective subject (Enerstvedt 1989 p158)

This argumentation lead unusual, subjective and unscientific aspects into the discussion of truth. The research report – the scientific text – would find its subject. The subject of the research would become the subject of the text. The crucial point is that the truth – the text would be validated in the future. The truth is not in the text, but in the readers meeting with it. The meaning is traceable in the “object of research” encounter with the researcher's narrative. The truth is created when the text’s meaning are connected with the “object of research’s” meaning – in the experience of this subject. The truth is created in or after this encounter. Perhaps we can say that the scientific report is not validated until the object of research, one way or the other has taken advice from the narrative.

This means that recognition, remembering, emotions and forms of presentation will decide in question s of validity and truth. Aesthetic is recognized as aspects of rationality. The rhetoric of the text – the aesthetic form – is part of social science and reports from social science - in a larger scale than the scientific community would like to admit. The truth is situated in the future - in the “object of research” future activity.

The discourse in the scientific community has a bureaucratic character. In this community they are managing the rules and supervising the research procedures - obviously important section of the discourse of validity concerned with stability and power. On the other hand it seems to be a backward looking and measuring practice more than an inventive and revealing one.

These considerations touch upon the role of social researcher. What would be the characteristics of this role considering the wisdom in Walter Benjamin’s conception of advice and the idea of inviting the object of research to take part in the validation? John Berger's book from 1967 “A Fortunate Man” might be the point of departure for an answer. This book might be considered as a research report - an original and different one at that. In this book John Berger reports from his observations of a person at work. The observations went on for a period of two years. Berger followed the medical doctor Sassall wherever his work brought him in that period. Sassall was the sole doctor of an isolated community. The inhabitants were called the Foresters. Berger’s
report represents the truth of Sassall’s work. Berger himself did not work alone. He cooperated with the photographer Jean Mohr. The book does not only represent sharp social observations but also brilliant aesthetic form. Sassall had lived for a long period of time in the village; his work had brought him facts of the people and their lives. On the other hand he was a stranger, traveled all over the world, educated and trained in the highly specialized medical profession. In other words he was uniting the lines of the storyteller in his person. One way or the other he seemed represents the counter proof of Walter Benjamin’s observation - the death of the storyteller. I think that John Berger through this work discovered that the role of the storyteller could be recreated and under which conditions. He discovered a kinship between himself and Sassall; a relation he actually made real some years later.

John Berger - well educated, traveler of the world, art critic, leftist and author from the British Middle classes - settles the year 1974 in a small village in Haute Savoie, France. In 1979 the book “Pig earth” was published. The book contains poems, essays, and stories from the village and the local area. It’s the first book in a trilogy where Berger focuses the intricate forces of development that lead from the villages of the peasant community to the city. The man who conceives homelessness and meaninglessness as parts of the same matter most probably disapproves of this progress. “Once in Europe” and “Lilac and Flag” are the titles of the rest of the trilogy. “Into their labor” was the working title of the project. This title covers both Berger’s intentions and what he actually did. He became the village’s storyteller. Dyer (1989 p118) rather laconically comments: “The peasants struggles to exist; Berger struggles to give a meaning to experience.”

From villages all over the French countryside - far from his own village - John Berger has received letters and notes asserting as an amazing fact: ”You are writing about us”. Pleased, John Berger sees these messages as confirmation of the truth in the communicated experience of "Pig Earth" and as indication of the existence of a peasant community.

John Berger seems to be aiming high - maybe too high - he has a grand and naive ambition with this project. He wants to focus - have the peasant community to see, to identify and acknowledge - the wisdom and knowledge experienced through work with the soil. He wants the peasant community to increase their regard for themselves and their esteem of the knowledge and experiences their work has given them. He regards this as a political question of vital importance. Its vital because of the modern society disregard and contempt of this kind of knowledge in a situation were humanity is facing a global ecological catastrophe - which as Berger sees it - only can be adequately opposed by the use of the peasants’ kind of knowledge. (Berger 1988 p12, Dyer 1986 p125, Anant 1992)

Taking the liberty of declaring John Berger a social scientist or educationalist/pedagogue it would, relating to his trilogy, seem right to situate him in the framework of critical social science or liberating pedagogy (influenced by the neo-Marxism of the 1970s). What "the critical scientist with liberating ambition" John Berger realize the consequences of previous to "other" social and educational scientist within the same decree was that "knowledge of forms are basically just as significant as knowledge of causes." (Eisner 1988). Berger relates the insight both to observation and report. It seems like he has been learning both from Cassierer (1945) and Dewey (1938). Cassierer, making a distinction between "visualize" and "conceptualize"- maintains that language
lures us to confuse the concept and what we actually are seeing. We concentrate on the word - the concept of the object - and not our experience with it. Dewey’s point is similar. His distinction is between "seeing" and "recognizing". Seeing demands enduring focus on the qualities of the object or situation; seeing has the character of investigation. "Recognizing" on the other hand is more like labeling the object; when the classification is done the investigation is finished.

This has a bearing on research method and teaching. It has been affirmed when a teacher (in the form of curriculum) and the researcher (in form of research method) put forward categorization and classification of objects and events, both the researcher's and the pupils consciousness are degraded and the chances of experiencing the objects and events qualities are reduced. Our awareness is not independent of the tools we use. When the methodology does not request sensibility in the investigation the consciousness is reduced.

The author, the art critic and the art historian John Berger author of the book "Ways of seeing" (Berger 1972) most probably has devoted his work to "knowledge of form" and esthetic questions. This man in a free position on the scientific community's sideline just improves his "gaze" and expands his authorship. He does not break any scientific rules of behavior. It is when we take the liberty of calling him a social scientist or educationalist he might be seen as a daring representative of an alternative "politics of method"; what Eisner states on a profound level to relate to "politics of experience".

This scientific position might support the following statement: A social researcher miming John Berger in his struggle to come close to his research object's experience would have to leave parts of the power, status and protection of the scientific community behind. May be this "politics of method" would advocate three brakes with the tradition of social science in emphasizing seeing more than recognize, presentation more than documentation and effect more than truth.

John Berger, perhaps, conceived this scientific position through the act of miming Walter Benjamin; He became the storyteller of the peasant community. He placed the validity decisions in the hands of the object of research. And he confronted the scientific ideal that Walter Benjamin probably believed to be the cause of lost ability to communicate experience which obviously is the same scientific ideal that John Berger means is hiding and degrading the knowledge and experiences that is needed to oppose a ecological disaster. He seems to see this scientific ideal both as a motor in the dangerous development and powerless in its attempts to solve the problems.

It is not difficult disagree with Berger’s political analysis. However it must be recognized that he has created role for the social researcher - an alternative politics of method which focuses the epic and the aesthetic dimensions of communication of experience. And he has made it possible for the object of research to take part in the validating process. Their lives might even be influenced by the advice of the narrative through communication of experienced meaning.
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Demystifying the North/Reconceptualizing Home:
How the International Training in Environmental Leadership (ITEL)
Challenges Participants’ Feelings of Inferiority and Belief in the Superiority of the North

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This paper presents some of the findings from a research study that I conducted for my MA in collaboration with Marli Santos, a graduate student at OISE/UT who is from São Paulo, Brazil, on NIEGA, the non-governmental organization (NGO) that Marli founded in Brazil in 1993.

NIEGA and ITEL
NIEGA stands for the Núcleo Internacional de Educação e Gestão Ambiental, or the International Centre of Environmental Education and Management. It is based in São Paulo, Brazil. NIEGA runs an environmental education program for adults called the International Training in Environmental Leadership, or ITEL. ITEL aims to promote environmental and social justice through environmentally and socially responsible and ethical actions.

ITEL’s objectives
• To promote participants’ awareness of environmental and global issues, and of the importance of democratic, cultural and political values;
• To promote the development in participants of an environmental and global ethics;
• To promote the development of participants’ self-confidence and self esteem;
• To inspire and empower participants to take ethical and responsible environmental and social action in their own communities;
• To promote a process of holistic change.

The ITEL program
Launched in October, 1993, the ITEL program is comprised of and run by a network of volunteers from environmental and social organizations in both Brazil and Canada. ITEL holds annual sessions in Brazil, in the city of São Paulo, and in Canada, in Toronto and Montreal. During the Canadian phase of the program, Brazilian participants spend two weeks in Toronto and Montreal, visiting, studying, learning from, and sharing and exchanging ideas and experiences with Canadian environmental and social organizations from the governmental, non-governmental and private sectors. Over the program’s 10 years, 127 Brazilians have participated. Each year, an average of 85.4% of those participants has been women. It is this fact that initiated the current research project.
The Research Project

A year and a half ago, Marli approached me and asked me if I would be interested in conducting research on the experiences that Brazilian women have had with the ITEL program. Given the disproportionately high percentage of female participants in all of ITEL’s programs, Marli was curious to find out what their particular experiences with the program have been.

My position

I am positioned in this research as a white, middle class, Canadian feminist. I speak limited Portuguese, had never been to Brazil or any other country in Latin America before doing the research, and had little understanding of issues in the Brazilian context. I thus was, and continue to be, clearly positioned as an outsider. Despite the apparent limitations which I bring to the research, Marli felt that I simultaneously had something to offer. I have been a global and environmental educator in both non-formal and formal settings, I have previous experiences volunteering and conducting research in the South (Asia and the Caribbean), and I am focusing on gender and feminist issues in education in my academic work.

The participants and methods

Last year I travelled to Brazil where I conducted interviews with 22 women who had participated in the ITEL program between 1994 and 2001. All of the women identified themselves as middle-class. 14 are middle-middle class, 5 are low-middle and 3 are upper-middle class. They come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, including indigenous, African, European and Japanese, and they represent a range of professions (private and public school teachers, non-formal educators, social workers, architects, managers, urban planners, environmentalists, journalists). At their time of participation in ITEL, these women ranged in age from 24 to 51 years. Prior to the ITEL program, only six of these 22 women had travelled outside Latin America to North America or Europe. Five of the women had travelled to Argentina or the Caribbean. Eleven had never had the opportunity to leave Brazil before ITEL.

I conducted interviews in the cities of São Paulo and Mogi Mirim in the state of São Paulo, and in Brasília, the capital. Since I conducted the interviews in English and since the majority of the women do not speak English, I relied on the help of a translator.

Emergent Theme

As I analyzed the research data, it quickly became apparent that new and prevalent themes were emerging which were not directly related to the questions I had asked the women during the interviews, but were rather related to information that participants had offered me unsolicited. It was in sharing these new themes with Marli that I discovered they were in fact aspects of Marli’s unofficial, implicit objectives for the ITEL program. The research focus thus shifted to a study of ITEL’s unofficial curriculum objectives rather than its official curriculum objectives, as outlined in a previous overhead.

The unofficial curriculum

The official curriculum is generally what appears in official or formal documents and includes the explicit goals, objectives, methods and content of a program. However, as Weisz (1989) states, curriculum is more than what appears in official documents. Rather, curriculum is what learners have the opportunity to learn, both through official, explicit as well as unofficial,
implicit means. The unofficial curriculum is that which is not explicitly stated in program brochures or documents, or in activities during the program. Some people refer to this as a program’s hidden curriculum. While not explicit, an unofficial curriculum is often intended and can be included in a program in implicit and subtle ways. The content of such an unofficial curriculum, while not explicit, can be significant for learners or participants, as turned out to be the case for this study.

**Breaking down inferiority and a belief in the superiority of the North**

The rest of my paper will focus on one of these emergent themes. This theme has led to a new and significant research question: Does the ITEL program challenge and break down the internalized inferiority that many participants feel in relation to countries in the North, such as Canada, and demystify participants’ preconceptions about the superiority of the North? As I previously explained, this question turned out to parallel one of Marli’s unofficial, unstated, implicit objectives: that of attempting to break down the colonial mentality that leads many people in Brazil to super-valorize the North and see Brazil and themselves as inferior in comparison.

**Two sources of internalized inferiority and a belief in the superiority of the North**

I will briefly discuss two of the potential sources of this internalized inferiority and a belief in the superiority of the North in the Brazilian context.

**1. Legacy of colonialism and impact of neo-colonialism in Brazil**

The first is related to Brazil’s experiences with colonialism and neo-colonialism. As Paulo Freire wrote in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, “In their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressors, to imitate them, to follow them. This phenomenon is especially prevalent in the middle-class oppressed who yearn to be equal to the “eminent” men and women of the upper class.” Freire, and others, refer to this as a “colonized mentality” or mental colonization or the colonization of the mind (Freire, 2000: 62; Shrestha, 1997). Frantz Fanon, writing in the African context, further described it as “the internalization…of inferiority” (Fanon, 1968:11).

In a more contemporary context, theories such as Rostow’s (1971) modernization theory - which claims that traditional or ‘backward’ societies are able to progress and become modern, a supposedly superior way of being - have had similar impacts on people of the South. Arturo Escobar from Colombia discusses in “Encountering Development” (1995) how the discourse and ideologies of western modernization and development, can become “effective in local culture.” He writes: “At times [Western] development grew to be so important for Third World countries ….that many in the Third World began to think of themselves as inferior, underdeveloped, and ignorant and to doubt the value of their own culture, deciding instead to pledge allegiance to the banners of reason and progress; so important, finally, that the achievement of development clouded the awareness of the impossibility of fulfilling the promises that development seemed to be making.” (Escobar, 1995: 52-53).

**2. The experience of being middle class in Brazil**

A second source of internalized inferiority and a belief in the superiority of the North that I will discuss arises from the experience of being middle class in Brazil. According to Owensby
(1999), writing on middle-class Brazilians in the 1920s and 1930s, the middle class was put at the centre of the modernization process. It was hoped it would deliver Brazil from the traditional and into the modern world. To be middle class was to be modern, and to be modern was to be like the middle class in North America and Europe where it was believed modernity had already been achieved. The early Brazilian middle class thus invidiously compared itself to an ‘ideal’ middle-class standard emanating from outside Brazil, a standard it could never quite live up to. As Owensby (1999) notes, judging their lives according to an outside, idealized standard left many middle-class Brazilians feeling insecure about their place in society.

According to research by O’Dougherty (2002) in the 1990s, the middle class in São Paulo today shares many characteristics with the early Brazilian middle class. In general, it continues to compare itself to a middle-class standard that represents modernity and that is located outside Brazil. In order to obtain and maintain social standing, the middle class strives to attain modernity by consuming foreign (namely North American or European) goods and experiences (such as travel abroad). Through these consumption practices, the middle class accrues cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; O’Dougherty, 2002). According to O’Dougherty (2002), these consumption practices are central to the realization of middle-class identity in Brazil. Attaining modernity allows the middle class to be symbolically positioned among citizens of the “First World,” and to secure and lead a modern life at home. The inflationary conditions of the economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s threatened the middle class’s ability to continue these consumption practices, thus threatening its very identity. According to O’Dougherty (2002), one of the enduring traits of the middle class in São Paulo is its instability.

Has ITEL altered participants’ feelings of inferiority and belief in the superiority of the North?

This brings us back to the question of whether or not ITEL has contributed to altering participants’ feelings regarding their own inferiority and their belief in the superiority of the North. Although I never asked this question directly, 12 research participants offered unsolicited information on how their feelings of inferiority and a belief in the superiority of the North were broken down. I will share a few of their comments with you.

Participants’ words

Emília: As Emília said through her translator: “She thinks that we Brazilians are very insecure, that we feel inferior, and ….we think that people who come from abroad and what comes from other countries are better. That our products are bad. It’s part of our culture. It was important for her to go to Canada not only to see what you [Canadians] have been doing but also to realize that what we [Brazilians] have been doing is important. And that before that we couldn’t know that, we didn’t get too much importance, and we thought that we were much behind. She saw that we [Brazilians] are doing comparable things. From going abroad she thinks that now she knows more and also it has boosted her confidence. By travelling abroad we can realize that we aren’t as bad as we imagine, we can value ourselves more after that.”

Arika: Arika relates through her translator one of the moments this occurred for her on the program: “There was one thing that called her attention when she arrived in Montreal because she got to know many of these organizations. But there was one [that was] special. The man in
charge was a geographer, and he was in charge of mapping areas of the city according to the population of the communities. And she asked him where did he get that idea, and he told the group that the idea was from a Brazilian educator called Paulo…. Paulo…. Paulo Freire. And that was wonderful for her because she could realize that Paulo Freire was very much known and they value him outside Brazil, but here in Brazil we sometimes just don’t care about him.”

Carla: As Carla said through her translator: “It was rewarding for her to see that we could give some contributions because in Brazil there are things that we do that are used there in Canada and this was extremely important for her. Things like the Food Share in Toronto…. and that was something that was done here in Brazil first…. Here it is called Big Bite, a kind of green grocer store that’s for poor people, and she saw that in Canada, an NGO called Food Share. What made her feel honoured is that the Canadians used one of our experiences and we are considered a problematic country, a poor country.” In her own words, Carla said: “I think in Brazil we have many many projects very creative, but our problems are so big and we don’t value them as we should.”

Tânia and Paula: Tânia’s and Paula’s comments sum up in a general or overarching way the importance of the learning that occurred for them on ITEL around this topic.

Tânia expressed: “I think that one of the most important and strongest things from the program was to know that we are doing very important things here [in Brazil]….but you must prepare your eyes to look at the important things and value them.”

As Paula said: “Brazil is a very interesting country and I believe we have a lot to tell, to share, to teach….I came back proud of what we do here. And I have to see something different to realize it. So I believe that ITEL gives you this opportunity.”

Concluding Thoughts and Questions:
I will end with some concluding thoughts and questions.

- If this learning was so significant for these 12 research participants, does this mean that this unofficial curriculum objective has been met for them? Was this learning as significant for the other 10 research participants, or for other people who have participated in ITEL, including men? What does this say about the power of an unofficial curriculum?

- Have the 12 women done anything with this learning and the personal transformation each underwent around this topic? Has there been any action?

- What are the implications of this learning …
  * …for ITEL?
    ⇒ What do we do with this unofficial, implicit curriculum now that we know about it?
    ⇒ Should it become an explicit component of ITEL’s official curriculum?
To what different or deeper levels of critical reflection, analysis and understanding could participants go if this topic was explicit?

Or should it remain implicit and subtle?

* … for non-formal education programs in general?

Can anything be learned from ITEL’s experience with an unofficial curriculum that can inform other non-formal education programs?

* … for the ‘North’?

What can those of us from the North learn from these research findings and from ITEL’s transformative learning process?

What role(s) did and ‘should’ the ‘North’ play in ITEL (and in this research)?

Do these findings present possibilities for South-North solidarity work? If so, what might they be?

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Alternative Approach to Community Empowerment

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Today, micro-credit based income-generating activities have become a major strategy for “community empowerment” in underdeveloped countries. Most of these activities follow the mainstream approach to development in their core assumption that the growth and expansion of the global market economy will benefit society in general and that participation in the global market is the way to attain the “good life”. In this paper, we point out fundamental problems inherent in these activities, and we further call for alternative transformative approaches for community empowerment.

I. Introduction

For those engaged in international development, one of the first questions to be asked following the presentation of a community education project or a community “empowerment” project is: “What are the income generating components?” Income-generating activities, including microcredit programmes, have become the “new orthodoxy” in the field of international development (Fernando, 1997). The basic logic behind these activities is that if provided with small amounts of capital and sometimes, training, the poor will be able to help themselves out of poverty through “productive self-employment” (UN, 1998). The Microcredit Summit held in Washington D.C. in 1997 endorsed a global campaign to reach “100 million of the world’s poorest families” through micro-credit based income-generating activities by the year 2005.¹

When we began working together on a pilot project for community empowerment, Lalit as the director of Uttarakhand Environmental Education Centre (UEEC), and Yuka initially, as a staff, and later as a consultant for UNESCO we too thought that our project would eventually need to incorporate some kind of income-generating activities in order to accommodate the material needs of the people. UEEC is a local NGO based in Uttarakhand, a mountainous region in the Himalayas in India. UEEC has been working with people in rural communities, particularly women, to support them in their efforts to enhance their quality of life and to address environmental crises threatening their livelihood.² UEEC has been collaborating with UNESCO since 2001, building on their experiences, to implement a pilot project on community empowerment with the residents of Maichun village in Uttarakhand since 2001.

UNESCO-UEEC project³ sought to support community members to explore and identify the causes of environmental degradation which were threatening their livelihood, and to seek possible solutions. It took some time for the people to realize that we did not come to them with a set of answers, but rather to help them define and address their own problems. One of the ways

¹ Quoted from Preamble to The Microcredit Summit Declaration and Plan of Action (1997, Washington, D.C.)
² For further reference on activities of UEEC, see “Education and Sustainability: Responding to the Global Challenge” published by IUCN; “Environmental Education in Rural Central Himalayan Schools” by Anuradha Pande in the Journal of Environmental Education (Vol32)
³ The project documents on this project are available at http://www.unescobkk.org/education/appeal/esd/act_comm.htm
that the project differed from conventional community projects is that it took considerable time to draw out and listen to diverse voices in the community, especially these voices that are often suppressed due to the complex power differences that exist within any community. As the women began to find their voices, they commenced active initiatives to address the ecological poverty: that is, the lack of life-sustaining elements such as water, fuelwood and fodder available locally and from the environment. They also started to seek solutions various other issues that affected their lives such as alcoholism and the resulting domestic violence.

In the beginning stage of the project, the community leaders repeatedly asked for “money” and “paid jobs.” As community members were encouraged to reflect on the root causes of their problems, and on issues such as ecological poverty, more diverse voices began to emerge, often reflecting the differences based on age, gender, social and economic status. Some even began to question whether “paid jobs” were what the community really wanted. One community members stated: “We want better agricultural production, no matter how much labour we have to put in…. The most important thing is that we do not have to buy seeds and compost from the market and thus we continue to be independent…. (of market forces)” (UEEC report submitted to UNESCO). On the other hand, most of the youth still want paid jobs in the city. The project is struggling, amidst these different opinions, to support people to work together to enhance the quality of their life.

The findings from this on-going project led us to critically question mainstream approaches to community development which centre around, and sometimes exclusively rely on income-generating activities. Our critical exploration eventually led us to this critique of the underlying assumptions and agenda of these approaches.  

II. The Context

Before discussing the problems of mainstream approaches to community empowerment, we would like to take some time to describe the transition which rural communities have experienced, as it provides crucial context for our subsequent discussions.

First, we would like to present a picture of how introduction of income-generating activities may be perceived by a marginalized member of a rural community. The draft of the story was first created by Yuka, based on interviews she conducted with the people in Maichun, and especially with women who remained silent during the community meetings. Lalit, then, held discussions about the draft with UEEC staff who work with the village people on daily basis, including some who are themselves from rural villages, to provide feedback and input. The draft went back and forth many times. Through this dialectic process, the story of Gita emerged.

A Vignette from a Village in India

As usual, at dawn, Gita was milking her cow, and tending to it. This afternoon, there would be a village meeting because a man from a development agency was coming to their village. Her morning would be even busier than usual to make time for that meeting. She poured the milk into a container. Before, she would have used it to make ghee – clarified butter – which she would sell, and also butter milk and curd which she fed to her children. Now, all the milk went

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4 This critique does not necessarily reflect the views of UNESCO.
to the market. This was one of the development projects. She was happy to earn money, as small as the amount was. At the same time, she was troubled by the words of the health worker who told her yesterday that her children had recently been looking malnourished. Gita shrugged angrily. What could she do? She needed money to give a good life for her children.

Gita carried her container of milk up the narrow steep path to the milk collection point by the road that ran along the top of the hill. A number of women were already there. They stood in circles around the man from the market who tested the fat content of the milk and paid the women according to the content. Malti was excited about today’s meeting. She had heard about another village that managed to get a building with sewing machines from an NGO. Some women were being trained to make garments to sell to the market. “May be we could be lucky like that!” Nandi commented that perhaps they could learn to make handicrafts such as ropes to tie cattle and baskets for farm work so that they would not have to buy them at the market. “My mother knew how to make these things”. Malti cut her off impatiently: “No, no, no! We need to make things we can sell to the market. Making things for our own use does not bring money!”

Gita did not say anything. She probably would not be able to get into these training classes because she was illiterate. She didn’t have time for them, either. They were for richer people like Malti. But maybe the agency could give them some money and jobs. Then her husband would be able to come back from the city and work in the village. But she was not too sure about this. Since going to the city, her husband had become very irritable. When he came back to the village once in a while, he did not bring much money because from the amount he earned, there was not enough to save or send home. Many men came back from the city because they could not get jobs and were ashamed of themselves. Perhaps that’s why so many drank and became violent, she wondered to herself.

In the afternoon, Gita sat in the village gathering place. Like other women, she had fetched the water, prepared food, done the washing in the stream. She had also collected the compost from the heap and carried it up the steep slope to her small strip of land etched into the hill, where she spread it out on the field. She was relieved, though, that this was post-harvest season and there was not much work to be done in the fields.

When the meeting started, the man from the development agency asked how many of them had jobs. A few men who worked in the cities put their hands up proudly. The other men looked down. Of course, none of the women put their hands up. They just produced food for the family. They did not earn any money. The women giggled as Nandi whispered, “we do no work.”

The man from the agency explained how poverty was a big problem, and that his organization would help them overcome this poverty by helping them to participate in the global market. He told stories of people, who successfully built small businesses, and how they were able to build new houses, pay the dowry for their daughters, and provide good education for their children. Everyone was listening now.

“We want to make this process participatory, we want to hear your voice”, the agency person said. He began to discuss with men what kind of income-generating activities they could initiate. Raising chickens to sell to the market …the women making some handicrafts and the men selling them in the market…. Gita listened silently with other women. She knew that in the end she would be doing whatever the men decided. She just hoped that she could be included, and that she could keep back some money from her husband. She also hoped that the activities would not add too much to her work. But she was willing to work. Gita wanted to have money to provide better education for her children so they could have good jobs in the future.
This thought made her look around at some of the youths who had gone to the regional university. They went on to the city but came back because they were not able to get jobs. People said, “That’s because they are failures”. Everyone knew that better education meant better jobs. Her sons would not be like them, Gita thought. Her sons would go to good schools and have good jobs in the city, she dreamed. At the same time, the thought of them going off to the city made her sad. She wanted them to live with her in the village. “But if they stay here, they are failures!” She became confused and stopped thinking about this.

The sun was sinking. Women were starting to become restless. They wanted to go off to gather firewood before it became too dark. This task was becoming more and more difficult as they had to travel ever so farther to find the forest. Gita envied her sister who had married a man from the next village which still had its community-owned oak tree forest. It was easy for her sister to gather firewood and the oak leaves made good composts. The areas around the oak forests had springs which gave a steady supply of clean water throughout the year. Since oak is not a commercial tree, the men in her sister’s village had wanted to cut down the forest to make way for potato cultivation which could bring them money. The women in the village came together and stopped this plan. It was a good thing that the women stopped them, thought Gita, or, as in her own village, they would have been faced with a scarcity of water, fuelwood, and fodder.

“Are there any other needs in the village?” The agency man asked. Gita thought to herself. “I wish we could have a community forest”. Not that she would ever dream of saying it. She was a woman, poor and illiterate, her opinion did not count for anything. Anyway, the meeting was about something else – how to make their lives better, and as everyone now knows, that means “how do we make more money”.

As described above, the impacts of the global market economy have reached remote rural communities in India. Men have gone out to cities in search of wage jobs, leaving behind women and children. Many of these men facing the hardship of living in cities, often slums, with minimal wage jobs turn to alcohol. The media portrays seductive images of affluent western lifestyle in cities, and the youth in the village dream of going out of the village to cities. Education also plays large part in luring the youth to western lifestyle living in the cities, since the curriculum prepares them for paid-jobs in the cities.

III. Fundamental Problems of the Mainstream Approach to Community Empowerment

It is within the context described above that income-generating activities are promoted in rural communities. These activities seek to “empower” people, mainly women who have remained on the fringes of the global market economy by enhancing their participation in the mainstream economy. While women in these rural communities have always been the main breadwinner of their families by producing food and other basic staples (Mies, 1998; Waring, 1990), many had not been directly involved in the market activities. Now, through these activities, women are being directly integrated into the market economy.

There are fundamental problems, however, in uncritically promoting income-generating activities, particularly in these rural communities where people still retain their connection to

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5 Mies points out, however, that the labour of women have always formed the basis of the growth of the global market economy (Mies, 1998)
land. We have attempted to capture manifestations of some of these problems through Gita’s story. We will recapitulate these problems in this section.

1) Obscuring One of the Root Causes of the Problems

Most income generation activities are based on the assumption that the growth of the global market economy eventually benefits all people, and that by enhancing people’s participation in the market, their life would be improved. What is ignored, however, that the growth of the global market has been, and continues to be, achieved by exploiting nature and the majority of the people in underdeveloped countries (IFG, 2001; Mies, 1998; Miles, 2001; Runyan, 1996; Shiva, 1989, 2000). The emergence and expansion of neoliberal globalization in the 1980s has led to a further widening gap between the rich and the poor. The gap in per capita income between the overdeveloped and underdeveloped countries tripled from $5,700 in 1960 to $15,400 in 1993 (UNDP, 1996).

The field of international development has played a large role in expanding the global market economy and establishing the dominance of the transnational corporations (TNCs). It was under the name of development that World Bank and the IMF enforced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) on indebted underdeveloped countries. SAPs prioritized the earning of foreign currencies through export production over the provision of goods and services for the local population. To this end, protective measures for their domestic economies such as tariffs and price controls were eliminated. Today, the underdeveloped countries are providing food and other staples for the world under exploitative production and trade systems and conditions controlled by a few overdeveloped countries and the transnational corporations while the majority of the population in these underdeveloped countries are lacking in these goods (Shiva, 2000).

This shift to export oriented production was made possible by the Green Revolution which swept across underdeveloped countries, changing traditional, ecologically sustainable forms of agriculture into one that is characterized by mass-production, mono-culture and dependency on agrochemicals, seeds and machinery sold by transnational corporations (TNCs). These changes have had and continue to have devastating impacts on many of the small-scale farmers and on the environment (Shiva, 1989).

Yet, most community projects, are uncritically integrating people into the very force, which many point out as being one of the root causes of poverty and environmental degradation. These projects do not provide opportunities to the people to learn about the negative aspects of global market economy or even question the assumption that participating in the global market would be good for them. These projects do not give people opportunities to explore, and thereby challenge, the root causes of their problems. Rather, these activities contribute in obscuring the root causes of poverty by reinforcing the myth illustrated in Gita’s story – that poverty is the result of the lack of access to, or individual failures to perform well, in the global market economy.

Furthermore, in integrating people uncritically into the global market economy, community projects run the risk of turning people into further victims of exploitation through their initiatives. For example\(^6\), one of the few in-depth studies of the income-generating activities by Ana Isla Salas de Rubios (2000) reveals that women producing medicinal plants for the global market in a debt-for-nature swap project in Costa Rica were engaged in nine hours per day of

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\(^6\) Also see the study by Fernando (1997).
intensive labour earning an income far below the average wage of those in the agriculture sector in that country. The income these women gained did not cover their production cost. Moreover, the time these women engaged in this hard labour was taken away from the time they would have used to produce their own food. Maria Mies (1998) also reports that in India, the income generating activity in which a small loan was provided to buy buffalo was provided as part of the dairy development scheme, “Operation Flood”, resulted in women earning less than half the normal wage of an agricultural labourer. As seen in Gita’s story, we have found that in Uttarakhand some of the poorest women abandoned the traditional practice of using milk in various ways to feed themselves and then sell the surplus products to the local market in favour of participating in a “sophisticated” dairy scheme introduced by a development agency. Under this scheme, the women sold all of their milk for a very small amount of money.

2) Strengthening the Existing Oppressive Relationships

In not attempting to explore the root causes of the problems, many community projects centred around income-generating activities not only leaves the oppressive relationships within and surrounding the communities intact but also builds upon such relationships. As seen in Gita’s story, women are often responsible for all or most of the work for income generation in addition to those responsibilities and duties that are traditionally defined as women’s work. In many cases, they have little or no control over the income. To ease overwhelming workload of adult women, female children are often pressed to help (Poster & Salime, 2002) which keeps them from attending or performing well in schools. Some agencies and NGOs target women in their projects from the beginning because they know that they would be more likely to bring more “success” to the projects, particularly in microcredit programmes where the return rate of the loans is anxiously monitored (Fernando, 1997; Poster & Salime, 2002)

While the engagement in income generating projects is often seen as the “empowerment of women”, these women are often left on their own to deal with conflict and violence that result as they try to gain some control over the money they have earned or as they step outside their traditional roles. For example, a study of microcredit projects in Bangladesh reveals how project personnel ignore or are reluctant to speak out against violence in fear of jeopardizing the programme’s acceptance by the community (Schuler, Hashemi, & Badal, 1999).

Since income-generating activities require a certain amount of resources and skills, the most marginalized people are often excluded from the activities and are given no other support by the international development communities.

3) The Devaluation of Ecological Values and the Subsistence Economy

Expansion of the global market economy has resulted in the promotion of market-oriented thinking whereby quality of life is defined in monetary terms worldwide. People in the rural communities especially the youth have come to hold in contempt the traditional mode of production where people produce their basic staples for their own consumption and sometimes trade the surpluses in the local market. As seen in Gita’s story, the production of food and other essentials for their own consumption is regarded as being “backward” and is not considered a “real job” as compared to wage labour.

The traditional mode of production – what Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen refer to as the “subsistence economy” (1999) – is supported by ecological sustainability. In turn, this mode of
production has over the centuries become an integral part of the local ecosystem. With the
degradation of the environment, the traditional production is becoming increasingly difficult.
This adds to the conviction that there is no future in the traditional mode of production: as
Jackson (2003) notes, “instead of asking why the land does not support them, they come to the
classical solution: we must migrate”. Thus, the degradation of the environment the
diminishment of traditional production, and the dependency on market oriented production form
vicious cycles which draw people deeper into poverty.

Most development projects centred around income-generating activities contribute to
pushing the communities further into this vicious cycle by strengthening market-oriented
thinking and pushing people further into the market economy. The time and labour (mostly
women’s) put into the income-generating activities are often those that are taken away from
subsistence production. These losses, however, are not taken into consideration in the
calculation of the income generated from those projects. Neither is the “ecological poverty” that
incurs from the shift to the market mode of production and the alienation of people from nature
reflected upon in these poverty alleviation strategies.

Nature and subsistence activities are the lifelines of the people living on land in the rural
communities. They enable people to fulfill their basic needs without relying on the exploitive
global market forces (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). By alienating the people from nature
and subsistence activities, this present approach to development is destroying the basis upon
which people may build alternative visions and paths for their future.

IV. Alternative Visions

We realize that there are some income generating initiatives that are struggling to find the
balance between providing for the immediate material needs of the people and challenging
oppressive systems. We would like to emphasize that our critique does not address such
initiatives. Nevertheless, as presented above, the community projects which attempt to merely
integrate people into the global market economy as “the only solution out of poverty” do not
empower communities in the Freirean sense (Freire, 2000) of the term but achieves the opposite.
They are not congruent with the principles of participatory democracy. We call for an alternative
approach to community education/development that:

1. Encourages and supports people to critically explore and address the root causes of their
   problems.
   This includes helping them see their problems in a larger context, including the global
   context.

2. Supports people to explore various visions for themselves, the community and the broader
   society.
   This involves helping them to learn about and connect with the broader social movements
   that are challenging various forms of oppression.

3. Encourages people to critically explore and define what their needs are and support them to
   fulfill such needs.

4. Gives voices and the ownership of the initiatives to the people in the communities.
   There is a need to be aware that communities are not homogenous groups and that unequal
   power relationships exist within. Therefore, facilitators need to ensure that the marginalized
   people are given voices in the initiatives.
5. Challenges, as far as possible, oppressive relationships, systems and practices at all levels of implementation including oppression and marginalization of women.
6. Affirms people’s knowledge and ways of knowing.
7. Affirms and enhances, as far as possible, people’s capacity to provide for themselves through ecologically sustainable subsistence production, and a local-based economy built upon such a mode of production.
8. Is ecologically sustainable.
9. Is based upon the understanding that transformation requires time.

Community projects should not be driven by the timeframe of the agencies.

We have presented these visions here as a springboard for further discussion. Our endeavour to seek alternative approaches to community education is very much a work in progress. We would like to invite all of you to participate in this exploration both in discussions and in practice.

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Political Miracle or Popular Triumph?  
The Rise of Bolivia’s Movimiento al Socialismo

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Introduction

The 2002 presidential elections marked an historic turning point for Bolivia. Against a campaign headed by a former president and millionaire mining executive, a social movement of peasant and indigenous peoples came within a mere one and a half percentage points of wresting control of the political power that has eluded them for over 500 years. How were marginalized peasants and indigenous communities able to achieve, in just over a decade, what forty years of powerful trade unionism was not? What factors contributed to the transformation of distinct rural-based social movements into a unified and viable political force?

This paper begins by considering the Bolivian experience in the wider context of rural social movements in Latin America. It then examines the social and political change that has occurred in Bolivia, with a particular focus on the enabling factors and constraints of the past decade that played a role in transforming a “movement in struggle” (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001) into a powerful political force. It concludes by suggesting how these changes enabled the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) to successfully challenge Bolivia's political status quo, with the intent of advancing discussion on whether the movements’ transformation into a political force of significance was mainly conjunctural – an anomalous incident not likely to be repeated - or, alternatively, evidence of a genuine and sustainable political alternative for Bolivia.

Rural social movements in Latin America

The past decade has witnessed a surge in the organizational capacity and ideological coherency of rural-based social movements throughout Latin America. Rural social movements are a response to the continued and deepening impoverishment of people in an age when the health, income, and educational well-being of advanced capitalist societies, and among the privileged in poor countries, has never been better.1 The history of rural struggle in Latin America involves a myriad of actors whose goals have ranged from socialist revolution and control of the state to access and control over less than a hectare of land. Nevertheless, central to all rural struggles is the condition of the Latin American peasantry. Like the peasant uprisings of the past, rural social movements resist the forces that lead to poverty and exclusion, and they seek change in order to improve their lives. In Latin America, these movements range from Brazil’s Landless Rural Workers’ Movement (MST) and the Zapatistas of Mexico, to lesser-known socio-political alternatives such as Ecuador’s Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE) and, more recently, the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) in Bolivia.

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1 For convincing evidence of the rising inequality of world income distribution, see Wade (2001).
There are at least two key, interrelated conditions that distinguish rural struggles in Latin America from other social movements. The first is that rural areas generally exhibit the highest levels of poverty and marginalization. The second feature, central to rural struggles, relates to the significance of land and natural resources to the lives of rural people. In addition to more traditional demands for land and socio-political integration and participation, rural social movements are incorporating concepts such as environmental stewardship, ethnic identity, defense of culture, and gender equity into their platform of values, beliefs and strategies of resistance. Influenced by a mix of imported and endogenous thinking about sustainable development, intellectual property rights, class analysis, nationhood, self-determination, biodiversity preservation, and shrinking natural resources, as well as experiencing the direct impacts of these issues, rural social movements are carving out a new space for themselves as a leading force of change.

Perhaps one of the most salient features of contemporary rural social movements compared to their historical counterparts is their capacity for coalition building in the national and even international arenas. At the same time there remains considerable skepticism about the ability of rural social movements to effect genuine political change that would lead to a redistribution of power and resources in their favour. For example, Ströbele-Gregor (1994) concluded that by the early 1990s, Bolivia’s indigenous organizations had only “a very limited impact upon national policy”, and that their “lack of ideological and organizational unity has hampered the development of a general strategy toward the dominant society and government”. Nevertheless, in 2002, for the first time in the country’s history, a rural social movement achieved significant results in a presidential election. The second place standing of the MAS in the official electoral count (with 21% of the vote) created the very real possibility that peasant leader Evo Morales would emerge as the country’s new president.

Social and political conditions in Bolivia

Conditions in rural Bolivia have historically been among the most oppressive in Latin America, and the concentration of land ownership extreme: prior to the agrarian reform of 1953, 92% of the land was controlled by 6% of the landowners, whereas 80% of the smallholders had access to only 1% of the land (Thiesenhusen, 1995:54-57). The majority of native peoples were serfs on large estates (latifundios) or relegated to indigenous communities on poorer lands (Barraclough, 2001:31-47). Even though Bolivia’s economy was dominated by the mining industry - silver and later, tin – most people made their living from agriculture. The Depression of the 1930s lowered export prices and significantly reduced Bolivia’s tin market. Economic hardships were further aggravated by the enormous loss of life and national territory during the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay (Thiesenhusen, 1995:53-55). By awakening the national consciousness of the Bolivian people, these elements combined to lay the groundwork for revolutionary change. Workers, campesinos and young officers of the upper classes came out of the War resolved to challenge the power of the ruling elite (Clerc and Harvie, 1986:31).

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2 Marginality describes the condition that exists when “the participation of vast numbers of people in the national economic system is intermittent and partial, both as producers and as consumers (Bradford, 1971:33).

3 Although a parliamentary vote determined otherwise, and former president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (Goni) once again took office.
In 1942, the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) was formed, creating a presence in the countryside, mines and cities, something that no other political party had ever done (Ibid:32). Increasingly powerful miners’ unions, the first of which was formed in 1923, proliferated and served as examples to the campesino unions that followed. The occurrence of the first peasant uprisings and land invasions, spearheaded by Quechua campesinos from the Cochabamba area (Albó, 2002:75; Thiesenhusen, 1995) persuaded the MNR leadership to present a moderate proposal for land reform to the Bolivian legislature in 1943. Though unsuccessful, it helped legitimize the peasant cause, and the government sanctioned the first national “Indian Congress” two years later, which led to the abolition of indentured peasant labour. More land invasions and strikes followed, and campesino unions became stronger, only to be subsequently repressed as fear of widespread rebellion grew.

Even though most of its leaders had been killed or were in exile, the MNR won the elections of 1951\textsuperscript{4}. Before Congress was able to name the MNR candidate as the new president, a military junta took control of the government and blocked his return to Bolivia. Eleven months later, on April 6, 1952, after three days of fighting, the first successful revolution in South America took place when miners and others from the working classes, led by the MNR and with the tacit support of the peasants, ousted the junta. Victor Paz Estenssoro assumed the presidency and remained in office for the next four years (Martin, 1958:1).

During its first years of government the MNR achieved its most significant reforms. Mines were nationalized and, with government support, the miners formed the Bolivian Workers’ Central (COB), which was to play an influential role in Bolivian politics and society for the next forty years. Local campesino unions (sindicatos) that had been forced underground reemerged as organizing efforts spread outward from La Paz and Cochabamba (Thiesenhusen, 1995:58). The renewal of peasant mobilizations, including land invasions, strikes and armed violence against landowners, culminated in the land reform of 1953 under legislation more sweeping than what the government had originally intended (Dandler, 1967 cited in Thiesenhusen, 1995:184).

Fiercely opposed by the elite then and for years after, agrarian reform meant that the country’s essentially feudal system of agriculture had come to an end (Feder, 1971:180). The agrarian reform dismantled non-commercial latifundios and gave farm labourers small plots of land. It also encouraged migration to the fertile but sparsely settled and agriculturally undeveloped region of the eastern lowlands by offering much larger plots of unsettled land in that part of the country.

Even though Bolivia’s agrarian reform did little to change the conditions of extreme rural poverty and marginalization, its real significance lies in the fundamental restructuring of land ownership that occurred. It is estimated that some 1 million peasants (or 256,000 peasant families) received land through agrarian reform (Thiesenhusen, 1995:63). The reform also strengthened the peasant movement in the highland region. Land was granted in response to petitions from organized groups of campesinos before being divided up into individual family plots. This gave the campesinos an immediate, tangible purpose for organizing, and the MNR encouraged and supported this process (Ibid:61-62). As a result, the first national peasant union

\textsuperscript{4} Even though most campesinos and miners were not eligible to vote, because of either their ethnicity or their illiteracy, and usually both.
organization was created – the National Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia (CNTCB) – to which peasants were automatically affiliated at the local community level (Albó, 2002:75). Four years after the revolution and prior to the first post-revolutionary election, the MNR extended the right to vote to illiterate adults, peasant and indigenous peoples, women, and soldiers. The electorate increased from a mere 200,000 to over 1 million (Theisenhusen, 1995:59; Martin, 1958:2-5). During this same time, a government-backed and armed civilian militia comprised mainly of miners and campesinos replaced the army and helped to immobilize various counter-revolutionary plots and insurrections. The 1956 election, carried out peacefully and with universal suffrage (despite evidence of widespread voting irregularities), was considered a milestone in the history of Bolivia (Martin, 1958:6). The ruling MNR won the election with an overwhelming majority, and remains a major political force in Bolivia today.

The impact of agrarian reform was very different in the eastern lowlands, where most largeholdings qualified as commercial enterprises and were therefore exempt from expropriation under land reform laws. It is useful here to point out the marked geographic and ethno-cultural divide between the high plains (altiplano) and valleys of western Bolivia and the fertile tropical lowlands of the eastern oriente. The highlands comprise almost half of the national territory and are home to the Quechua and Aymara, the predominant original peoples of Bolivia. A smaller but increasing proportion of the population lives in the remaining half of the country, including some 32 ethno-culturally distinct groups such as the Guaraní and Chiquitanos (who collectively make up less than 3% of the national population), dispersed across the Amazon, eastern lowlands and Chaco ecological regions. Although more suited to agriculture, the area is far from the mines where Bolivia’s early development was concentrated. The oriente was therefore largely unaffected by the redistribution of land to peasants through agrarian reform, and the subsequent organization of peasant syndicates. At the same time, land was made available to those highland peasants who chose to migrate. This began a trend of internal colonization that has continued ever since.

Beginning with a coup that overthrew the MNR in 1964, Bolivia entered Latin America’s phase of authoritarian capitalism. It was governed by a succession of military regimes that, through the so-called ‘military-campesino pact’, co-opted the peasant union movement by granting political favours and manipulating elections to ensure the election of some campesinos to parliament (Albó, 2002:95). During this period, the complex and ambiguous language of agrarian reform legislation was used to grant large landholdings for the establishment of ranches and additional commercial farms in the oriente. This led to an agri-business boom in the eastern lowlands, financed under the presidency of General Hugo Banzer with international loans backed by increased world prices for mineral exports (Clerc and Harvie, 1986:33). Combined with an increasing number of government-issued logging concessions, these new land uses began to encroach upon the dispersed, sparsely populated and less organized lowland indigenous communities. This period also marks the beginning of Bolivia’s cocaine industry, the drug made from the chemical processing of the leaf of the coca plant, an ancient traditional medicine, ritual offering and hunger alleviator (Weatherford, 1988:199-200) that remains a vital part of rural culture and, increasingly, rural livelihoods.

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5 Although the presence and influence of the peasant confederation in the eastern lowlands was negligible.
6 Representing an estimated 35% and 25% of Bolivia’s population, respectively.
7 It is estimated that during the early 1980s, the underground economy led by the cocaine trade accounted for more than
The military-campesino pact began unraveling in 1971 with the emergence of the **Kataristas**, a movement begun by Aymara peasants that gained control of the campesino confederation and introduced, for the first time, an explicitly ethnic dimension to class struggle in Bolivia (Albó, 2002:76-77). The CNTCB was restructured and became the more autonomous Confederation of Campesino Workers’ Unions of Bolivia (CSUTCB)\(^8\), newly affiliated with the COB and with the declared purpose of defending their land. Peasant opposition to the Banzer military regime intensified after a 1974 massacre of campesinos who had organized to demand better agricultural prices (Clerc and Harvie, 1986:33). Four years later, under pressure from the Carter administration, Banzer was forced to call elections, although the government remained in a persistent crisis of legitimacy with a succession of weak political coalitions, coups, and violent repression of the popular sectors. The period 1978-1985, described as “the golden age” of Bolivia’s peasant movement, saw widespread mobilization, the strengthening of campesino political participation and ethnic identity, and the emergence of “a new utopian project of a ‘multinational state’ ” (Albó, 2002).

This period coincided with the return of democratic government in 1982, when pressure from various popular sectors and the COB, as well as divisions within the army, culminated with a general strike in October, 1982, that ended Bolivia’s period of military rule (Clerc and Harvie, 1986:34). That same year, a new organization representing the lowland indigenous communities, the Indigenous Confederation of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB), was formed. The origin of Bolivia’s organized indigenous movement in the **oriente** is very different from that of the peasant movement in the western highlands. CIDOB’s early platform was the inward-looking pursuit of cultural recuperation and ethnic consciousness-raising rather than outward-looking struggle for economic and political concessions from the state. Although most are agricultural workers, the lowland **indígena** (indigenous) peoples do not share the campesino identity. The terms reflect historically ascribed roles and organizational affiliation more than anything else. After the revolution, the term **campesino** provided an acceptable substitute for the bias-laden **indio** (indian) for the highland peoples, while the term **indígena** served the strategic need of forging a collective identity for the communities in the eastern lowlands.\(^9\) Thus, it is not unusual for a highland ‘peasant’ community to have retained more native ethno-cultural characteristics than a lowland ‘indigenous’ community (a first language other than Spanish, for example).

Bolivia’s participation in the so-called “lost decade” of the 1980s was marked by enormous debt (nearly $4 billion by the end of 1984) and hyperinflation (2000% from November 1983 to November 1984) (Clerc and Harvie, 1986:34). With the looming possibility of debt default, Bolivia became a prime candidate for structural adjustment, authorized by Presidential decree 21060 in 1985 and implemented so swiftly and extensively that the international financial community deemed Bolivia “one of the most successful economic adjustment programs of the postwar era” (Larrain and Sachs, 1998:145).

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\(^8\) The **Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia. Unica** (literally, “only”) denotes the fact that there is no other national campesino organization in Bolivia.

\(^9\) This is markedly different from the language of, for example, the landless workers movement (MST) in Brazil. Robles (2000:658) notes that the word **camponês** (peasant) is rarely used today. Rather, the term ‘landless rural workers’ is used by the MST, which serves to identify both its non-land owning origins and its class-based identity.
Eighteen years later, the structural adjustment of Bolivia is practically complete. Predictably, the role of the state has been transformed from “promoter of social equity and provider of social services” to “advocate of fiscal discipline, deregulation, decentralization, privatization and free trade” (Robles, 2000:669). The final steps have included the privatization of the remaining five strategic state enterprises: the national mining company, the mainstay of the Bolivian economy; as well as the oil and gas, airline, railway and telephone companies. Bolivians no longer own or control their mineral or hydrocarbon resources, or their transportation and communications systems, and tens of thousands of workers have been laid off. Along with a decrease in inflation and some initial but now stagnant growth in GDP, the gap between rich and poor has widened, and only a small minority of Bolivians have experienced the promised benefits of economic reform (Muñoz, 2001).

One of the most dramatic consequences of Bolivia’s structural adjustment was the almost complete disintegration of the political role of the COB, and with it the likelihood of any future coalition of popular forces. Privatization and the mass dismissal of mineworkers decimated the ranks and leadership of the COB, and significantly reduced its role on the national socio-political scene (Salvatierra, 1999:3; Whitehead, 2001: 45-46 ).

Bolivia today can be characterized by the unresolved struggle between two tendencies: one national and popular, oriented to the internal development of the country, and the other anti-national and exclusionary, focused on the continued exploitation of Bolivia’s human and natural resources to satisfy the needs of international capital. The possibility of successfully pursuing the nationalist tendency, once the domain of leftist political parties and the COB, appears to be increasingly dependent on Bolivia’s peasant-indigenous movement.

What explains the unprecedented political gains made by the MAS in the national election of 2002? One explanation is that the convergence of two key forces – ‘localization’ pressures from below, and political-administrative decentralization from above – created the conditions necessary for the voices of Bolivia’s socially excluded rural majority to be heard, autonomously and in a politically significant way. Let us now consider a number of factors as evidence of this hypothesis.

**Movement from below and ‘democratization’ from above**

The demise of the COB left an apparent vacuum in Bolivia’s social and political left. Even though the peasant movement has been an important strategic ally to the COB, campesinos and particularly the newer and less confrontational national indigenous organization tended to be viewed as unreliable political allies of the left.

Nevertheless, the peasant-indigenous movement has been gradually gaining ground, to the point of being regarded as the “new social protagonist” in Bolivia. The Indigenous Confederation of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB) came to national attention as the principle protagonist of the 1990 ‘March for Territory and Dignity’, when indigenous representatives marched for 70 days from the eastern lowlands towards a symbolic fraternal encounter with their Aymara counterparts in La Paz. Following the march, the coalition centre-right government of the day officially
recognized indigenous territorial claims for the first time, and shortly thereafter Bolivia ratified ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, becoming one of the first Latin American nations to do so (Albó, 2002:77).

Four years later, CIDOB won important changes to Bolivia’s Political Constitution. For the first time, the Constitution recognizes Indigenous Peoples, their territorial and communal rights to natural resources, and their traditional norms and natural leadership (Salvatierra, 1999:6), rights which for the most part have yet to be consolidated. At the same time, an expressed objective of the indigenous movement is to acquire political power, and to this end the indigenous leadership proposed an alliance with the peasant movement (Ibid).

During this same period, the federation of coca producers had assumed a leadership role within the national peasant confederation. Migration from the highland mining and farming communities had accelerated since the mid-1980s, in part the result of privatization, lay-offs, and the decline of most mining-dependent economic activity. An increasing proportion of Bolivia’s labour force has engaged in informal activities including currency speculation, the small-scale retailing of contraband goods, and coca production in the semi-tropical Chapare region, which absorbed a large proportion of the migrant population. While not all coca production is illegal or geared to the cocaine industry, Bolivia’s U.S.-funded coca eradication program is designed to encourage and enforce a prescribed maximum cultivation. Increasing militarization together with the economic failure of replacement crops has fuelled social unrest, mobilization and conflict in the Chapare.

The main leader of the cocaleros and presidential candidate for the MAS, Evo Morales, is an ethnic Aymara who perhaps epitomizes the astute leader capable of combining rural, identity-based demands with an appeal to the broader public concerned about the privatization of key national industries and the range of urban social ills that have intensified during the post-adjustment period. The political project of Morales and his supporters, including long-time political and trade union activists of Bolivia’s left, has been several years in the making. García Argañarás (1997:66-67) traces the early development of the cocalero movement to the coca eradication program, beginning with a hunger strike in 1989 that won the commitment of the government to allow peasant participation in the development and implementation of coca-replacement policies. By 1992 it was clear that peasant participation in ‘alternative development’ was nominal only, and secondary to the real priority of increasing the military presence in order to enforce the goal of eradicating 70% of the coca cultivation. Morales was already the principle leader in the largest of the five associated peasant union federations of the Chapare that, collectively, decided to opt out of the Development Plan they had originally lobbied for.

Over the next ten years, the cocalero’s strategy of participation followed by abstention and then forced compliance evolved into open resistance to coca eradication, in large part because sixteen years of participation in ‘alternative development’ projects generated either an insignificant or a negative economic impact on the majority of farmers (Ledebur, 2002:1-3). In light of this failure, USAID efforts to create separate producer associations strengthened rather than weakened the cocalero unions. Evo Morales was elected to Congress as Representative (Diputado) for the MAS, at that time a political instrument primarily of the coca producers.
The lead up to the 2002 elections saw the MAS grow from a regional to a national movement with a discourse that combines nationalist, class-based demands with an identity-focused political strategy. The recuperation of natural resources, the defense of land, territory, and coca, together with the rejection of the political and economic interference of the United States and the international financial institutions, resonated with a population for whom sources of stable employment were disappearing, and the promised benefits of restructuring failed to materialize. In less than five years, the MAS was transformed into the second major political force in the country, capturing 20.9% of the vote, only 1.6% fewer votes than the MNR, and 721 votes ahead of the NFR, led by a populist former mayor of Cochabamba. (See Table 1.)

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Source: National Electoral Court, compiled by De la Fuente (2002:2)

* In 1993, the MIR and ADN ran under the same banner, and in 2002, the MBL joined with the MNR.
(1) Votes for those parties that formed part of the governing coalition one or more times since 1985.

Interestingly, Bolivia’s democratization initiatives, including decentralization and popular participation (1994), may have been “unwitting accomplices” to the rising political consciousness of Bolivia’s rural population. Although the new laws were thrust upon an unsuspecting population and initially rejected by the popular sectors (Grindle, 2000), they were soon seized upon as the political tool that the ‘socially excluded’ had so far been denied.
The key aspects of the Law of Popular Participation include:

- **Municipalization**: the creation of new municipalities in rural areas where before there were none;
- A doubling of the municipal share of central government resources from 10% to 20%, and its allocation to each municipality on a per capita basis. Prior to Popular Participation, 92 percent of state transfers were distributed among the capital cities; by 1997, capital cities received only 39%, with 61% going to the rest of the country (Gray-Molina, 2001:69-70).
- **Municipal title to all local infrastructure related to health, education, roads, culture, etc.,** together with the responsibility to maintain and improve it;
- **The legal recognition of neighbourhood organizations, agrarian syndicates, and other community-based organizations (territorial base organizations or OTBs);** and
- **The establishment of Oversight Committees**, comprised of representatives of the OTBs but separate from the municipal councils and boards, with responsibility for overseeing municipal spending and proposing new projects (Faguet, 2000:3-4).

It is primarily from this last aspect of the new law that the label “popular participation” derives; within a year, 10,000 OTBs were recognized, creating for the first time a mechanism for local, broad-based input into government decision-making. As such, the new law is considered by many to be “one of the most profound institutional reforms in contemporary Bolivia” (Veltmeyer and Tellez, 2001:87).

Perhaps even more importantly, the reforms enabled a majority of the rural population to vote in local elections for the first time in the country’s history. Candidates from peasant and indigenous communities (under various political banners) participated in and were relatively successful in the municipal elections of 1995. Peasant and indigenous councilors were elected in two-thirds of Bolivia’s 311 municipalities, and 1 out of 4 municipalities elected peasant or indigenous mayors (Gray Molina, 2001:68). In the Chapare region, all of the mayors elected were peasant leaders and members of the MAS. The significance of this was not lost on other peasant syndicates, and likely helps to explain the growth of the movement in rural areas throughout the country. Many of the candidates who had participated in the municipal elections of 1995 and 1999 also ran in the 2002 national election for the MAS. In the words of a popular campaign slogan, the majority of electors who voted for the MAS were voting for themselves (De la Fuente, 2002:7).

Another decision imposed ‘from above’ that almost certainly boosted the popular appeal of the MAS relates to the so-called “water wars” that erupted in Cochabamba in 2000. The anti-neoliberal discourse of the MAS appealed to large sectors of the population engaged in the fierce and ultimately successful battle to stop the privatization of the municipal water system. The widely reported words spoken by the U.S. ambassador in Bolivia just prior to the election, warning Bolivians against voting for Evo Morales and threatening economic sanctions in the case of a MAS victory, likely had the opposite effect and further boosted electoral support for the MAS.

A final contributing factor to the electoral gains made by the MAS may relate to the number of eligible voters and voter participation rates, both of which were higher in 2002 than in the 1997 national election. There were over 500,000 new people in the voting age population, the
equivalent of 11% of total eligible voters, in 2002. The voter participation rate was also higher – 64% compared to 56% in 1997 – resulting in more than 600,000 additional votes being cast in 2002.

The second place standing of the MAS, together with a system for electing members to Parliament that combines proportional representation with a uninominal, “first-past-the-post” selection (Domingo, 2001:150), allowed the movement to obtain the second largest number of Representatives in Congress (Diputados) and the second largest number of Senators: 35 in total (compared to only 27 for the NFR, the third place party with a geographically concentrated electorate). Their refusal to engage in coalition politics has positioned the MAS as the principal force of opposition in Bolivia.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence presented, I suggest that the political maturation of Bolivia’s peasant-indigenous movement, which has found its most autonomous voice to date in the MAS, evolved after successive periods of domination first by a political party, then by the organized labour movement. During the period of military dictatorship, the peasant confederation joined the Bolivian Workers’ Central (COB), a labour confederation that was more a social and political movement than a traditional trade union. The COB, with no parallel organization anywhere in the country, played a critically important role in demonstrating how unity and cohesiveness through a single, nested structure of affiliation at the provincial, departmental (regional) and national level can lead to organizational vitality, longevity, political influence and power. The organizational model of the COB has been replicated in both the peasant and indigenous movements. The demise of the COB brought on by structural adjustment and the mass dismissal of miners from the former state mining sector created a vacuum in the political left. Combined with deteriorating standards of living, increased unemployment, rising militarism and social unrest, this fostered the development of a strategic alliance between peasant and indigenous organizations, leftist politicians, activists, and politically unrepresented members of the urban middle and popular classes. This alliance subsequently evolved into the MAS, a development unintentionally abetted by decentralization policies that opened up political space for Bolivia’s marginalized rural communities. As a movement that has masterfully combined fundamental class-based demands with an environmentally conscious, identity-focused political strategy, the MAS represents the only viable, popular political alternative in Bolivia today.

Whether the MAS wins the presidency and has the capacity to deliver a viable program of government for Bolivia remains to be seen. So too does the level of international support, or sabotage, of such an effort.

Epilogue

On October 17, 2003, President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada was forced to resign and left the country following nation-wide opposition, spearheaded by the MAS and allied popular sectors, in response to the government’s plan to export gas to the U.S. via Chile. Mass mobilization led to the violent repression of protesters, resulting in the death of 78 Bolivians. An electoral poll conducted in four major cities later that same month (reported in the newspaper “El Deber”-
Santa Cruz on November 2, 2003) identified Evo Morales as the second leading candidate with 21% of the decided vote, compared to 27% for the leading candidate (a former Bolivian president). There is little doubt that support for the MAS in the whole of the nation, including its rural areas, is even higher.

References


Appendix 1:

List of Abbreviations and Description

**CIDOB** – Confederación Indígena del Oriente Boliviano, Indigenous Confederation of Eastern Bolivia. Organization that represents the interests of over 30 ethnic groups in eastern Bolivia and defends their claims to territory, autonomy as a people and the sustainable management of their natural resources. Allied with the CSUTCB.

**COB** – Central Obrera Boliviana, Bolivian Workers’ Central. Labour central representing miners, employees of state-owned industries, teachers, etc. Has played a key role in Bolivian politics and society for over forty years. Structural adjustment and privatization significantly reduced the membership and role of the COB. Mass mobilizations that led to the resignation of the President in October 2003 appear to have revitalized the role of the COB.

**CNTCB** – Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia, National Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia. First national campesino confederation. Later became the CSUTCB.

**CSUTCB** – Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia, National Confederation of Peasant Workers’ Unions of Bolivia. Affiliated with the COB, the CSUTCB represents the interests of all campesinos of Bolivia and defends their land.

MNR – *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*, National Revolutionary Movement. Architect of the Bolivian revolution (1952) and agrarian reform (1953); implemented structural adjustment policies in Bolivia in 1985; won the elections of August, 2002 by a slim margin.
Deliberative Citizen Legislation: A Hopeful Alternative to the Flawed Legislative Initiative

Katie M. Hinnenkamp
MA Candidate, OISE/UT

INTRODUCTION
Twenty-four of the fifty US states have some form of a citizen initiative process, which in theory allows any state resident to draft a proposed law, gather signatures to demonstrate support for the measure, and have it placed on the ballot to be ratified or rejected by voters. While originally designed to give the average citizen a way to counteract the power of corporations and partisan interests, in reality the initiative process contains fatal flaws. It places before voters complex issues without providing sufficient voter education, allows a powerful few to define the issues which end up on the ballot, squelches the voices of vulnerable minorities, and offers little space for compromise or alternatives.

The diversity of voices which make up public opinion could be translated into legislation much more effectively through a system of deliberative citizen legislation. Such a system would educate the public through its participation, include a wide cross-section of the population in defining the issues, insist that vulnerable minorities be heard, and replace a winner-take-all setup with opportunities for alternatives and compromise.

This paper begins by looking at why there is a need for direct citizen participation in the first place. It then goes on to explain briefly the initiative process and outline the ways in which it fails to meet the goal of truly involving citizens in creating legislation. Next an alternative is proposed in the form of deliberative citizen legislation. A model is offered of how statewide citizen deliberation might work, and evidence is given to support the assertion that a deliberative process would meet the public need far better than the current initiative system.

BEYOND ELECTING REPRESENTATIVES: A NEED FOR DIRECT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The framers of the US Constitution were openly opposed to the idea of direct democracy, believing that it would “empower turbulent and contentious majorities and trample the rights of political minorities” (Sabato et al., 2001, p. ix). They set up a complex system of representative government, including numerous checks and balances, to ensure that the nation would be governed by a group highly informed citizens that made decisions through a lengthy, thoughtful process of deliberation and compromise. The structures put into place at the federal level were essentially duplicated by state constitutions, which send the legislature through a similar series of steps to enact laws.

Whether or not one believes that state legislatures are doing their job effectively, there are many reasons to support some form of direct citizen participation in the state legislative process, beyond simply electing legislators every few years. For one, voters overwhelmingly support the idea. When California voters were asked what they felt was the most effective way to solve the state’s problems, over 75 percent said they trusted the initiative process more than they did the state legislature. Even though racial minorities are often said to suffer disadvantages in direct democracy, minorities were even more strongly in support of the initiative, with 83 percent of Latinos and 92 percent of Blacks preferring it to the legislature (Hajnal and Louch, 2001). Reasons voters give for supporting initiative politics include that it “gives people a voice”, that it
“forces issues onto the agenda”, and that it “makes voters aware of issues” (Bowler and Donovan, 2000, p. 651).

Political scientists agree with voters that one positive attribute of direct citizen participation is that it promotes a more aware citizenry. According to Nicholson (2003), participating in direct democracy “may increase political efficacy, knowledge, and participation” (p. 409). The idea that participation leads to learning is an old one, dating at least back to Rousseau, who argued that educating people as effective citizens was in fact the main function of citizen participation (Pateman, 1970). John Stuart Mill, too, felt that government institutions should be “a great influence on the human mind” (in Pateman, 1970, p. 28). Pateman speaks of a “virtuous circle” in which participation fosters learning, which in turn leads to further and more meaningful participation (Schugurensky, 2003). Later I will discuss whether initiative politics in fact fulfills this function, but for now what is important to note is that both citizens and political scientists place a great deal of value in those democratic processes that do promote learning.

A third reason for direct citizen involvement is to act as a counterweight to powers which may not have the people’s best interest in mind. This takes us to the genesis of the legislative initiative. At the beginning of the 20th century, two budding political movements, the Populists and the Progressives, disagreed on many things, but they were united in believing there was a need to “curb the power of corrupt corporate and partisan interests” which were threatening to take control of the legislative process (Cain and Miller, 2001). The initiative process emerged to counteract this unhealthy concentration of power. Citizens could band together to go over legislators’ heads and enact important laws that a corrupt and deadlocked legislature might never get around to. Unfortunately, despite the good intentions of its originators, the process of direct democracy fell short of these lofty goals. In the words of Salvucci (1998), “The ideal initiative would be a grass-roots, bipartisan, cross-cultural effort to override the faulty laws (or inertia) of a legislative body beholden to special interests. Such a romantic vision has rarely, if ever, come to fruition” (p. 878).

Nevertheless, wide voter support for the initiative process in the states where it exists makes it unlikely that they would give up the initiative without a viable alternative. Alternatives do exist. The legislative initiative is neither the only nor the best way of involving citizens more directly in their government. All over the world—from Porto Alegre, Brazil to Kerala, India to Chicago, USA—systems are being implemented that allow people meaningful participation in deliberative decision-making (Fung and Wright, 2003). These systems, though so far existing predominately in small geographical areas, can be expanded and offer a promising alternative to the flawed initiative process.

THE INITIATIVE PROCESS

For the purposes of this paper, “the initiative process” will refer to the system of direct democracy that exists in 24 US states (Sabato et al., 2001). Though a few other places in the world—namely Switzerland, New Zealand, and British Columbia—have some sort of citizen initiative system, the specifics are different enough to place them outside the scope of this paper (Bowler and Donovan, 2000). As mentioned above, the US initiative system came into being at the beginning of the 20th century, at a time when the Populist Party was gaining power in a number of western states. To date, the process is mainly a western phenomenon, and is used most frequently in Oregon and California, with Colorado, North Dakota, and Arizona following close behind (Ellis, 2002).

In its first years of existence, the initiative was used quite frequently, with 295 initiatives appearing on state ballots between 1900 and 1919. Use then tapered off for a good fifty years,
only pick up again in the 1980’s. Between 1980 and 2001, a total of 711 initiatives appeared on state ballots, with over 100 each on the ballot in both Oregon and California (Ellis, 2002, p. 206). There are a number of theories for why ballot initiatives have become increasingly prevalent in recent years, but whatever the cause, this fact means that concerns about lack of democracy in the process are in urgent need of attention.

In comparison to the complexities of the legislative process, the initiative process looks relatively simple. In California, as in most states, it consists of five basic steps. First, an individual or a group drafts a proposed law. Next, the proposal is sent to the attorney general with a $200 filing fee, which is refundable if the proposal qualifies for the ballot. Third, the sponsor circulates petitions in order to gather the number of signatures required to get the proposal on the ballot. In most states, this number is equivalent to a set percentage of votes cast in the last election. After the necessary number of signatures has been collected, the proposal goes back to the attorney general for verification. Finally, qualifying initiatives appear on the ballot for the public to vote on. If it passes, it becomes law. It then can generally only be amended or repealed by another popular vote. However, successful initiatives are often challenged in court by opponents (Bowler and Donovan, 2000).

CRITIQUE OF THE INITIATIVE PROCESS
This straightforward explanation conceals the many ways in which initiative politics distorts the public’s will and gags vulnerable minorities. In reality, as we will see shortly, many people vote with little understanding or opt not to vote at all. If they do choose to vote, their options are limited to those defined by initiative sponsors, with limited opportunity to hear other perspectives and no real possibility of compromise or alternatives. Not only does the process often make for flawed, unresponsive legislation; it also creates sharp divides and antagonisms within communities. This section explores these factors in detail by exploring the answers to five key questions:

Do people understand what it is they are deciding?

Perhaps the most common critique of the initiative process is that it asks the public to decide issues of a complexity beyond its capability. There are a number of reasons to suspect this is the case. To begin with, the arcane language of ballot propositions can overwhelm even the savviest voter. Because the initiative, if it passes, will be enacted into law exactly as it appears on the ballot, the preferred ballot language is legalese. However, because drafters may or may not have experience writing legislation, they often get it wrong. “The propositions tend to be lengthy, complex, technical, carelessly phrased, and ambiguous” (Julian N. Eule in Salvucci, 1998, p. 880). Thus voters, to make effective decisions, must sort out not only the initiative’s intended consequences but also those unforeseen by underqualified drafters.

Whatever the dangers of amateurish drafting, one can imagine far more frightening outcomes from crafty initiative sponsors which employ strategic drafting. As its name implies, strategic drafting is a technique of getting voters to unknowingly support an outcome which is not clear to the average reader of the proposal, and which might by opposed by voters if it were

> Voters generally lack detailed knowledge of the legal context surrounding a proposed initiative statute. Similarly, voters are often unfamiliar with the technical legal jargon that is used in the text of initiatives….While largely incomprehensible to voters, these terms can trigger very precise and significant legal consequences” (p. 878).

In addition to initiatives’ complexity, the length of individual initiatives and the number of them that appear on many ballots create another hurdle to voters’ understanding. Proposition text commonly runs 1000 words or more, and in high-use states like Oregon and California it has become common in recent years for voters to face ten or more ballot initiatives per election year (Ellis, 2002). It is therefore not surprising that many voters exhibit signs of “voter fatigue”, and often react with “voter drop-off”, voting on some sections of the ballot while leaving others blank (Salvucci, 1998). Ellis (2002) contends that initiatives often fail more due to voters’ doubt and confusion than to anything else.

Of course, voters do not rely solely on a proposition’s text to inform their decisions. There are, however, a limited number of other sources of information available, with the majority coming from the biased perspectives of supporters and opponents of a measure. In California, the attorney general’s office prepares a summary of each proposition which appears on the ballot. This summary and analysis is usually considered to be politically neutral, but a telling case in 1996 showed that this is not always the case. Then attorney general Dan Lungren, a known opponent of affirmative action, summarized Proposition 209 on the ballot as a “prohibition against discrimination or preferential treatment”. Opponents took his office to court, saying that 209 clearly aimed to ban affirmative action and should clearly state this. Several court decisions later, Lungren’s summary was allowed to stand. It is widely believed that, had the language been changed, Proposition 209 would not have passed (Salvucci, 1998). This is one of many instances in which an initiative’s wording ends up being more important than its actual content.

Besides the attorney general’s summary, the California ballot contains arguments for and against the proposition written by supporters and opponents. These arguments often include rather dubious claims, none of which are verified by any independent source. Many times they directly contradict one another. One side may say that the law will cost the state millions, while the other predicts a fiscal gain. In the case of Proposition 209, voters were told by supporters that a yes vote would protect citizens against sex discrimination, which is precisely what opponents said a no vote would do (Salvucci, 1998). Given this sort of conflicting information, it is no surprise that many voters leave initiative sections of the ballot blank.

Then of course there are the paid advertisements for and against a given initiative, where most citizens get their voting information (Salvucci, 1998). These ads contradict one another in the same way that the ballot arguments do, and often leave voters more confused than at the outset. Alternatively, voters may only hear one side of the issue, that which has enough money to sponsor an effective ad campaign. Perhaps the most in-depth source of information voters have access to are debates and editorials, though these too are put forward by individuals with a position for or against a measure. Debates and editorials are also much less ubiquitous than paid ads, and must be sought out by voters looking to inform themselves. Unlike presidential or
gubernatorial campaigns, in initiative campaigns there are no mechanisms in place to assure voters that public debates will take place.

Other than the information printed on the ballot, the initiative process has no built-in structures to inform the public. Even the arguments for and against a measure appear on the ballot only if someone decides to submit them. In the end, voters must rely on their own efforts to prepare themselves to vote, a task that I can attest involves many hours of reading and research. It is little wonder, given all these obstacles to voter understanding, that initiative voters tend to be more educated than the average citizen, a factor that is explored in depth in upcoming sections.

**Who defines the issues?**

From the outset, initiative sponsors, not the people, define and control the issues and the process. The process does not require sponsors to consult with the public in any way, shape or form until after the initiative has been drafted and submitted to the state. The wording of the proposition is already set in stone at this point. Drafters, then, control the wording, and as we have seen, the wording can determine the electoral outcome.

Drafters of initiatives therefore have no incentive to consider minority and opposition interests. In fact, the fewer people they include in the drafting of the proposal, the surer they can be that it says exactly what they want it to say. Dialogue and compromise would only water down their intentions. Often “a small, single-issue, less-than representative group drafts laws that will govern all people” (Salvucci, 1998, p. 878). Minorities who oppose such a group’s intentions have few options. Denied a voice in defining the issues, they are even less likely to be heard later on at the winner-take-all election stage.

This is one of the many ironies of initiative politics. While it is true that a majority of voters must give their approval for it to become law, even if an initiative passes, it was not necessarily an issue of major concern to the people. Because the drafters both decide what issues to address and how to address them, people might be voting for or against issues they care little about. As Ellis says, “The initiative process enables people to express opinions on things that matter to initiative activists, but it does not necessarily empower people to express themselves on the issues that they care most deeply about” (p. 79). Initiatives generally do not arise directly out of people’s struggles the way the Populists had envisioned.

In reality, today’s typical initiative sponsor is far from representing the average citizen. The unrestricted nature of the process makes it very attractive to influential people seeking a wide open space in which to exert their influence. Paradoxically, initiative sponsors today are usually the politicians, wealthy individuals, and powerful special interests whose power the process was designed to counteract (Smith, 2001; Donovan et al., 2001). Who else? An elected politician knows or soon learns that holding office is no guarantee that his or her personal agenda is anywhere near becoming law. In contrast, powerful initiative sponsors, even with no prior mandate from the people, have a good shot at getting their own law, word for word, onto the law books or even into the state constitution within a year of coming up with the idea. And even if it does not pass this year, with enough resources they can try again next year.

Partisan politicians, whose involvement in initiative politics used to be seen as unethical, have ended up jumping into the process with gusto. In 1988 and 1990, 50% of California’s ballot initiatives were sponsored by politicians or candidates (Ellis, 2002). Politicians use the process to push through agendas they could not get through in other ways. In 1992 newly elected Oregon state legislator Bob Tiernan was having a hard time getting support for his ideas from his colleagues due to his confrontational style. He decided to team up with a group of wealthy
individuals on an initiative proposing to cut state expenses by reducing retirement benefits to state employees. Tiernan continued to have trouble in the more deliberative atmosphere of the legislature, but his Measure 8 passed by circumventing the legislative process altogether (Ellis, 2002). Former California governor Pete Wilson employed a similar strategy, backing no less than seven initiatives in the 1990’s, some of which he authored himself. Most notoriously, Wilson supported Proposition 187, which was intended to keep undocumented immigrants from receiving any state services, including public education (Ellis, 2002). The proposition was passed by voters, but was later overturned as unconstitutional.

In addition to pushing their legislative agendas, politicians also depend on high-profile initiatives to support their campaigns for office. Unlike candidate campaigns, citizen initiatives have no limit to the amount of money that can be spent to assure their passage. This exemption has been upheld by the US Supreme Court, which protects initiative funding as “core political speech” (Gerber, 2001). A high-profile initiative sponsored by a candidate can therefore make a perfect complement to a campaign for office, with unlimited dollars plastering the candidate’s name on initiative ads throughout the state.

Wealthy individuals, not to be outdone by politicians, have themselves become major initiative backers in recent years, with a good deal of success. As Smith (2001) writes, “[W]ealthy financial interests are more able to assert themselves through the initiative process than are citizen groups…which the process was originally intended to bolster” (p. 72). In 1998 Californian Ron Unz, a Silicon Valley millionaire, decided he was the best man to set state educational policy. He put his money behind Proposition 227, which proposed an end to bilingual education. After 227 passed, Unz went on to back the unsuccessful Proposition 25 (Kaufman, 2001). Proposition 25 would have limited the donations candidates for office could accept, thus giving the advantage to wealthy political hopefuls like Unz, whose right to spend unlimited amounts of his own money to run for office is constitutionally protected. Another initiative backer, billionaire George Soros, has spent over $30 million in five states to sponsor proposals to decriminalize marijuana, with varying degrees of success (Ellis, 2002). In effect, the initiative process serves as “an open invitation for wealthy individuals to write their own legislation, unburdened by opposing viewpoints and conflicting interests” (Ellis, 2002, p. 110).

Money and power are at least as influential in initiative campaigns as in candidate campaigns. Special interest groups thrive in this climate. Groups like the National Rifle Association (Donovan et al., 2001) and the Oregon Citizens Alliance (Ellis, 2002) can exert their power with few limitations. “[S]pecial interest groups are the ones likely to have $1 million to spend, and so most able to qualify measures for the ballot” (Bowler and Donovan, 2000, p. 646).

Celebrities are another group drawn to this arena in which their financial resources and name recognition render them almost omnipotent, with no need to obtain political credentials. Actor turned movie producer Rob Reiner got into the initiative game in 1998, throwing his money behind Proposition 10, which levied an additional tax on tobacco products in order to fund programs for preschool children in California (Kaufman, Nicholson, 2003). Gale Kaufman (2001) wonders “how an actor/director with no apparent expertise in either taxation of tobacco or complex children’s health issues was competent to develop this initiative” (p. 137). Using similar qualifications conferred by Hollywood alone, in 2002 action movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger used Proposition 49, which reconfigured California after-school programs, to launch the political campaign he had long contemplated (Slaughter, 2002).

In their defence, the designers of the initiative process did truly intend the process to be one in which the people defined the issues, however far it has strayed from that ideal. One
structure they put in place to give people a say was the petition requirement. The idea, of course, was that only those proposals with true popular support would be able to get enough signatures to appear on the ballot. From the outset of the process, though, this proved to be wishful thinking. Those who invented the initiative likely envisioned teams of volunteer signature-gatherers who spread throughout the state engaging the public in spirited discussion of the issues. This has essentially never existed. Paid signature-gatherers appeared in the early days of the initiative, and today are a massive industry. In reality the petition requirement is merely a formality, obtainable by anyone who has a million dollars, which is the approximate cost of getting on the ballot in California (Bowler and Donovan, 2000), perhaps a bit less in smaller states. Most initiative campaigns today rely heavily, if not entirely, on paid signature-gatherers (Donovan et al., 2001).

As for the spirited debate probably foreseen by the designers of the process, studies show that people generally sign petitions without reading them. Gatherers stand outside shopping malls or grocery stores soliciting signatures from shoppers, and are compensated with one to two dollars per valid signature (Bowler and Donovan, 2000). And in case people hesitate to sign, signature-gathering firms employ carefully engineered techniques to persuade would-be signatories. Professional petition-circulator Paul Grant discovered that people were more likely to sign a petition if he told them it was his birthday (Ellis, 2002). So much for signature-gathering constituting “core political speech”.

Despite this dubious evidence, initiatives continue to be touted as populist and of the people. Initiative backers certainly get a great deal of mileage out of this claim, and the public seems to buy it. As cited earlier, fully three-fourths of Californians put more faith in initiative politics than in the governor and the legislature, though they do recognize some of its drawbacks, including the fact that “voters are not informed”, that there are “misleading ads and campaigns” and “special interest influence”, and that “too few people vote on the issues” (Bowler and Donovan, 2000, p. 651). However, only about one in ten voters in Bowler and Donovan’s (2000) study expressed such concerns. They found it far easier to name positive things about initiative politics. The most common of these, stated by 44 percent of respondents, was that the initiative process “gives people a voice” (p. 651). The above arguments would suggest otherwise. At best, from the drafting stage on, the issues are defined by a marginally informed majority; in truth, they are often defined by a powerful few.

Whose opinion counts?
From the drafting stage straight through to election day, initiative politics runs the risk of constituting what James Madison called “tyranny of the majority”. As stated earlier, the framers of the US Constitution were opposed to direct democracy for this very reason. The mechanisms of the initiative process provide ample justification for this concern. We have already seen that the drafting process provides no hearing for the voices of vulnerable minorities or opposition groups. In fact, the only minority that may be heard is the powerful minority which drafts the initiative without so much as consulting the public at large.

This remains true throughout the campaigning process. While powerful opposition groups may arrange airtime to state their piece, the voices of less powerful minorities are quickly drowned out, if they are heard at all. Thus any voters who may have been swayed by the concerns of vulnerable minorities never have the opportunity to hear from them. This leads Ellis (2002) to declare initiative politics a successful venue for “[i]ssues for which support is widespread but shallow and opposition is limited in number but deeply felt” (p. 102). No matter how strongly they oppose a given measure, without ample resources an affected minority has
little chance of impacting the process. On the other hand, even if the majority cares little about
an issue, as long as 51% of the electorate feels vaguely supportive enough to vote for a proposal,
it becomes state law.
In Madison’s worst nightmare, the interests of the majority win out with little thought about the
common good. Indeed, not having heard the objections of affected minorities, the majority may
convince itself that it is acting in the common good.
Vulnerable minorities are particularly at risk of having their rights trampled in this way. Though
the initiative process was designed to curb the influence of the powerful, it is often a tool
for the powerful majority to squelch the rights of minority groups. The process favours those
measures that benefit the many while afflicting the few, or afflicting those unable to speak up
effectively for themselves, who may in fact be many. Groups adversely affected by initiatives in
the past thirty years include immigrants in general and Latinos in particular, gays and lesbians,
youth, convicted criminals, and women who have given their children up for adoption.
Immigrants, though unable to vote until naturalized as citizens, are nonetheless
understood to be protected by constitutional guarantees of rights. Ethnic minorities as a whole
also find initiatives directed at issues of concern to them, and as they constitute a minority of
voters they are virtually powerless to respond. California, though now a state with no ethnic
majority, still has an electorate that is over two-thirds white, due to the fact that minorities vote
in much smaller numbers than whites (Hajnal and Louch, 2001). The majority rule initiative
process makes it a perfect vehicle for the scapegoating that often goes on in states with large
immigrant and minority populations. California’s Proposition 187 is the most notorious
immigrant-targeting initiative in recent years. It attempted to deny social services and education
to undocumented immigrants and their children. The proposition passed on the basis of the white
vote alone, with 63% of whites supporting it, while it was opposed by 53% of the black vote and
77% of the Latino vote. Proposition 209, ending affirmative action, had similar results, passing
despite opposition by 74% of the black vote and 76% of Latinos (Hajnal et al., 2002).
Disparity between the Latino vote and the votes other ethnic groups is a common theme
in many California elections. Indeed, while Hajnal et al. (2002) conclude that in general ethnic
minorities fare as well in initiative politics as do whites, they single out Latinos, saying that they
fare worse than other groups in their chances of voting on the winning side of initiatives of
special concern to them. On issues that specifically target minorities, Latinos come out even
further behind, and are in fact on the losing side more often than not. Whites, in contrast, as a
continued strong majority of voters, are always on the winning side of these initiatives.
Gays and lesbians, like immigrants and ethnic minorities, frequently find issues
impacting them forced onto the agenda by initiative politics. California’s Proposition 6 in 1978
would have forbidden gays and lesbians to teach at public schools (Wat, 2000). Proposition 6 did
not pass, but gay and lesbian issues have continued to appear on ballots in many states, with
results often coming out against the wishes of the gay community. Voters in Nevada, Nebraska,
and California have approved initiatives defining marriage as only being legal between a man
and a woman, tying the legislature’s hands for any future move towards legalizing gay marriage.
In 2000, Oregon voters narrowly defeated Measure 9, which would have prohibited public
schools in any way sanctioning homosexual behaviour in students (gaydemographics.org).
Youth, a population made up mostly of non-voters, are also accustomed to having issues
that affect them decided by initiatives on which they have no input. Nearly every election year
finds one or more measure relating to schools and education on the ballot. In another area,
Proposition 21, sponsored by former governor Pete Wilson and passed in 2000 by California
voters, allows courts to put juvenile offenders as young as 16 in adult prisons (Amnesty International USA).

Adult convicts have also gotten their share of attention from the initiative process, though not at their own request. Convicted felons are another group in society which cannot vote, but the framers of the Constitution nonetheless recognized criminals as citizens and put in place structures to assure their rights were retained. Initiative voters have not showed as much concern for the rights of people convicted of crimes. In 1993 voters in Washington State passed a “three strikes and you’re out” initiative, requiring fixed sentences from 25 years to life for a person convicted of three violent felonies, a policy which had previously been rejected by the state legislature. The following year California voters passed Proposition 184, an even more sweeping “three strikes” law (www.pbs.org).

If minority groups are heard from little during an initiative campaign, their opinions count even less come election day. The winner-take-all system assures that even the best-organized minority will be unable to stop the passage of an undesirable law. Despite California’s apparent ethnic diversity, for example, it is statistically possible for an initiative to pass even if every black, Asian, and Latino voter in the state votes against it (Hajnal et al., 2002). The question of who has a voice also raises the issue of voter turnout, which reflects a select minority of the population, often less than 50% of those eligible to vote (Salvucci, 1998). Those who do vote are not representative of the population, as they tend to be disproportionately white, high income, and educated (Hajnal et al., 2002; Salvucci, 1998). Even those people that do vote often decline to vote on many of the initiatives due to lack of understanding or voter fatigue, preferring to leave them blank. “Should a voter lack [sufficient] diligence or political education, or simply lack the time to read the 100 plus page ballot pamphlet, there is a strong possibility that voting on propositions will be discouraged” (Salvucci, 1998, p. 880).

The issue of voter understanding is quite important, too, when considering whose opinion counts in the initiative process. Even if those who voted did constitute a representative cross-section of the population, which they apparently do not, can people really be said to be expressing their opinions when they may or may not understand the issues? An educated citizenry, far from being merely an ideal, is in fact a crucial factor in seeing that election results genuinely reflect people’s preferences and beliefs. As we saw earlier, initiative politics as it stands fails to effectively inform voters of the issues, and thus their opinion cannot be said to truly count.

The influence of money must also be looked at in asking whose opinion counts. With enough financial resources, anyone’s opinion can be made to carry weight. If people do not know or care about your issue at the beginning, they will by the time you are finished spending. Petition-gatherers are paid hundreds of thousands of dollars. Incredibly expensive ad campaigns are run. The spending record to date was set in 1998 by California’s Proposition 5 on tribal casinos, in which a total of $92 million was spent by both sides from the qualification stage through to the election (Bowler and Donovan, 2000). Conversely, without sufficient resources, even the most urgent message can go unheard. It has become nearly impossible to qualify an initiative for the ballot without paid signature-gatherers, especially in a large state like California (Ellis, 2002). If the initiative does qualify, without a lot of money it is difficult to run a successful initiative campaign in the face of well-funded opposition.

Whose opinion counts in the initiative process? The same opinion that nearly always counts: that of wealthy, powerful, educated white people. In addition, the voice of initiative
sponsors is heard more than that of opponents. As in so many other cases, the opinion of vulnerable minorities counts least of all.

**What range of choices do people have?**

Another key criticism of initiative politics is that it poses voters with a binary choice. In response to what may be a complex, contentious, thought-provoking issue, voters’ only option is to say yes or no. As Sue Tupper (2001) observes, “the only real citizen involvement in initiative politics is a forced vote that occurs on election day” (p. 27).

Salvucci (1998) points out that this limits our ability to interpret voters’ intention. If the initiative passes, of course, supporters will interpret it as a mandate for the state to implement the law in its entirety, while if it fails opponents will immediately claim that voters have rejected not only that particular initiative but the issue as a whole. In truth, the fact that voters can only choose between yes and no makes either of these claims shaky. As Salvucci (1998) observes, “There are not any write-in sections on the ballot. There are not any methods available for the voter to express with the voter ‘really meant’” (p. 881).

Clearly, then, if a simple yes or no choice is insufficient for voters to express their opinions, then the process needs somehow to be altered to give the public more meaningful input. As stated earlier, currently, once collection of signatures begins, there is no opportunity to modify the initiative in any way. If people want to participate in the process thereafter, their only option is to join a “for” or “against” group. Even then, they cannot make suggestions to improve the proposed law, however clumsily drafted it may be, but must simply accept it or reject it as it is. Initiatives could come to reflect the people’s will more accurately if the process included citizens in the drafting or amending of the initiative text. The deliberative process proposed in the second half of this paper will do just that.

As the initiative process stands, there is no opportunity for compromise once the proposal is submitted for certification. Indeed, Salvucci (1998) argues that “there is no need for compromise with targeted or concerned groups and often little concern for consequences beyond the immediate purpose of the initiative” (p. 879). This is an obvious consequence of the undemocratic nature of the drafting process. Drafters have every reason to craft an initiative to suit their interests, and no reason not to. Cain and Miller (2001) state that “ironically, direct democracy can actually be less democratic than representative democracy, in that it fails to maximize democratic opportunities for refinement, informed deliberation, consensus building, and compromise” (p. 33). Thus groups that may have common interests will never find this out, because each group will retire to separate chambers to draft its own narrowly focused proposal, and come election day each group will vote for its own law, disregarding the common good.

Just as it sees no need for compromise, initiative politics likewise leaves little space for real discussion of alternatives to whatever is being proposed. However noble their intentions may be to choose wisely, voters have only the option to accept or reject a given proposal as written. Perhaps a simple change in the provisions of a measure might have satisfied its backers while responding to the needs of opponents, but modification of a proposed initiative is not an option. Again, the choice of yes or no is woefully inadequate. Indeed, as Ellis states, “Although voters may prefer a particular initiative to the status quo, given a wider range of options they may rank that initiative near the bottom” (p. 78). How they ought to vote under such circumstances is hard to say. A more deliberative drafting process would bring out the issues involved in more depth, and voters would be able to see the actual dimensions of the decisions they are making. After all, voting for an initiative is a long-term commitment. In most states, once a measure is passed by voters, it can only be amended or repealed by another statewide vote.
Another reason to solicit citizen input to improve initiatives before they hit the ballot is to keep the resulting laws out of court. When initiatives do pass, they often wind up in court due to ambiguous language, a result of either amateurish or strategic drafting. Because voters simply have to check yes or no on a piece of legislation that may contain internal contradictions, courts have a hard time interpreting voter intent (Salvucci, 1998).

**What is the human impact of this process?**
Aside from its political implications, initiative politics has an impact on the people of the states in which it exists. Initiative campaigns are contentious and divisive. “[M]any critics of ballot initiatives lament the shrill, uncompromising, and manipulative discourse typically found in contemporary ballot initiative campaigns” (Sabato et al., 2001, p. xi). Initiative politics encourages an us-versus-them mentality in which some people win and others lose. As we have seen, those who lose are disproportionally members of vulnerable minorities—immigrants, youth, gays and lesbians, and so on. Even voters who support an initiative are essentially left out of the process until the very end, and those who oppose it are left feeling powerless and disillusioned if it passes. The overall result is fragmented and disgruntled citizenry.

**A NEED FOR CHANGE**
The foregoing critiques of the initiative process provide clear evidence that it has not proved the grassroots, people-centered system it was intended to be. In many ways, it is in fact undemocratic.

Critics of initiative process—including Ellis (2002) and Sabato et al. (2001)—contrast it with the legislative process, pointing out that the legislative process has built-in checks and balances and deliberative processes which encourage legislators to take into account compelling minority interests and draft laws that promote the common good. Be that as it may, I have already pointed out several reasons why we also need a forum for direct citizen participation beyond just electing representatives: the public overwhelmingly supports it, it creates a more educated citizenry, and it checks the power that tends to be concentrated in powerful interests and other forms of government.

That said, the deliberative nature of the legislature remains a value to strive for in whatever system of decision-making we set up. The question is how to apply these same principles of deliberation to a form of popular participation or direct democracy. The remainder of this paper attempts to answer this question.

**DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY**
What exactly do we mean by deliberation? Parker et al. (2000) propose a few possible definitions. To deliberate means “to weigh, as in weighing which actions will best address a common problem”; it is “discussion with an eye toward decision-making”. For purposes of this paper, citizen deliberation refers to a system of participant-driven problem-solving such as those in place in Porto Alegre, Brazil and Chicago, USA. These are systems which give people real decision-making power through both direct and representative features, but always with sound deliberative process at their center (Fung and Wright, 2003).

In Porto Alegre, approximately 100,000 people, or eight percent of the population, participate every year in the city’s participatory budget process. The process begins with regional meetings in various parts of the city, which are open to members of city government, representatives of community-based organizations (CBOs), and anyone else who is interested, though only people who live in that region can vote in decisions. Delegates from these regions
are selected to a city-wide council, which goes on to establish a municipal budget (Fung and Wright, 2003).

Similar systems govern schools and police beats in Chicago. The Chicago Public School system is run primarily by 560 individual school councils, made up of parents, teachers, community members, students at the high school level and the school’s principal, who is hired by the council itself. The councils are responsible for, among other things, evaluating staff and writing a school budget. Due to problems similar to those the school system was experiencing, the Chicago Police Department also opted to decentralize power in the mid 1990s. Communities are divided into police “beats”, and policing priorities and strategies are set up at monthly meetings attended by local police and neighbourhood residents. Both the Porto Alegre system and the citizen bodies in Chicago provide participants with ongoing training in deliberative process (Fung and Wright, 2003).

These and other deliberative systems have in common a practical orientation towards common problems, which puts everyone on the same task of working for a solution that serves the common good. This contrasts with other ways of group decision-making, such as debate or aggregative voting, where participants organize into factions around pre-formulated agendas which serve their self-interests (Parker et al., 2000). Structures are in place to ensure people that respect deliberative norms of speaking in turn, listening to all points of view, and being willing to change one’s own mind as well as attempting to sway others’ opinions. Additional measures, sometimes known as enabling structures, encourage the participation of those who generally find themselves marginalized in the political process, and see that all voices are heard.

DELIBERATIVE CITIZEN LEGISLATION: A MODEL

Though the Porto Alegre and Chicago systems operate at a city, rather than a statewide level, Fung and Wright (2003) express optimism that such systems “can be expanded both horizontally—into other policy areas—and vertically—into higher and lower levels of institutional and social life”. Indeed, the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, where Porto Alegre is located, began implementation of a statewide participatory budget in 1997. There is reason to believe, then, that citizen deliberation can work on a large scale.

In this section I outline one potential model that could replace the current initiative process with a system of deliberative citizen legislation. This is a simplified skeleton of a model, and still very rough. In the spirit of deliberative democracy, it should be taken not as a final answer, but as a starting point, to be discussed and adapted to best fit the needs of a given population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DELIBERATIVE CITIZEN LEGISLATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Proposed Structure</td>
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Four levels of participation

Neighbourhood councils

The main function of neighbourhood councils is to identify issues of local concern which could be addressed by statewide legislation. Each neighbourhood council then elects 3 delegates to the regional council, including at least 2 from established community-based organizations (CBOs). Neighbourhood councils also give input on legislative proposals once they have been drafted and, once these proposals appear on the ballot, serve as centers for public education and deliberation in the weeks prior to the
election. Dependent on local needs and interests, the neighbourhood councils might grow to perform functions outside the citizen legislation process.

Neighbourhood councils are open to anyone living in the area. Statewide each neighbourhood council represents approximately the same number of people. A small town may have only one neighbourhood council, while a large city would have several. The structure of the neighbourhood councils is more flexible than that of the regional or statewide councils. For some tasks the neighbourhood council might choose to break into committees, or it may prefer to perform all functions as a single body.

People are actively recruited to participate, especially through established CBOs. Emphasis is placed on working with CBOs that represent vulnerable minorities, such as the poor, the homeless, immigrants, people of color, youth, and gays and lesbians. Both CBO staff and the community members they work with are encouraged to attend neighbourhood councils. CBO participation is emphasized to counteract the influence of the corporate interests, wealthy individuals, non-grassroots organizations, and professional politicians that currently control most initiative processes. An established CBO is defined as one that has several years of history working in the community to address issues of concern to community members, and is given special recognition in this process. This is to distinguish it from any group formed with the sole purpose of getting its own issues on the ballot when they may not reflect ongoing concerns in the community.

Staff and members of churches, schools, chambers of commerce, and local government are also kept abreast of neighbourhood council meeting schedules.

**Regional councils**
The regional councils are the bodies in this process that actually draft citizen legislation. They base the issues they address on the input from the neighbourhood councils, and work with qualified legal advisors to assure that their proposals are soundly drafted.

There are 3 to 5 regional councils in the state, depending on the state’s size. This council consists of delegates elected at the neighbourhood councils.

For certain tasks the regional councils break into committees based on interests or expertise. These committees can invite in experts to advise them at any stage in the process, though these experts will not be voting members of the council.

**Statewide council**
The statewide council meets only once a year, at the conclusion of the deliberative citizen legislation process. The statewide council's task is to eliminate any redundancies wherein more than one legislative proposal addresses the same issue. If there are redundancies, the statewide council goes through a deliberative process to determine which of the redundant proposals should go on the ballot. If they become deadlocked, the issue is decided by a vote. The statewide council cannot alter any legislative proposal it receives. After eliminating redundancies, the statewide council submits the remaining proposals to appear on the next ballot.

**Statewide electorate**
As in the current initiative process, the statewide electorate ultimately decides the fate of proposed legislation with a yes or no vote. However, the neighbourhood councils are responsible for holding forums for people to learn about and discuss legislative proposals in the weeks prior to the election. Neighbourhood councils conduct extensive outreach to be sure community members are aware of these forums. In this way, voters have ample opportunity to make an informed choice. If they are unhappy with the choices available to them, they are invited to participate in the next neighbourhood council meeting.

**Enabling structures**

To encourage people to participate in neighbourhood, regional, and statewide councils despite obstacles they may face, participants are eligible for reimbursement for travel expenses. Neighbourhood council meetings are held in the neighbourhood, while regional and statewide meetings are held in central locations, with transportation assistance available for any delegates who have difficulty arriving. Childcare and meals are provided during council meetings. Interpreters are available to overcome language differences, as is assistance for those with low literacy. Other enabling structures may be developed as needs arise.

**Participant training**

Because learning through participation is not enough, participants are offered trainings on deliberative skills and attitudes. A “Principles of Deliberative Citizen Legislation” workshop is held periodically for new participants, and ongoing trainings on a variety of topics serve as refreshers or to deepen people's level of participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed work schedule</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January-February</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose 3 delegates to regional council, including at least 2 from established CBOs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March-June</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Choose priority issues from neighbourhood proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Committees draft potential legislative solutions with help from a qualified legal advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Whole regional council deliberates on committee proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Proposals are returned to committees to make changes suggested during deliberation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Whole regional council reviews proposals, votes to choose up to 3 proposals for submission to other regional councils</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July-September</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Committees examine proposals and make comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Whole regional council deliberates on all proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comments made can include a recommendation to table a proposal, along with reasons why</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Summarize and record comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>At the same time, neighbourhood councils receive (up to 15) legislative proposals. Tasks:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Break into committees, if desired</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Deliberate on some or all the proposals</td>
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</tbody>
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• Comments made can include a recommendation to table a proposal, along with reasons why
• Summarize and record comments

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<tr>
<th>October-November</th>
<th>Proposals, along with summarized comments, are returned to the regional councils that drafted them. Regional council tasks:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Committees review comments from other regions and amend or table proposals as they see fit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Whole regional council votes to decide which proposals to submit to statewide council</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Elect 3 delegates to statewide council, at least 2 of them from established CBOs</td>
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<tr>
<th>December</th>
<th>Statewide council meets. Task:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine whether there are any redundancies wherein more than one legislative proposal addresses the same issue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If so, deliberate to determine which of the redundant proposals should go on the ballot. If deadlocked, decide by a vote</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Submit all remaining proposals to appear on the next statewide ballot</td>
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<tr>
<th>Next election</th>
<th>Voters statewide decide whether to adopt the legislation</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood councils hold forums to educate people about the issues, allow for open discussion of pros and cons</td>
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**HOW A PROCESS OF DELIBERATIVE CITIZEN LEGISLATION WOULD OVERCOME THE SHORTCOMINGS OF INITIATIVE POLITICS**

Now let us consider how introducing citizen deliberation would transform the initiative process into a truly people-centered system. In doing so I will refer back to the model proposed above, but the assertions I make would be equally true of any well-designed system of deliberative citizen legislation. Such a system would create a citizenry that genuinely understood the issues at hand; in fact, the issues would be defined by them. Enabling structures would see that everyone’s opinion was taken into account, and a deliberative process would open a space for true compromise. Just as importantly, such a process would go a long way towards making a lot of disparate voices into a community. To expand on these points I will return to the five questions addressed in the critique of initiative politics, this time asking them of the deliberative citizen legislation model:

- Do people understand what it is they are deciding?
- Who defines the issues?
- Whose opinion counts?
- What range of choices do people have?
- What is the human impact of this process?

**Do people understand what it is they are deciding?**

As mentioned earlier, political thinkers have long emphasized the educative value of political participation. Rousseau believed that this was a crucial reason for people to participate. In the same tone, John Stuart Mill felt that political institutions should be evaluated on “the degree to which they promote the general mental advancement of the community, including under that the phrase advancement in intellect, in virtue, and in practical activity and efficiency” (in Pateman, 1970, p. 28-29). A deliberative institution holds up very well to Mill’s standard. A process of deliberation is an excellent way for people to increase their political understanding. By taking the time to talk together and to listen to one another’s analysis of the situation, people come to
understand the matters at hand at a much deeper level than they would sitting at home reading through the text of ballot propositions. Thus, in Pateman’s virtuous circle, they become better prepared for future participation (Schugurensky, 2003).

People learn through participating in deliberative democracy, but learning through participation takes time. Participants need to gain certain skills early on to be able to participate effectively. Pateman refers to political capacity as “both a result [of] and a precondition for good participation” (Schugurensky, 2003). For this reason, my proposed model of deliberative citizen legislation would include both initial and ongoing trainings for participants in the skills and attitudes necessary for successful deliberation. These skills include:

- data-gathering and data-analysis procedures,
- participating in and moderating discussions of controversial issues,
- seeking opposing points of view,
- expressing positions and the reasoning that supports them,
- searching for missing voices and perspectives,
- weighing alternatives, and
- predicting consequences of alternatives (Parker et al., 2000, p. 157).

In addition to these skills, attitudes which would be discussed in trainings and encouraged by procedural structures are those that support a culture of deliberation, including respect for diversity, taking the time to consider evidence and weigh one’s decisions, and an openness to truly listen to perspectives one might not share and to examine one’s own point of view (Parker et al., 2000).

Another reason that citizens in a deliberative citizen legislation process like the one I propose would be likely to understand the decisions being made is that they themselves would define both the problems and the solutions. Unlike the initiative process, where proposed legislation is drafted with no input from the public, in the deliberative process there would be no decision-makers but the public. Thus issues of importance would arise directly from people’s own experience, and what do people understand better than the situation in which they live? Deliberative decision-making would do more than educate voting participants. Its open-door policy would mean that any member of the public could attend deliberation sessions. Thus young people and new immigrants would be encouraged to sit in and be exposed to the workings of democracy even before being granted voting rights. By the time they came of age or applied for naturalization, they would be well on their way to understanding community concerns and the way in which deliberative democracy addresses them.

Who defines the issues?
The system of deliberative citizen legislation I have in mind rejects the logic of the initiative system, which essentially begins by offering a solution, whether or not the public has identified a problem. In deliberative citizen legislation, the first step would be to sit down in face-to-face public meetings and find out what the problems were. Because this would be done live and in person, no one could know in advance just what problems would emerge, and so no one could arrive at a meeting with pre-packaged solutions. In this sense, all participants would begin the process on the same page. No one could be the expert at this point, because each individual would be the authority on his or her own situation.

Starting with a problem all participants can agree exists obliges participants to set aside—for a while anyway—their pre-formulated, self-interested agendas. The task at hand is to find solutions to common problems. When a problem is defined collectively, a collective solution that serves the common good is much more likely to emerge. A shared problem “is the common ground that makes of [people] a single public, at least for the time being” (Parker et al., 2000). While this may sound idealistic, Fung and Wright (2003) stress that a deliberative process “does
not require participants to be altruistic or to converge upon a consensus of value, strategy, or perspective”. The important factor is beginning with a common problem, which by definition necessitates a common solution.

Once participants collectively identified issues of concern, the next step would be to prioritize them (Fung and Wright, 2003). This would again be done through deliberation, ranking issues according to severity of need or intensity of preference, factors which are central in deliberative democracy but factor not at all into majoritarian systems (Ellis, 2002). If differences in priority were not resolved through prolonged dialogue, a vote might be taken. Deliberative voting, though, differs from the traditional concept of aggregative voting, in which “individuals simply vote according to their own self-interest, without necessarily considering the reasonableness, fairness, or acceptability of that option to others” (Fung and Wright, 2003). Because deliberation is always striving toward a common solution to common problems, participants would be expected to vote according to which option seemed most reasonable and best able to further the group’s agenda.

Enabling structures would be crucial so that a broad cross-section of the community could be active in defining the issues. The system design must include multiple and ongoing incentives for vulnerable minorities to participate, not only to assure that they attend meetings, but that they speak up and are heard. Otherwise we would be back to a system resembling initiative politics, where a privileged minority defines the issues for the public as a whole. The beauty of a deliberative process with effective enabling structures is that it would create a body diverse enough to truly represent the public as a whole. Therefore the only ideas that would get off the ground would be those the public really cared about. Deliberation, say Parker et al. (2000), “is absolutely meaningless when separated from problems worth deliberating.” Special interest groups that came into a deliberative citizen legislation session with their own ideas of how the process should go would therefore be met with blank stares if their proposals did not address the problems that participants were trying to solve.

This model of deliberative citizen democracy probably differs most sharply from initiative politics at this initial stage of defining the issues. The two methods could not be more different. While the drafting stage of the initiative process is so closed in nature that it could literally begin with a single individual sitting down and sketching out what he thought the next state law should be, deliberative citizen legislation would force this step wide open, incorporating a diversity of voices, and beginning by defining common problems. Deliberative legislation would also involve the group in prioritizing which issues most urgently need to be addressed, a step which initiative politics skips entirely. In reality, as was stated earlier, the fact that an initiative appears on the ballot has little or nothing to do with whether the public considers it an important matter.

Whose opinion counts?
The initiative process is often a successful venue for “[i]ssues for which support is widespread but shallow and opposition is limited in number but deeply felt” (Ellis, 2002). This is due, of course to its majoritarian, winner-take-all design. Voters do not have the option to say, “I don’t care much about this issue, but I guess I agree with you.” Neither can they say, “I strongly disagree with this proposal, and if it passes it will be disastrous for my family and me.” They simply say yes or no, without being able to express compelling need. A deliberative process, through dialogue, brings forward this deep opposition and the concerns that minorities may have. No decision is made until everyone with something to say has spoken up. Thus even if the
process does finally end with a vote taken, those voting are doing so after hearing all voices and weighing intensities of preference, keeping the common good in mind.

However, vulnerable minorities are not accustomed to having a say in decisions that affect them, and high-status groups are unused to giving them the floor. Structural design, then, is key to assuring that all members of the public have a voice in deliberative democracy. As Parker et al. (2000) point out, the structure must guard against the exclusion of “the poor, women, and oppressed ethnic, religious, and racial minorities” who are so often marginalized. The goals here are twofold. First, marginalized groups must be encouraged to attend. Once they do, structures must be in place to ensure that they actively participate. Some examples of these enabling structures are discussed below.

Disempowered people face multiple obstacles in getting involved in the community. The model suggested above would enlist the help of CBOs to actively recruit participants from marginalized groups. Practical concerns like lack of transportation or childcare would be addressed. Interpreters and assistants would be made available to people who did not speak the local language or those with low literacy. Having multiple access points to the process would allow people to participate at the level and in the context in which they feel most comfortable (Parker et al., 2000). Holding meetings at different times, days, and locations would allow people to work it into their schedules. Building this sort of enabling structures into the process would demonstrate a commitment to include marginalized people and encourage them to attend.

Rather than ignoring, as initiative politics does, the fact that power differentials silence some while building a giant soapbox for others, a process of deliberative citizen legislation would look these power imbalances in the eye, and take great pains to neutralize them as much as possible. Appropriate structures must be in place to carve out a forum for the voices of those who are not usually heard. Fung and Wright (2003) suggest involving labour unions, advocacy groups, and CBOs which can “check the tendencies of both officials and groups of citizens to commandeer ostensibly deliberative processes to advance their own narrow needs” (p. 23).

Deliberative citizen legislation could even give voice to those who are not eligible to vote. As we saw earlier, youth, non-citizen immigrants, and other non-voters are often the subject of direct democracy legislation, though the process gives them no way to weigh in on the matters at hand. In a deliberative legislation system these groups could attend neighbourhood forums and speak up on issues that concern them. Though they would not have a final say in the form of a vote, they could nevertheless stand up for themselves if their rights were being threatened.

What range of choices do people have?
The initiative process, as we have seen, limits citizens to a single choice on even the most complex issues: yes or no? In contrast, the deliberative citizen legislation model is all about alternatives and compromise. Because participants would have access to the objections of opposition groups and vulnerable minorities, they would be much more likely to incorporate these concerns into the decisions they made. Deliberation would provide space and incentive for parties to change their minds, thus approaching a common decision. And if opponents were not satisfied with the first draft of a proposal, it could be rewritten until participants were convinced that it served the common good rather than narrow self-interest. “The essential need, says John Dewey (in Salvucci, 1998), “is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion” (p. 871).

Compromise is a crucial element of democracy, and one sorely lacking from initiative politics. “Populism’s glorification of ‘the people’ as unified and monolithic makes little or no
allowance for the conflict of values and interests that makes political bargaining and compromise necessary” (Ellis, 2002, p. 203). Crucial here is the concept of compelling need or intensity of preference (Ellis, 2002). If two groups were advocating for two competing things, in a system of deliberative legislation they would both have a chance to state their case. The group as a whole would then have to decide whose need was really more compelling. One group might get what it was asking for, or a compromise might be reached that resembled neither of the original proposals. In the end, participants in a process of genuine deliberation would come together around the course of action which was most likely to further the common good.

The final proposal to emerge from a deliberative session rarely resembles the ideas that individuals had going into the process. This is exactly the purpose of deliberation. Conclusions reached by a body of individuals with real knowledge of the problems and a diversity of experiences are bound to be more complete and more effective than something an individual or a small homogeneous group might come up with on its own. Says Ellis (2002) of representative democracy, “The point of having selected individuals study, discuss, and debate public policy in a face-to-face forum was that they might reach a judgement that was different from the opinion with which they began” (p. 200). The same can be said of citizen deliberation. In addition, by bringing in a wide variety of voices, deliberative citizen legislation would be able to approach a problem from different angles and would have a good chance of finding a viable solution. Encouraging previously excluded minorities to speak up is not only good for them; it improves the outcomes by making policy that is more responsive to society’s problems.

A common critique of the deliberative process is that it takes a great deal of time. Certainly, in the case of deliberative citizen legislation, actively recruiting new participants, holding multi-level forums, giving everyone who wished to a chance to speak, providing time for responses and questions, and writing and rewriting proposals until people were satisfied with them all would take time, much more time than is needed in the initiative process to draft a proposal, circulate a petition, print up ballots, and hold an election. This difference is intentional. The very speed and ease with which initiative politics works is what makes it so frightening. Sweeping legislative changes can be put in place before people know what hit them. Deliberation, on the other hand, gives participants time to weigh the options, consider the pros and cons, and change their minds if new information arises. Proposals that emerge are thus much more carefully considered, and likely to be sound legislation.

**What is the human impact of this process?**

Like the initiative process, deliberative citizen legislation would impact the people and communities on a personal level. However, this impact would look quite different than that of initiative politics. Deliberation, unlike the initiative process, encourages respect for the opinions of others and regard for those less able to speak up for themselves. It insists that compelling need and intensity of preference weigh in, rather than each individual charging ahead after his or her own self-interest. With the common good as its central concept, deliberation builds community. The human impact of deliberative citizen legislation properly implemented would be to nurture and draw out people’s humanity.

**CONCLUSION**

When the initiative process came in to being in the western United States 100 years ago, its proponents were optimistic that it would be successful in making state government more responsive to the people. However, as the foregoing evidence has shown, the system has failed to accomplish this. In this paper I have asked five questions of initiative politics and of my
proposed alternative, deliberative citizen legislation. I have demonstrated that some form of deliberative citizen legislation—either the model I propose or some variation based on the same principles—would provide a more satisfactory answer to each of the questions.

First, while the initiative process often leaves voters overwhelmed with information and unsure what they are deciding, a system of deliberation would base the issues in people’s own experience and provide ample opportunity for community members to deepen their understanding of the options through dialogue. Secondly, initiative politics begins with the backroom drafting of a proposal which cannot be altered from that point on. Deliberative citizen legislation, quite the opposite, would throw the doors wide open and include everyone—including youth, new immigrants, and other non-voters—in defining the issues that mattered to the community. Third, initiatives are adopted or rejected by winner-take-all elections, with few structures built in for opponents to be heard. In deliberative citizen legislation, on the other hand, the majority of the system’s time and resources would go toward making sure that everyone with an opinion had a chance to speak up. Fourth, short of drafting their own legislation, all citizens in initiative politics can do is choose yes or no. In contrast, a deliberative process would allow a whole range of choices, compromises, and alternatives to emerge, with participants able to weigh intensity of preference and adopt the option that comes closest to meeting the common good.

Finally, the two systems differ greatly in their human impact. Initiative politics pits proponents and opponents against each other, with no common ground on which to meet. As a result, successful initiative backers and mainstream voters become more aware of their clout and better poised to use it in the future, while the defeated minority becomes increasingly disgruntled and more likely to opt out of the process. Deliberative citizen legislation, conversely, would be inclusive by design, with structures in place to consciously bridge divides between groups and build community. The result would be a population more willing to see problems as belonging to everyone in the state, and their solutions as a communal responsibility.

There are those who will argue that real life is about competition and the triumph of the strongest; that the rule of the majority, ugly though it may appear at times, is natural and inevitable. This perspective fails to recognize that people in fact use deliberative practices on an everyday basis, in both personal and institutional settings. Children negotiate with their parents for a later bedtime. Employees convince their bosses to let them telecommute to work. It could be also argued that it is an inherently human characteristic to defend the rights of those unable to defend themselves and to consider their compelling needs: to chastise a family member for telling a racist joke or to give up one’s seat on the bus to an elderly passenger. The principles of deliberative democracy, then, are not as idealistic as its critics would have us believe. A system of truly deliberative citizen legislation is not only desirable; it is attainable. And initiative politics in its current state—sullied by money, power, and tyranny of the majority—has shown us it is time for a change.
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PBS website on the POV television program: http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov1999/therelegacy/timeline.html


Globalization and Education within two Revolutionary Organizations in the United States of America

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Neoliberal globalization, along with the economic, political, and cultural fallout that come with it, is widely considered to be one of the most important issues facing the field of adult education today. Ironically, for a field such as adult education that does not have a long tradition of political economic analysis (see Youngman, 2000, pp. 33-34), the very force of the imposition of neoliberalism has made political economic analysis of capitalism essential for adult educators’ assessment of the current period. At the core of this analysis is globalization. Over twenty years of rightwing ascendance and leftwing retreat, however, have not left adult education in a very good theoretical or practical position to address the question of globalization. Postmodernism’s insistence on de-centering and fragmentation influenced the move in adult education toward localized nongovernmental organization (NGO) development initiatives and civil society theorizing rather than a focus on capitalism and on the state as an agent of globalization. These civil societarian (Welton, 1997) initiatives in the form of privatized community development have often times tailed neoliberalism rather than challenge its core principles.

In an effort to move beyond civil societarian theory and practice, this paper presents the findings of ongoing research on the perspectives of globalization and social change and educational work within two revolutionary organizations in the United States, Freedom Road Socialist Organization and the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

Globalization Perspectives and Educational Work in Two Revolutionary Organizations

Before presenting findings on the education work of the two organizations I am working with, it is important to outline their histories and analyses of globalization.

Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO)

Background. The organization called Freedom Road Socialist Organization was founded in 1985 with the merger of two organizations. In 1993, the Socialist Organizing Network merged into FRSO. In 1999, FRSO suffered an organizational crisis that led to a split and there are currently two separate organizations identifying themselves as FRSO. The organization that I am working with can be identified by the title of its newspaper, Fight Back, and when I discuss FRSO in this paper I will be referring to this organization. Out of this crisis, FRSO-Fight Back (1997) maintained the original identity of the organization as a revolutionary socialist and Marxist-Leninist organization seeking to apply revolutionary theory in our mass work that draws from the rich revolutionary traditions of Mao Tse Tung thought, as

1 This paper is based on research funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation through the Cyril O. Houle Scholars in Adult and Continuing Education Program
2 For a history of U.S. revolutionary organizations that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Elbaum, 2002.
well as from the theories of revolutionary nationalism, revolutionary feminism and environmentalism. (¶ 6)

**Strategy.** Since FRSO believes that the principal contradiction on the world scale is between the Imperialist powers and the oppressed peoples of the world, the most basic strategy of FRSE is to build a united front against imperialism. To the extent that globalization is understood as imperialism in the Leninist sense, as FRSE understands it, globalization is the central focus of their work. The united front concept for FRSE (2001a) means “a broad united front of all forces aligned against imperialism” (¶ 14). For FRSE, this united front must be based on the conditions of the US. Since FRSE (1997) “has always held that national oppression and white supremacy are the linchpin of capitalist rule” (¶ 1) in the US, then, the “strategic alliance of the working class (represented by its most oppressed sections) and the national movements” (¶ 2) must be at the heart of a united front.

**Analysis of globalization.** In developing its analysis, FRSE draws on a variety of sources. All of the following sources are used in varying degrees depending upon the specific issue or aspect of monopoly capitalism under study. The classic works of Marxism-Leninism are foundational for providing analytical tools. In the case of globalization, Lenin’s (1939) five essential features of imperialism are a starting point. In analyzing a particular situation such as Colombia, FRSE studies the objective aspects such as the socio-political economic interests of the US as well as the subjective factors. FRSE also believes it is very important to draw on the analyses provided by Marxist forces on the ground (e.g., the FARC in Colombia). FRSE draws critically on the mainstream media, and finally, in their active work within mass movements in the US, FRSE draws heavily on what the masses themselves raise.

For FRSE, globalization is not a qualitative new stage in capitalism.

Some individuals and organizations have attempted to define globalization and neoliberalism as new phenomenon, distinct and separate from imperialism. In fact, these phenomena are not new. Where they represent something particular to the last decade the difference is quantitative, and not in any way fundamental. (Yorek & Kelly, 2001, ¶ 18).

Specifically, FRSE points to the fact that capital and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are concentrated in the three main imperialist blocs of the US, the European Union and Japan (Yorek & Kelly, 2001, ¶ 19). For FRSE, what we see as globalization today is a continuation of imperialism in its monopoly stage as outlined by Lenin.

Since “globalization” is a continuation of capitalism in its imperialist and monopoly stage, FRSE believes it is important to challenge the very label of “globalization”. Losing the focus on imperialism and turning to a term like ‘globalization’ results in two misconceptions. First, the idea of globalization often leads people to argue that the technological revolution has created a seamless world economy while, according to FRSE, it has merely aided in the intensification of imperialist relations (FRSE, 2001b). Second, the idea of globalization also leads to a characterization of the struggle against globalization as one between the global capitalist and the global worker divested of national boundaries. While it is correct to challenge corporations, this should be done from the perspective that realizes the fundamental role of states and militaries as the protectorates of corporate power. FRSE equates seeing a seamless world economy to Kautsky’s (1914/2002) erroneous idea of super-imperialism and his notion that capital would become one reformable international entity (Yorek & Kelly, 2001, ¶ 35 - 39).

Moreover, FRSE argues that in many areas of the planet, capitalist relations operate side-by-side
with semi-feudal relations. Ignoring this fact misses the significant role of the peasantry as a revolutionary force.

*Educational work.* The principal work of FRSO through its members is to be active in the mass movements, with a priority placed on oppressed nationality movements and movements of the multinational working class of the US. In general, FRSO begins with the following epistemological principles: a) the people make history; b) general contradictions reside in particular situations or contradictions; c) people learn through doing (practice) and the summation of their practice; d) the correctness of ideas or theory is determined by practice. Given these premises, FRSO believes it must be immersed in the mass struggles of the people in order to be relevant. Within these movements, FRSO actively tries to build the left poles by raising people’s level of understanding; recruits what it sees as the most advanced sectors of these various movements; and actively seeks to win concrete gains through struggle. All of these activities in the mass movements have educational elements based on their epistemological principles.

In an organizational document that directly addresses the issue of globalization FRSO outlines the “mass line” which is their basic political and organizational method and also contains core elements of their educational and epistemological philosophies.

[U]nder no circumstance should we pit ourselves against those in motion to resist corporate globalization. Rather we should work side-by-side with them and patiently explain things. Mao made the point: "In all practical work of our Party, all correct work in necessarily 'from the masses, to the masses.' This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in action."

To put this another way, we use Marxism to sum up where people are at. Basing ourselves on what people are concerned about, on what folks actually want, we develop slogans, policies, plans, ways to fight back, that people will take up as their own. (Yorek & Kelly, 2001)

If we look to the structure of FRSO we can see how their educational work is done at the different levels of the organization. The Units at a local level contain a small number of people working in a common area such as trade union work. The bulk of Unit meetings is taken up with discussion of the mass work which is a form of informal learning for the members to the extent that they collectively engage in analysis of strategy and tactics to further the particular mass movement in which they are working. In addition specific nonformal study on a topic is incorporated into Unit meetings on a regular basis. Another form of Unit educational work are the advanced recruitment studies. In these studies, the Unit organizes a study session on a particular topic and invites non-members from the mass work organizations to participate.

Monthly District meetings have similar educational aspects as Unit meetings. Since a major part of District meetings is summation of the mass work of the Units in the District, informal learning takes place as unit chairs are required to collectively and systematically analyze the progress of mass work within the District. Moreover, District meetings also include a nonformal educational session. Once a year, Districts conduct cadre schools based on readings and presentations. Districts also produce leaflets or pamphlets and hold open public forums on specific issues relevant to mass work of Unit members in the district and the larger public. District planning sessions held on a regular basis are a more intense form of informal learning for members in that they assess a longer period of mass work and plan future directions for Unit mass work. Four times a year, Districts are required to submit a written report to the National Executive Committee (NEC). These reports are collective endeavors that require the District members to synthesize the work of the District over the last quarter.
The NEC is responsible for publishing the newspaper *Fight Back*. The role of the newspaper in FRSO’s work varies from Unit to Unit. In some Units the newspaper, due to its coverage of that particular Unit’s work is intimately tied to the mass work and acts as a direct tool in furthering the particular movement, organization or trade union. This is most common in some of the unions in which FRSO is actively involved. In other Units *Fight Back* is used to introduce people of a particular mass movement to politics and struggle of other movements. Finally, in all of FRSO’s nonformal educational activities at the Unit or District level there is an emphasis on using techniques of popular education. FRSO sees the techniques of popular education as very important for two reasons. First, many of the members of FRSO or activists they work closely with in mass movements have low literacy levels. In these situations reading classic texts with discussion questions is not an effective way to educate. Secondly, and from an epistemological standpoint, the idea of the mass line, is to work directly with and from the lived experiences of the masses. The main feature is that it’s interactive, that it derives from people’s lived experiences and knowledge that people bring with them, whether they’ve read an article or not. Then we usually try to involve some different creative tactics to engage people and to even the playing field…[S]o [our education work is] real specific to the different areas of work or struggle we’re engaged in. (J. Sundin, personal communication, July 2, 2002)

League of Revolutionaries for a New America (LRNA)

*Background.* LRNA has its initial roots among individuals who quit or were expelled from the CPUSA in the mid-1950s. A group of these individuals involved themselves in the Provisional Organizing Committee to Reconstitute a Marxist-Leninist Party (POC) that formed in 1958 with mainly African American and Puerto Rican membership. This organization gradually disintegrated and in 1968 a small group expelled from the POC went on to found the California Communist League that became the Communist League in 1970. In 1974, the Communist League called for the formation of a Marxist-Leninist party called the Communist Labor Party (CLP) that officially disbanded in 1993. Out of the disbanding of the CLP emerged the National Organizing Committee and then the League of Revolutionaries for a New America in 1995.

*Analysis of globalization.* For LRNA (1998) “globalization is capitalism in the age of electronics” (p. 5). They emphasize the fact that social change has two sides (objective and subjective) and revolutions have three interrelated stages (economic, social, and political). The objective side of social change, corresponding to the economic stage of revolution, is brought on by the introduction of qualitatively new forces of production (microchip). This causes tremendous disruptions in the social relations of a society (the social stage of revolution). A revolution in which the social relations of production and, therefore of society in general, are realigned to the new productive forces can only occur with the culmination of revolution at the level of the political—when a new class takes power. From this analytical framework, LRNA argues that we are well into the economic stage of revolution with microchip-based production, and are now entering an “epoch of social revolution” (Peery, 1993). These new productive forces are qualitatively different; they are not merely labor saving devices like mechanical machines, they are labor-replacing devices. Based on the idea that new instruments of production produce new classes, the inevitable increase in the use of these devices creates a growing sector of the working class—what LRNA calls “the new class”—that has no hope of ever finding stable work in the capitalist system; they are in effect, outside the capitalist system.
At the core of this new class are the growing ranks of the homeless and structurally unemployed, with the growing marginally employed sectors of the working class at the periphery. This new class, unlike any other class in history, is an objectively communist class. This means that their survival itself is dependent upon the elimination of capitalist relations of production and distribution; production without labor and, therefore, without wages, demands distribution without payment.

Since we have entered a whole new epoch, a new organization is necessary. “The creation of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America as a non-Marxist organization in no way calls Marxism-Leninism into question. What we do call into question is the Leninist form of organization” (Peery, p. 140).

**Strategy and Educational work.** Since, LRNA believes that the objective conditions for communism—the creation of an objectively communist class—are increasing more evident, the role of revolutionaries is to work on the subjective conditions, or consciousness and ideas.

What is needed today is a core of educators who are capable of helping the people understand what they already know. More than that, we need speakers who are capable of explaining the situation and the inevitable resolution in such a way as to excite people for their historic revolutionary task. (Peery, 2002, p. 11)

The emphasis on education in LRNA’s strategy includes two basic tasks. First, it is necessary to elevate the subjective formation of the new class. LRNA argues that revolutionaries cannot impact the objective process of revolution but what they can and must do is to understand its “line of march” (see Marx & Engels, 1848/1948, p. 22), and work side-by-side in an educational way with the objectively revolutionary class in order to raise their consciousness of the resolutions to the problems they face.

LRNA analyzes the struggle to raise consciousness as one of moving from social awareness to social consciousness. Social awareness means “an awareness that something is wrong and a compassion for the poor but very little sense of class identity” (LRNA, 2000b, ¶34). Social consciousness implies and understanding that society is made up of different classes with different economic and political interests (LRNA, 2000a, ¶34). LRNA recognizes that the move from social awareness to social consciousness requires “constant education and...a political party based on a class program” (LRNA, 2000b, ¶38). LRNA believes, therefore, that the formation of the Labor Party in the US is an important step for the new class and the working class generally, and an important opportunity for revolutionaries.

With the organizational vehicle of the Labor Party, LRNA believes that its educational work with the new class must be based from within the mass movements of the class itself. “This education cannot consist of simply handing out leaflets or passing out papers or holding forums. We must be involved in the practical struggle, in such a way that we constantly are teaching on that basis” (Peery, 2002, p. 138).

Beyond and fundamentally related to the work with the new class, LRNA’s second basic task at this stage of the revolutionary process is to “go to all sections of society and gather together the revolutionaries and propagate a general understanding of the communist resolution of the problems that society is fighting out” (LRNA, 2001, p. 11). The introduction of new technology is creating such social disruption that people from broad sectors of society are beginning to see that fundamental transformations are necessary to resolve society’s problems.

At this moment we are focusing on trying to reach, influence, and recruit people, who are already trying to propagate new ideas...Our immediate goal is to create an organization of propagandists. They can be found in most every walk of life. (LRNA, 1999, pp. 34-35)
We can analyze the specific educational activities of LRNA by dividing its educational work into what it calls education and propaganda. For, LRNA, however, it should be pointed out that these two types of activity are intimately related. In adult education literature on social movements, these forms have been identified with the idea of internal (education) and external (propaganda) education (Kastner, 1990).

Propaganda (or external education) work in the mass movements is the major function of LRNA in the subjective formation of the new class. The League produces the monthly newspaper *People’s Tribune/Tribuno del Pueblo*, the monthly radio broadcasts of People’s Tribune Radio that it distributes to radio stations willing to air them and also has them available on their website, CDs and cassette tapes, and has a Speakers Bureau (Speakers for a New America) of people willing to travel and speak on specific topics. Within all of these instruments and methods of propaganda, the League emphasizes its analysis of capitalism in the age of electronics and the needs of the new class.

We can use the term education to refer to the intellectual and skill capacity development of LRNA members.

League education is designed to educate propagandists. Our core curriculum focuses on the Program and the cause of communism: What the League is and what we are attempting to do….Through this process, we incorporate the methodology of understanding how things change and how we are going to affect the change…. Local education is what will transform the League and stabilize it. Education is most effective when it answers the questions people are actually asking. Teaching so people can learn means starting from their perceptions….Every member should receive, within the area, an orientation in the convention documents and classes covering key political and theoretical concepts. (LRNA, 1999, p. 37)

There are also examples of informal forms of education. All levels of the organization must file activity reports and analytical reports of the socio-political situation in their area; the preparation work for and the writing of these reports is a form of education.

**Conclusion**

The destruction of globalization reflected in the most localized situations is not a problem of a dialectic between the local and the global—as often reflected in the rhetoric of localized civil society initiatives—but the results of the internal contradictions of capitalism. With all the talk of globalization, it is often too easy to lose sight of the fact that we are talking about the expansion of capitalist relations.

The organizations I am studying are rich sources of economic and socio-political analysis within the Marxist tradition that are virtually unknown to the field of adult education and even to those within the field who operate from a radical perspective. Through their (internal) educational work they produce organic intellectuals of the working class. Through the decades of left retreat in the 1980s and 1990s they maintained allegiance to the necessity and possibilities of revolutionary transformation and continue to engage in external education (propaganda) aimed at raising people’s consciousness of this task. These organizations offer analyses and organizational forms distinct from those who champion civil societarian perspectives that should be taken seriously by radical adult education. The sub field of radical adult education, so enamored with the writings of Antonio Gramsci, will continue to languish in the social democratic dead end of civil societarianism until it begins to take seriously radical or revolutionary political parties and organizations of the type within which Gramsci worked.
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The role of the traditional public library in the United States is really a question of how we, as a citizenry, envision an authentic democracy. A democracy can be characterized by a system of “public purposes” that engage, support and inspire a society to greater participation and preservation of a set of ideals and principles. Public, democratic and other institutions further fortify these purposes with a commonality and commitment to protect and strengthen our democracy. Despite the fact that public libraries represent the most basic democratic institution, they are constantly faced with a “crisis” of their cultural significance and economic value. From an economist’s point of view, the question often is, why should we fiscally support social goals—public institutions in this case—that do not maximize their own utility. The library is no longer for the public good or a public asset but requires a business model to rationalize its very presence.¹ The contemporary challenge of the traditional public library is to embrace the very features that give it purpose in our society but also, to re-invent itself by shifting public opinion and galvanizing a growing consensus, and collective yearning, to take back our public spaces—the commons. Public libraries must become holistic epicenters locally and nationally, returning “third places” to our local communities and neighborhoods. To imagine a different kind of public institution, librarians, as cultural workers, must resist the need to respond to the dominant trends of our market-driven culture.

The Search for Community

What is commonly referred to as a “third place”, a phrase coined by sociologist, Ray Oldenburg, is a cultural feature in cities, towns and villages throughout the world. Third places offer deep social connectedness and a community focal point that grounds the public; they represent the very soul of a city, town or village. Citizen participation, community organizing, and community media are nurtured by their presence. Third places allow us to engage and become self-conscious about the community and our shared needs. These spaces teach men, women, and young people what matters in a community and that all community members need to be accounted for—their individual lives and how they move within that community. Third places inform and educate about civic public life.² It is critical to maintain a local deli/grocer, five and dime store (virtually nonexistent), hardware store, public school and public library, and of course, a third place, however it evolves in a community.

Third places are anchored in Europe—the French bistro and the British pub—and the global South—the “la plaza” of Latin America and the outdoor market, an everyday gathering point in most non-western cultures. In the U.S., however, the increasing isolation of


individualism, splintering suburban development schemes and the political mechanisms that support them and the growing number of planned/gated communities have resulted in a sharp decline of third places. The consequences have meant increased homogeneity, traffic congestion, decreased open spaces, and unsightly suburban sprawl. However, a burgeoning movement to revitalize this social phenomenon in the United States has begun.

Several generations ago, Americans enjoyed a strong tradition of third places whether it is the ubiquitous local Main Street, local tavern, cracker barrel gathering, corner diner or the neighborhood coffeehouse all provided a purposeless alternative space to gather outside of the daily spaces of home and work. Post-World War II suburban housing developments and the completion of the interstate highway system meant greater dependence on the automobile which shifted populations away from cities, so routine social gatherings required planning, transportation and re-establishing a gathering location based on the aforementioned variables. Hence, suburbia produced isolated communities cut off from urban centers and created connections borne from work, school and next-door-neighbor relationships. Suburban life provided few opportunities to walk outside of one’s immediate surroundings and make purposeless visits to diverse, public spaces. Nowadays, the growth tendencies are isolated intellectual clusters and pockets, gated communities and event-oriented gatherings and, of course, in most communities, the need to have an automobile to get there—a discouraging proposition if the goal is to simply be purposeless.

In recent years, this inevitable soullessness and arid existence of suburbia has generated a need for a neutral space to “get away from it all”. Mega-chain, all-purpose stores have responded with an influx of chain bookstores and coffee/espresso shops in automobile suburbia and mall-oriented urban centers. Public gathering is happening at the mega-Barnes and Noble and coffee-chain Starbucks. However, this “gathering and hanging out” is under girded by a steady consumer culture—buy books, beverages and food. People are, therefore, engaged in more consumptive activities than in social gathering; the typical Starbucks customer, for example, is buried in the newspaper, hosting a business meeting or just sitting alone. These spaces do not encourage social interaction, spontaneity and that per chance way of turning to someone and striking up a conversation. The misleading quality of these businesses is that they are successfully disguised as gathering places because they sell a product in an expertly informal, casual fashion. Hence, “public gathering” centers on buying packaged, mass produced goods. Mega-chain bookstores have systematically perfected book buying in a volume intensive setting dependent on high public traffic which will comes in, hangs out for hours, buys coffee/pastries and eventually buys a book or magazine. Additionally, author readings and book signings are carefully crafted, controlled affairs that are connected to mainstream book publishers, targeted book reviews and media exposure. There are few opportunities to engage with writers and bridge communities. Consequently, these operations may fill a public void but in no way feed the public soul seeking human connections.

Additionally, the appeal of the sidewalk café element of most Starbucks and similar coffee/espresso chains is an attempt to replicate the cherished French bistro (commonly known as le bistro), a sidewalk café that encourages long visits and the dominance of the sidewalk.\(^3\) This speaks to our need for more public spaces whether they are parks, plazas or outdoor markets. Starbucks’ version is deceiving, however, because customers serve a uni-functional role

in which they are reduced to a client/customer status and the relationship is one of “economies of scale”, thus, once the profit yield drops, that “charming sidewalk” will easily be replaced by more espresso machines and cash registers.

The neighborhood bar is almost nonexistent in most neighborhoods and the few remaining ones do not offer a comfortable, diverse setting. Arguably, the modern bar is suitable for social connections but, again, there is a price to pay, literally. Few bars exist albeit a drink policy or thematic purpose (ladies’ night, singles bar, cigars, sports bar, bar & grill, etc.) and the purpose is to sell alcohol.

The slowly, diminishing independent bookstore in the U.S. successfully fulfills the role of a public gathering space. Customers enjoy a one-on-one relationship with the owner/staff, staff is knowledgeable about the collection/inventory, subject/topical areas, publishers, writers, and most importantly, they typically have roots in the local community. Hence, a visit to purchase a book gives customers access to a plethora of community news/information, upcoming author visits and an opportunity to chat with other locals because the atmosphere is grounded in the everyday and what is locally accessible. Also, the “business” of buying a book is a far more participatory and engaging process between owner and customer. Consequently, customers share a strong sense of ownership and a stake in the life of the bookstore. The owner is also compelled to maintain a spirit of integrity with both the collection/inventory and within the local community.

As it stands, the mega-bookstore and chain coffee shops are disguised as third places and have proliferated across the U.S., yet something is amiss. Advertising and hyper-consumption encourage dissatisfaction, isolation and dislodging. The assumption is that we are always dissatisfied, wanting and needing more and willing to move where more money can be made and spent. Revitalizing “third places” in our neighborhoods would allow all three spaces (home, work/daily activity and third place) to co-exist and give balance to our lives.

Finally, third places play a critical role in youth development and socialization in cultures. They welcome young people and encourage their participation in the gathering space. In the pub, for example, although they are not allowed to drink alcohol because they go with family members, and are included in the social interaction, they learn at an early age to drink in moderation and socially. The lack of public spaces in the U.S. has resulted in the “mall rat” phenomena, dangerous automobile cruising/drag racing on the main drags of cities and hanging out in fast-food restaurants. These “youthful activities” have resulted in teenage drunk driving deaths, thefts, random violence, and drug abuse that have been characterized by boredom and a lack of adult supervision. Envisioning a “third place” must include youth; it is imperative that they feel that they belong, have an equal voice and an active role in the gathering space.

FIGHTING FOR THE COMMONS

The search for community that third places offer is directly tied to a growing consensus that our “common” spaces, and our collective stewardship of parks, public lands, rivers, oceans and seas are threatened by biopiracy, enclosures and privatization. Scientist and activist, Vandana Shiva, has eloquently drawn the connections between science/biotechnology and the dwindling public ownership of the commons. An awareness of our role in the local environment and the larger ecology stems from the local, everyday dialogue, debate and struggles happening in our “common” neutral spaces. Political astuteness of how one fits in the municipal, social and political environment comes from social connections that offer recognition of local issues which
necessitate the need for public, gathering spaces. There is a growing understanding that the commons should also include public institutions. Consequently, the fight for the commons includes the crisis of public libraries and a slow awakening that public libraries serve multiple purposes. In some communities, they are housed in post offices; some are homegrown and operate on an honor system; some host community meetings; some are bookmobiles binding networks of rural library districts; and some libraries have washers and dryers.

Public libraries are, undoubtedly, cornerstones in any society and by far the most democratic of all institutions in a purported democracy. The public library is a free resource to all who enter. It acquires, maintains and manages an array of collections and information while supporting policies that make information available to anyone seeking it. The public library fights censorship, covers most subject areas and topics, and advocates free/fair use of the Internet. Most public library services reflect a realistic demographic makeup of most communities: children, youth (teenagers/young adults), adults, communities of color, the elderly, immigrants, GLBT, etc. In scattered populations, county-wide library services and rural communities and municipalities with declining library services, utilize a vital component of the urban public libraries’ outreach services, the mobile library, more popularly known as the Book Mobile.

A lesser known, and largely overlooked, purpose that the public library serves is a gathering space for individuals and communities. The public library, indiscriminately, provides public space for casual reading, study/research, group meetings/workshops, film screenings, civic activities, and public forums. Most importantly, prior to the surge in Andrew Carnegie Libraries, the original physical use of public libraries in large urban centers was as a “public reading room” for immigrants and the working poor.

There is an opportunity for libraries to be at the forefront of this critical mass in the fight for our common spaces and show, in an explicit way that libraries have always been multi-purposed and vital multiple spheres. The basic public library philosophy supports the tenets of the commons and multiple spaces. Libraries have had the flexibility of morphing into whatever that community needs. Subsequently, this hidden history of libraries is the missing link to the larger societal value of public libraries and the misplaced definition of “public institutions” which has succeeded in burdening the public libraries system with tax battles, social policy debates and indebtedness to library boards and trustees and special interest groups.

The resources housed in the typical public library, the egalitarian values and a public service mandate that welcomes an “open door” policy of accessibility, freedom of expression and ideas and social inclusion is at the core of the fight for the commons. Public libraries also have a tradition of recognizing multiple spaces that make it possible to provide services to communities, under the radar. Also, the history of librarians in large, diverse urban communities, in particular, is where the rubber hits the road, so to speak. They have “customized” their public services, hours and outreach acknowledging the fact that libraries are the school, resource center and university of the poor, marginal, immigrant, homeless, and disenfranchised. They grapple with information poverty and the socioeconomic barriers that impede groups from fully participating in the economic and social life of the larger society. Public libraries are the only open institutions to serve the poor, children, shelters, farm/migrant workers, prisons, and rural communities. This “common ground” element of public libraries secures it in the public trust.

PROVISIONS LIBRARY’S ROLE IN RECLAIMING AND REDEFINING PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Provisions was founded in September 2001 as a seed project of the Gaea Foundation to gather alternative resources that would serve individuals and groups exploring possibilities for deep social change. The Library’s public collection of more than 3,000 books, 250 periodicals, its web-based resources, its educational programs and art exhibits present ideas, topics and points of view often forbidden and suppressed in mainstream information sources. In profound acknowledgement of global interdependence, the Library seeks to establish an international context for exploring and initiating social change.

Provisions goals and methods are geared to integration across communities and across areas of interest. The Library offers many open doors through which one may enter, from anarchy and revolutionary practice to natural foods and nutrition, from peace studies and conflict resolution to voices from the global South.

Because of the large number of visitors to Washington, D.C. for study, cultural touring, and convening on an international scale, Provisions’ “community” is exponentially greater than local residents alone. Provisions’ is a unique repository, research facility, and learning context which gathers hard-to-find resources in one place. If available at all, these resources are typically scattered throughout academic libraries, specialized non-profit settings or bookstores, and highly concentrated in respective geographical areas of the world. Provisions’ website reflects its collection and programs for off-site researchers and other learners.

The Library is positioned to mainstream ideas and resources, introducing large audiences to grassroots organizing, alternative thinking and media.

The value of creative expression lies at the core of Provisions’ mission. Provisions is re-inventing what a library can be. Provisions renders alternative information more accessible and compelling through the medium of personal experience and personal expression – visual arts, fiction and poetry, memoir and biography, film and new media. The Library’s knowledge, information and learning contexts go far beyond texts and the printed word. Among Provisions’ resources, visual and arts are primary media of information, documentation, analysis and truth-telling. While most traditional museums and galleries hesitate to exhibit controversial or socially grounded art, Provisions’ mission is to deeply examine this nexus.

The Library maintains a growing collection of audiovisual materials which convey oral traditions and histories in people’s own words. Film and new media are central to both our library collection and visual arts and education programs. The Grey Matter Collection is an assemblage of personal/analytical stories and grassroots news and project reports from disparate areas of the world.

Provisions offers learning contexts led by a unique series of faculty who have captured their personal experiences in ways that change the way we view the world, and change possibilities for expressing our own experiences. The Library’s learning contexts center on visiting faculty whose work integrates personal and social transformation. Students have the opportunity to engage with creative thinkers/artists/practitioners and to work directly on writing, applied visual arts, film-making, self and community healing, and ideas ranging across Provisions’ interest areas.

Through its multi-faceted approach, Provisions Library introduces larger audiences to global grassroots organizing and alternative media, and to realities of world conditions and possibilities. Provisions makes it possible for the work of a broad range of progressive thinkers, creators and activists to reach wide and new audiences.
The Provisions Library: Resource Center for Activism and Arts is governed by three separate but related values:

- Build safe space for the exploration and expression of often forbidden and suppressed ideas, topics and points of view.
- Empower the examination and questioning of authority structures in our every day lives and the destructive, harmful, and limiting realities that are presented as normal and inevitable.
- Strengthen the imagination and enactment of peaceful and popular resistance, revolutions, new paradigms and cultures of liberation.

These values speak to the importance of a third place for social connections and interaction as well as sustaining public spaces that inform, challenge and inspire.

A transformative path entails deep social change and reflection and the Library embraces the use of art as a means of social change. Hence, the space serves the purpose of a traditional public library with reading rooms, periodical shelves and library stacks juxtaposed with socially focused artwork and art exhibitions which are on display in the library daily, and are an integral part of Provisions’ resources. The Library embraces creative artistic expression as a powerful means of communication and transformation so the experience is visual, literary and filled with film, music, and new media arts.

The mission of Provisions Library is to foster a creative environment for a diverse international community, to explore and be active in social change and justice. The name of the Library evolved from the appropriateness of the definition of “provision”: supplies; providing or preparing; and something provided for the future. The Library is also known as a “resource center” because the scope is international and the fact that in most non-western cultures, a public library infrastructure does not exist or is fractured at best; therefore, “formal and informal resource outlets” are established, fulfilling the artistic, civic, cultural, health, educational and political needs of the community.

The Library is an alternative public library, a departure from the traditional public library, which honors the very best that public libraries offer in many diverse communities all over the world: a public space; a reading room; a community forum; a research center; an arts and cultural venue; and an accessible, democratic repository for all people. The Library differs from a public library by offering alternative and suppressed points of view, and promoting creative means for social change and a purposeful space for reflection and making social connections. Provisions Library seeks to re-invent the traditional public library.

The Library is open to the public. It is not tax-supported or part of a municipality or public system. It is a reflective space, research-oriented educational institute, offering provisions for the journey. These provisions support the interests of artists, writers, students, scholars, activists, community organizers and the general public. The Provisions Library is a road map, launching pad and meditation space for rumination, germinating ideas, social gathering, and building mindful approaches to social change and paradigm shifting. Provisions Library is a different kind of library, one which highly values knowledge, information and learning contexts beyond texts and the printed word. Provisions’ holistic framework incorporates visual arts as an important means of exploration, documentation, analysis and truth-telling.

As a holistic learning center, Provisions Library offers a transformative environment, where all are encouraged to think critically and imaginatively about themselves as individuals in relation to the larger world. Provisions is a space where people feel at ease crossing cultural,
racial, national and class boundaries to construct and affirm our shared humanity and aspirations. Whether through literature, historical studies, visual arts, spoken word or story-sharing, Provisions breaks down barriers between people and opens inquiries about ‘what is’ and ‘what if’ in our world.

The goals and methods of library collection development as well as the surrounding contexts of artistic and educational programming are geared to integration among “Meridians,” or Areas of Interest. The meridians are the sources that give rise to fulfilling the collective yearnings for connections and possibilities. These sources engage, incite and encourage dialogue, the very actions that keep a third place alive. Our Meridians are:

- Anarchy and Revolutionary Practice
- Arts and Social Change
- Cultural Diversity
- Environmental Sustainability
- Feminism
- Free Expression
- Gender and Identity
- Global Economy
- Human and Animal Rights
- Indigenous Cultures
- Media Studies
- Natural Foods and Nutrition
- Nature Awareness
- Oppression and Hegemony
- Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution
- Philosophy and Critical Studies
- Popular Culture
- Protest and Liberation Movements
- Public Health
- Public Space and the Commons
- Race and Class
- Science and Technology Criticism
- Sexuality
- Spirituality and Psychology
- Voices from the Global South
- Youth Activism

This new library design can offer many open doors through which one may enter, from anarchy and revolutionary practice to natural foods and nutrition, from youth activism to voices from the global South. The Library’s collection, programs and staff, volunteer and faculty actions—are all oriented toward making the connections among these meridians. The library thus supports connections between people and across movements, nations, communities, and perspectives. Provisions provides extraordinary research, platforms and other supporting resources for activists, writers and artists engaged in social change work. Yet Provisions’ users, patrons, and audiences do not rest on or confine themselves to these self-identifications.

Provisions Library is the nexus of an international transformative learning institute. The Library is a clearinghouse, alternative portal and a connector across topics and movements. Our
“provisions” support an international transformative education highlighting popular education, gathering tools and practicum for social change, and infusing learning with arts, humor, spoken word, film, music and public forums.

Provisions Library is a non-consumption based outlet for alternative media, voices and ideas from around the world that are not marketed or often heard in the mainstream. Provisions is a place where people can not only find and be exposed to alternative perspectives, but can also interact with ideas and practices by enjoying visual arts or film, browsing books and magazines, or personally interacting with other patrons or faculty. Such provisions are metaphors for offerings of the Provisions Library. The library offers a safe, comfortable space for reflection and social gathering and a commitment to social connectedness that embraces community, empathy and fosters awareness around the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnic and national origin.

Personal and social transformation is journey of reflection, mindfulness, unpacking and undoing layers of silencing and distorting socialization. The journey must include basic provisions for navigation, shelter and mental well-being. A critical re-designing and re-conceptualizing of our most democratic institution, the public library, into locally-based holistic centers with an international focus can fortify our communities in ways that encourage the “connecting the dots” that translates into transformative learning and a paradigm shift. Provisions serves as compass, road map, walking shoes and food, all basic sustaining items for the journey.

THE COLLECTIONS OF THE PROVISIONS LIBRARY

The Library was conceived as an open system, a classic library organizational model that states that the library, basically, receives input from the outside, transforms that information, and then puts it out to the environment. Goals and objectives are determined, to an extent, by that larger environment or system, and if the library is to be successful, it must depend on the outside input to be able to produce usable output.

That stated, Provisions Library has meticulously nurtured and augmented its collection (books, periodicals, and multimedia) responding to an external need for alternative resources, points of view and personal experiences that highlight actions, cultures, the arts and people’s lives and struggles. We exist based on a collective urgency throughout the international community for personal and social transformation. Our collection’s growth is organic and represents an affection of daily social interactions, the Library’s transformative learning programs, international connections and a space filled with socially-concerned art displays and art exhibitions.

Therefore, honoring a traditional public library model is our inspiration but Provisions Library is a departure from this model because our evolution is based on an encompassing commitment to utilizing print resources, visual art, multimedia and social gathering and dialogue as a platform for social change and shifting the existing paradigm. So the collection continues to grow based on the Library’s meridians (areas of interest) but also based on the key elements borne from the aforementioned open system. Additionally, we rely on the breadth and depth of the Library’s periodical collection that includes book reviews and essays on topics that inform our collection development decisions.
The collection represents a wide range of subject areas and topics not easily accessible in a mainstream bookstore or public library. The Library “experience” at Provisions features an old-fashioned reading room enhanced by the fact that the majority of the collection does not circulate so patrons must sit and read material; there are library stacks where books are shelved alphabetically and side-by-side in terms of subjects and topics as opposed to a standard subject classification system; and book displays serve as program announcements and compliment the art exhibitions.

Finally, the collection is a reflection of our designated world regions whether it’s fiction, nonfiction, art books or reference materials. More importantly, the Library collection is diverse in its voices, international in perspective and balanced in our commitment to illuminating movements, experiences and struggles typically under the mainstream radar. Based on our open system and “Library experience,” art exhibitions and social gathering, we strive to ensure that the entire collection reflects the following world regions:

1) The Middle East (including North Africa)
2) The African continent— including Heinemann African Writers Series
3) South Asia
4) Southeast Asia
5) East Asia
6) The Caribbean – including the Heinemann Caribbean Writers Series (West Indian Writers)
7) The Americas—North America (Aboriginal People/Native Americans) South America, Canada (Aboriginal/Native People), and Central America (mainly Spanish language writers and Latin American authors)
8) The Pacific Islands including Australia/New Zealand –Aboriginal Peoples
9) United Kingdom - Transforming the Crown Collection Works of the Afro Arab-Asian British Culture in the UK
10) Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union – Kosovo, Bosnia, former Yugoslavia, Russia, etc.

The Provisions Library Collection includes the:
1) Reference Collection
2) Children’s Collection
3) Periodicals and Indices
4) Art and Story Collection
5) General Collection (fiction and nonfiction that represents our Meridians)
6) Grey Matter Collection
7) Art Reference Collection (Art books from all over the world)
8) Profiles In Healing Collection
9) Very Short Introductions Collection

REFERENCE COLLECTION

The Library recognizes seminal works by leading international activists, journalists, writers, artists (writers and visual) and public intellectuals as primary source material. Hence, the reference collection extends beyond traditional reference material: dictionaries, directories,
guides and encyclopedias. We define “reference” as any work that points to a source that meets the needs of the patron. The Library’s reference collection comprises anthologies of poetry, articles, essays, speeches, letters, short stories and plays from indigenous communities, people of color, women, gays and lesbians, world regions, etc. representing marginalized voices and silenced histories; an array of readers that offer a compilation of the works of activists, public intellectuals, marginalized groups and artists i.e. *The Che Guevara Reader, The Winona LaDuke Reader, The Jose Martí Reader*, etc.

Additionally, groundbreaking books that can easily serve as primary sources include: *A People’s History of the United States, A History of Surrealism* and *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The Library supports the interweaving of traditional reference materials (dictionaries, encyclopedias, maps, etc.), definitive fiction works (essays, plays, short stories, etc.) and nonfiction works by important public intellectuals and progressive scholars such as Howard Zinn, Audre Lorde and Edward Said.

**CHILDREN’S COLLECTION**

The children’s collection is filled with books representing our world regions and inspired by books highlighted at the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) that sponsors the Bologna Children’s Book Fair, the largest international gathering celebrating children’s literature; the Zimbabwe International Book Fair; the Frankfurt Book Fair; the Cairo International Children’s Book Fair; and the Guadalajara International Book Fair (focused on Spanish language books). The collection age range is children (6-10), juvenile and young adult (12-16). Additionally, selections come from extensive alternative international book catalogs that are mindful of gender issues, indigenous peoples, and historically accurate. Our children’s collection has a strong emphasis on folklore, legends and mythology from cultures all over the world, children’s daily life in non-western cultures, relationships with the larger community and the environment. Most books are oversized, colorful, filled with images of mythical figures and drawings and depictions of children from non-western cultures. The collection also includes juvenile (young adult) literature that introduces more challenging subject matter with an international perspective such as: sexuality, race, social conditions and gender identity.

**PERIODICALS/INDICES**

The Library’s periodicals are the fastest growing and most dynamic area of the overall collection. The collection is augmented based on our meridians and has approximately 250 journals (academic and layperson), magazines, and newspapers. Significant portions of the collection are not available in mainstream bookstores and newsstands. We have art magazines from Africa, spirituality journals and magazines, Canadian alternative media journals, Native American newspapers, intentional community magazines, independent media and alternative press magazines, Middle East journals and magazines representing punk, anarchists and environmental activist communities. Part of the “Library experience” is the steady rotation of journals and magazines displayed on the periodical shelves so that patrons see the growth of the collection and displayed periodicals do not grow stale. The periodical collection includes the Left Index (CD-ROM) and the Alternative Press Index. Both indices are comprehensive bibliographic
citations of alternative, independent, out-of-print, and irregular periodicals and serials articles, essays, monographs and transcripts dating back to the 1980’s from all over the world. Additionally, many journals and magazines include an annual index of articles from their respective periodical.

ART AND STORY COLLECTION

The Art and Story Collection is an artistic information and transformative learning resource tool that utilizes the narrative traditions and illuminates the lives and experiences of ordinary people all over world. The purpose of the Art and Story Collection is to give patrons exposure to different ways of knowing and opportunities to make personal connections with, and new and analytical understandings of, different cultures, communities and individual lives. The collection, while representing our Meridians (Areas of Interest), reflects voices from groups under the radar, indigenous peoples, the global South and communities silenced, oppressed and excluded from the mainstream for a host of reasons. These voices and communities embody our approach to transformative learning where an important element of personal transformation is an awareness of and connection to other people’s stories, ways of life, knowledge systems, art forms, narrative traditions and cultures. The collection comprises fiction, poetry, memoir, and biography. The collection also represents our ten world regions with an emphasis on local publishers and small presses within each region. The collection is extensive and reflects our vision: people’s stories, experiences and voices are a powerful and active reference base for social change.

The Art and Story Collection, we believe, is a key and valuable source of alternative learning that flourishes alongside facts, statistics, and levels of expertise as secondary sources. Narration and art become primary sources for learning and research. The benefits of this approach to transformative learning are the endless possibilities of cross-cultural connections, a deeper respect and an empowering humanity for all peoples, cultures and the biodiversity that sustains us all. The Art and Story Collection creates openings for new understandings of realities and possibilities relating to all of our Meridians.

GREY MATTER COLLECTION

It is easier to describe, rather than define grey matter literature. Collectively, the term covers an extensive range of materials that cannot be found easily through conventional channels such as publishers, but which is frequently original and usually recent. Peter Hirtle in Broadsides vs. Grey Literature defines it as:

“The quasi-printed reports, unpublished but circulated papers, unpublished proceedings of conferences, printed programs from conferences, and the other non-unique material which seems to constitute the bulk of our modern manuscript collections.”

The Provisions Library has amassed an extensive collection of workbooks, study guides, manuals, reports, newsletter/bulletins, etc. that are distinct from the other collection and cannot be easily cataloged but is critical to the overall resources available. Most of the materials are archival in nature, first editions and out-of-print.

This collection also includes a significant number of newsletters and ‘zines from all over the world that may or may not be a current subscription; this material, again, reflects our meridians
and newsworthy and current events activists communities, indigenous movements and topical issues such as gender, race and class, public health.

**PROFILES IN HEALING COLLECTION**

Produced by the Ringing Rock Foundation and Ring Rock Press, this book/audio CD series, represents an unprecedented encyclopedia of the world's healing knowledge through the stories of traditional shamans and medicine people.

The book series, Profiles of Healing was created to evoke the experience of sitting with traditional healers, shamans and medicine people as they teach their cultural ways. Edited by Bradford Keeney, Ph.D., the books are first person narratives accompanied by photographs, illustrations, and CDs or DVDs of music, prayers, sacred songs and dances, and sounds of the cultures. The diverse cultural experiences and descriptions of complementary medical practices detailed in these volumes make this series a unique encyclopedia of the world's healing knowledge.

Many indigenous healing traditions risk extinction. The people represented in this series have participated because it is crucial for our world's health that their knowledge and ways of life be preserved. Traditionally such wisdom has been passed on through oral life stories. The books' photographs and digital recordings allow one a close-to-life experience with the healers in their communities.

The series presents the participants'/authors' stories in a mutually agreed upon format, and our authors are eager to share their valuable knowledge with the rest of the world. This sharing is a sacred event. *(publisher’s note)*

Volumes Include:

Gary Holy Bull: Lakota Yuwipi Man
Ikuko Osumi: Japanese Master of Seiki Jutsu
Kalahari Bushmen Healers
Guarani Shamans of the Forest
Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa: Zulu High Sanusi
Walking Thunder: Diné Medicine Woman
Shakers of St. Vincent
Ropes to God: Experiencing the Bushman Spiritual Universe

**VERY SHORT INTRODUCTIONS COLLECTION**

Published by Oxford University Press and combining authority with wit, accessibility and style, The Very Short Introductions Collection offers an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. They are written by experts for the newcomer, demonstrating the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in 100 key subjects: from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

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Introduction

Governments, politicians, educational institutions, business and industrial organizations, and leaders of all kinds invoke “diversity” without considering the influence of transformation of consciousness. In the midst of the ongoing nightmares of the plights of many, everyone acknowledges that things have to change but there is little discussion of how conscious awareness might facilitate change.

The term *transformation* is derived from, the Latin transformare (*trans* + *formare* – to form). Simply, it means to change form. Transformation of consciousness, then, means a change in the form of consciousness. Transformative learning research has benefited from the investigation of methods and theories of ways of changing the form of consciousness (Mezirow & Associates, 2000). In response to those leaders who advocate diversity and to current theorists in transformative learning, the results of this study change the form of current thinking on diversity by incorporating transformation of consciousness.

I advocate that living peacefully in a pluralistic complex community, country, and world can only be attained through opening ourselves to inclusion with awareness of consciousness.

The Problem

What is missing from the current thinking, research, and actualizing in the diversity movement is a transformative approach. There are very few examples of diversity programs within organizations, or research in the same field, that have been conducted through the lens of the emerging Integrative paradigm (Elgin & LeDrew, 1997; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Ray & Anderson, 2000). The fundamental problem is that current diversity research and practice emphasize differentiation and fragmentation between people because they are limited by a logical/rational worldview that denies the existence of spirit, love, and journeys of the soul. Without their inclusion, assumptions, beliefs, and values cannot change.

Reflections from a Crystal: Overcoming Resistances through Transformative Competencies and Worldview Capacities

In the spirit of the Integrative paradigm, I have honored three distinct and unique theories, and acknowledge their contributions to knowledge in the field of diversity. In light of the spirit of each of the theories of transformation of consciousness (expanding, evolving, unfolding), it is crucial to be able to hold multiple perspectives. It is my intention to capture the multi-facetedness of the research results through this approach.
Triggers and Resistances to Transformation of Consciousness

Based on Tang and Joiner’s (1998) that consciousness expands, triggers and resistances to consciousness transformation created the first formation of the crystal. In follow-up interviews, I probed for evidence of subtle shifts oriented toward transformative outcomes as delineated by Tang and Joiner (p. 421) through the following criteria:

1. Capacity to withhold judgment.
2. Ability to openly and compassionately listen to and accept different perspectives.
3. Ease in tolerating ambiguous situations.
4. Skills in exploring assumptions as cultural conditioning.
5. Ability to hold different perspectives simultaneously.
6. Confidence in ability to hold differences.

Triggers and resistances to consciousness expansion are very much as Tang and Joiner (1998) describe “subtle shifts.” Indeed, transformations in engaging with others, in being-in-the-world, in facilitating, in working with equity, and in increasing the capacity to discern judgments—all are significant but subtle. In a similar vein, resistances to articulating values, beliefs, and assumptions, to holding different perspectives simultaneously, and to extending the process of SI to anti-racist work are meaningful, yet much easier to identify. The reason for this is that they are far more widespread.

The triggers and resistances, though, verify what many (Hubbard, 1995; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993; Wilber, 2000b) have said – more and more people are demonstrating higher levels of consciousness awareness. The triggers, in particular, were representative of visionary, inclusive, conscientious, and loving imaging of the kind of world we could peacefully be living in.

I was ill-prepared for the resistances. I had not anticipated them, partially because of my own expectations and partially because they had not been discussed in previous SI-based studies. Although I reported the resistances that clearly matched the transformative outcomes, I knew intuitively that there were far greater resistances to transformation of consciousness taking place in the data that did not specifically relate to the expected outcomes, as specified by Tang and Joiner (1998). The clear and deep resistances were an unexpected outcome that drove me to further analysis to try to understand why individuals resist transformation of consciousness.

Transformative Competencies in the Evolution of Consciousness

Based on Wilber’s (2000a) evolutionary theory of consciousness, Transformative Competencies were the end result of the second formation of the crystal. Using the evolutionary lens to examine the transformation of consciousness, Wilber (1998, 2000a, 2000b) provides a full-spectrum approach to the identification of experience. He calls this approach “all quadrant.” He is referring to the four quadrants that he has identified: Interior-Individual (Intentional), Exterior-Individual (Behavioral), Interior-Collective (Cultural), and Exterior-Collective (Social). Figure 2 shows Wilber’s four quadrants.
Wilber’s (2000a, 2000b) two-dimensional model of the four quadrants, addresses two of my major concerns. The first concern is that it should accommodate the balance of individual and communal experience where “The upper half of the diagram represents individual holons; the lower half social or communal holons” (p.127). The second concern is that it should capture both the internal and external realities of the researcher and the participants. According to Wilber, “the right half represents the exterior form of holons – what they look like from the outside; and the left half represents the interiors – what they look like from within” (p.127).

The results of the analysis of Wilber’s four quadrants produced four continuums of experience, which I have identified as: meshed/self-reflection continuum; harmful/healing behaviors continuum; tradition/multicultural dynamics continuum; and single/multiple realities continuum. Figure 2 illustrates these results within an Integral map.

![Integral map of findings.](image)
Meshed/self-reflection continuum

The Meshed/self-reflection continuum is composed of six themes that resulted from the Interior-Individual quadrant: Feelings, Sensorial, Group, Projections, Judgments, and Guide. Each of these were progressively inclusive from left to right. Figure 3 depicts the progressive inclusivity of the Meshed/self-reflection continuum.

![Figure 3. Inclusivity of the meshed/self-reflection continuum.](image)

Each of these is successively inclusive from the left to the right. For instance, awareness of personal judgments will include acknowledgment of feelings.

Taken on its own this continuum indicates that, as the researcher and the participants evolved toward self-reflection, they were better able to guide their feelings and sensorial experience in relation to both themselves and the group.

Harmful/Healing Behaviors Continuum

The researcher’s and the participants’ experience within the Exterior-Individual quadrant formed on a continuum. This ranged from actions and physical manifestations where the participants and the researcher revealed hurt, to actions and manifestations of behaviors that revealed growth, healing, and nurturing. These experiences were revealed on three levels: individual, group, and society-wide. Each of these is a distinct yet interrelated dimension of the continuum. In other words, behaviors that are enacted within the society dimension will affect groups and individuals.

The harmful/healing continuum is held at either end by poles of harm and healing. Figure 4 depicts the progressive inclusivity of the Harmful/healing continuum. Each of these is successively inclusive from the left to the right. For instance, forgiving actions within society will acknowledge personal pain. Taken on its own, this continuum indicates that as the researcher and the participants evolved toward nurturing behaviors toward self, within the group, as well as within society, they were better able to heal and forgive previous hurtful experiences by including them.
The Interior-Collective quadrant includes inter-subjective experience – subjective morals, values, and beliefs that are held in common between people. In this study, the selection of participants was based on two culturally related criteria. First, they were known within their own cultural communities as having exceptional abilities to be open in their dealings with people from different cultures. The purpose of this selection criterion was to ensure that the intention of participants was to move beyond the differences imposed by culture while maintaining a connection and voice with their own culture. Second, participants were selected from divergent cultural backgrounds. The purpose of this criterion was to attempt to have a balance of culturally related concerns that would reflect a global perspective.

With these considerations in mind, the experience of participants that reflects the cultural realm falls along a continuum of the following themes: tradition, journeys, and multicultural dynamics.

A significant aspect of this continuum is that it is inclusive. Multicultural dynamics that are inclusive of cultural values rely on participation and expression of traditional cultural forms. Figure 5 depicts the inclusivity of the Tradition/multicultural dynamics continuum.

The researcher and the participants reported and demonstrated inter-subjective experiences that included traditions, journeys, and multicultural dynamics. Each of these is successively inclusive from the left to the right. Cultures develop traditions. Over time, the forces that
influence them on their journeys shape them. This is a matter of survival. When the journey ends cultural traditions cannot be maintained. Cultures must preserve their traditions in order to exist over time. Most cultures have been influenced by other cultures around them. As mobility increases internationally, the dynamics between cultures appears to become more complex. The journeys of one culture may have affected another. The influences that shape a culture may have a legacy influence on others. Multicultural dynamics includes the shared cultural journeys between evolving cultures.

Taken on its own, this continuum indicates that as the researcher and the participants evolved toward living within the context of intersubjective realities while honoring the traditions of journeys of their own cultures.

**Single/Multiple Realities Continuum**

The experience of the researcher and the participants within the Exterior-Collective Quadrant rested on a continuum. The continuum extended from the living of a single reality to multiple realities. The discussions ranged from social roles to political realities to identity groups. Each of these is a distinct but interrelated dimension of the continuum. In other words, social experiences within the identity group dimension will affect “social roles” and “political realities.”

The continuum is held on both ends by poles of “single” and “multiple” realities. One aspect of the continuum that is not evident in this illustration is that the social events are progressively inclusive. For instance, it is possible to be able to hold multiple realities while honoring the reality of a single socially-constructed reality. Figure 6 depicts this inclusivity for the entire continuum.

![Figure 6. Inclusivity of the single/multiple realities continuum.](image)

Taken on its own this continuum indicates that the researcher and the participants evolved toward living within the context of multiple realities while honoring the perspectives influenced by social roles, political realities, and identity groups.

**Spirals and Blockages**

In addition to establishing the four continuums, the results of the analysis using Wilber’s four quadrants also revealed three types of dynamics or movement within and between quadrants: downward spirals, blockages, and upward spirals.
These dynamics are resonant with the movement implied by evolutionary theorists who described the evolution, or devolution of consciousness. The term “downward spirals” implies a movement toward a previous stage of consciousness, or at the very least a sense of “stuckness” in a current aspect of that stage which prevents further evolution. “Upward spirals” implies a movement toward a “higher” stage or, in Wilber’s terms, self-transformation, or again at the minimum, a “growing” or “opening” toward the next stage in evolution.

**Downward Spirals: Breakdowns**

Self-dissolution of holons occurs through the vertical breakdown along the same evolutionary path that built it up through self-transcendence. These findings are resonant with Wilber’s (2000a) theory of self-dissolution. Most significantly, the breakdown of the “vertical” verifies the spiraling effect. These findings are also consistent with Wilber’s description of the neoplatonic path of descent when those on the path have lost or forgotten compassion, or the connection with the “Good.”

Breakdowns refer to events within a quadrant that moves toward a descent in another quadrant; a negative pattern within a quadrant that catalyzes a negative event or experience in another quadrant; or a combination of two or more of the existing categories which indicated a motion toward descent.

**Blockages**

The integration of the experience of the four quadrants also revealed examples of blockages or barriers toward the evolution of consciousness. These were instances where the researcher and the participants were literally stuck or blocked in the evolution of their consciousness.

The blockages within quadrants included in this section may provide guidance on the dynamics of Wilber’s four quadrants regardless of the stage of evolution. Blockages are resistant through their inability to evolve. At these times, participants were not consciously aware of resisting. They were simply stuck in their position.

**Upward Spirals: Waves and Connections**

Waves and connections relate to either an event within a quadrant that moves toward ascent in another quadrant; a positive pattern within a quadrant that catalyzes a positive event or experience in another quadrant; or a combination of two or more of the existing categories which indicates a motion toward ascent. Self-transformation of holons occurs when holons combine and create a new holon at a higher level. This vertical dimension is a clear description of the evolving dynamics of the evolutionary theory of consciousness transformation.

As I was sorting through the data, I noticed that there were times when a positive event which took place in one quadrant catalyzed a positive event in another quadrant and, in doing so, created a dynamic that felt as if it were moving upward. The findings of this section indicate that events in one quadrant can positively influence events in other quadrants by an upward motion. Each of these is consistent with Wilber’s (2000a) description of the neoplatonic path of ascent toward the “Good.” Significantly, they confirm the creation of the “vertical” levels of agency and communion. This vertical dimension verifies the upward spiraling effect.

**Summary of Continuums, Spirals, and Blockages in the Evolution of Consciousness**
These findings show that within the evolutionary lens of transformation of consciousness, the experience for the participants and the researcher could be mapped on four continuums: meshed/self-reflection, harmful/healing behaviors, tradition/multicultural dynamics, and single/multiple realities. In addition, pathological (Wilber, 2000a, p. 234) and integrative patterns were identified in the experiential events. Downward spirals, blockages, and upward spirals indicate that a dynamic can be mapped within the four quadrants that demonstrates movements which are nuances rather than “stage-shifts.” In other words, these may not move all the way between the vertical levels of holons. The movements are more subtle. These movements provide a deeper understanding of evolution between the poles of each continuum, as well as their integrative potential. Each continuum can be looked at either on its own or in relation to the other continuums. Figure 7 illustrates upward and downward spirals across the continuums.

![Continuums and Spirals](image)

Figure 7. Continuums and spirals.

These results show that engaging differences with conscious awareness is dependent upon where one is placed on each of these continuums at any single moment. These results also demonstrate developmental theorists’ (Lee, 1999; Wade, 1996, Wilber, 2000b) insight that evolutionary theories complement each other in their classification (stages) systems. Through comparison of approaches to the evolution of aspects of consciousness, a more complete picture can be painted of the many-facettedness of consciousness. As well, it highlights the interdependencies of each approach to the evolution of consciousness. Each approach is necessary for the comprehension of the evolution of consciousness, each makes an equal contribution to the knowledge-base of consciousness. In the spirit of the Integrative paradigm, inclusivity can be extended to consciousness theories. This is a remarkable distinction from “traditional” science where competition emerges from a separate stance (Braud & Anderson, 1998).

**Spiritual Emergence of Transformative Capacities**

The spiritual emergence of the evolution of consciousness can be summarised as four distinct Transformative Capacities: the ability to witness; the ability to heal; the ability to live with multiple identities within the context of multicultural dynamics; and the ability to live with
multiple realities. Like self-reflection, I believe that Transformative Capacities are connected to the “Good” through love and compassion.

The implications of these capacities, I believe, add a spiritual dimension to current research and practice within the field of diversity. This is above and beyond any notions of “traditional” faith beliefs or approaches to spirituality. Although it may very well relate to individual traditions, it moves beyond in that they are competencies that are reflected across the span of traditions. The implications of the continuums and spirals show the direction of Transformative Capacities that can be developed to increase the ability to transform the consciousness for diversity practitioners and researchers.

**Worldview Formation in the Unfolding of Consciousness**

Based on a view of the unfolding of consciousness (Gebser, 1985), the third formation identifies the influence of worldview formation on the practice of researchers and participants in the area of diversity. This study found instances of consciousness arising from the Magical, Mythical, Mental and Integral structures of consciousness among practitioners. Gebser (1985) asserts that consciousness unfolds outwards, with the Integral structure of consciousness at the outer-most circumference. It is incumbent upon me to reveal the findings of this analysis as a result of their integration through the lens of the Integral structure of consciousness.

My experience of the participants is that they had glimpses of awareness through the Integral structure of consciousness. The following describes instances of the glimpses through the Integral structure of consciousness and reveals how the experience of working with differences assisted diversity practitioners in using the Integral structure of consciousness as a worldview, if just for a moment. These include that they articulated the stages leading up to multicultural interdependency and co-creation; identified worldview mutations; demonstrated comprehension of the connection to the origin of their view(s); and manifested spiritual transparency. The following illustrates each of these findings.

**Identified Worldview Mutations**

Glimpses of the Integral structure of consciousness were seen when participants were able to identify actual mutations of structures of consciousness. In other words, in these instances participants were able to express when a structure of consciousness had unfolded. For instance, Group B exemplified this when they were talking about the transition from a lack of knowledge to a vision of knowledge and ecosystems in unity. The split of knowledge from power is a characteristic of the Mental structure of consciousness. In comparison, the unification of knowledge with a fuller power, like ecosystems, is a characteristic of Integral structure of consciousness. Together these participants co-created the transition between two structures of consciousness.

**Demonstrated Comprehension of the Connection to the Origin of Their View(s)**

In reflecting on the entire workshop, B demonstrated his connection to the formation of his views emanating from their origins:

One more piece around this is that I need to do more of this for myself – it's like I do this for other people. And I do some of this with myself by myself or within the coalition but it's really nice to do this with the three of you. And I need to do more of that. I got so many kinds of things that I'm
excited about. The thing that I've been playing around with is that we have differences out there but we also belong to many different groups that have been internalized. Like I've got my male part that's internalized. I've got my class part. I was raised working-class, upwardly-mobile, I've got that particular piece. I've got another piece that's Black. And often those pieces get in conflict with each other. So that the conflicts that I see out in the world in between different groups, internally I'm in conflict with my own pieces. So how do I use this process, to deal with internally my own conflicts?

B literally “owned” each of these aspects of his self. At this moment, he glimpsed from an Integral worldview.

**Manifested Spiritual Transparency**

As Group A was in the act of co-creating their creation story, they came to a consensus about how to manifest spiritual transparency:

- K: We both had rainbow colors.
- F: The rainbow is a feeling of hope. Look at your multicolors.
- K: Yeah, there they are. There are all different colors.
- F: Out and out rainbow. For me hope is because these things keep coming back up and the seed people going back down come back up. So that is hope. But I'd like to see a rainbow. Because that is a sign of hope.
- R: And it is reflective of the color.
- K: It doesn't have to be stylized. It could be inclusive.

In this case, hope is understood to be an indication of spiritual transcendence. This analysis also resonates with Gebser’s (1985) theory about the shift between perspectival and aperspectival consciousness. It has demonstrated that the Integral structure of consciousness is not only inclusive of all previous structures of consciousness, but those individuals operating from this worldview are aware of the origins of their mutations of consciousness at that moment. This awareness is not found in previous perspectival structures of consciousness.

Most significantly, the findings from this analysis have revealed four activities in which the researcher and the participants were operating from the Integral structure of consciousness. These specific activities included when the researcher and participants were performing the following: articulating the stages leading up to multicultural interdependency and co-creation; identifying worldview mutations; demonstrating comprehension of the connection to the origin of their view(s); and manifesting spiritual transparency. These findings resonate with Gebser’s (1985) claim that individuals operating from the Integral structure of consciousness are able to reveal inclusion through transparency.

**Worldview Competencies**

Contemplation of diversity within the context of Gebser’s fourth dimension revealed that what I thought of as distinct cultures are, in reality, interdependent. In addition, I established that the more we can move toward awareness of differences as polarities of self, the more we can make transparent the truth-in-being of each other and ourselves.

Based on these conjectures, I believe that a new mutation of awareness of working with differences can be proposed through the identification of the following four Worldview Competencies1: Articulate the stages leading up to multicultural interdependency and co-

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1 According to the Encarta World English Dictionary (msn.ca), one of the meanings of the term competence is “a person’s internalized knowledge of the rules of a language that enables them to speak
creation; identify worldview mutations; comprehend connection to origin; and manifest spiritual transparency.

As the findings in this study reveal, Worldview Competencies will require new forms of competency-building initiatives. These include describing the general structures of worldviews to participants; creating exercises for participants to assist them in identifying mutations of the manifestations of their worldviews; and creating experiential exercises specifically to facilitate the capacities to a-ware, make spiritually transparent, and retrace their origins.

Current research provides evidence that supports the view that awareness of cultural backgrounds, personal prejudices, and assumptions is of vital importance to counselors, multicultural trainers, and others who work with differences. This study confirms these findings and extends them. The results of this study illustrate that awareness of worldview formation and construction can move current research and practices from a conflictual model of dealing with differences to an inclusive model that puts the facilitator on level ground with clients. Each of us has a worldview. It affects our capacities to transcend and include differences, and to create new ways of being together.

**Implications of this Research**

This study has demonstrated that the Integral structure of consciousness is not only inclusive of all previous structures but those operating from this worldview are aware of the origins of their mutations of consciousness at that moment. This awareness could assist both diversity researchers, as well as other social science researchers, in their investigations of why people are triggered by differences. At the very best, this knowledge may help to prevent the ghastly ramifications of unacknowledged personal projections that individuals such as Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, the former Rwandan minister of Family and Women’s Affairs, who is currently facing charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. Recently it was revealed that Nyiramasuhuko is herself of Tutsi descent. The very same cultural lineage which she sought to destroy externally.

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and understand it.” I am using the term Worldview Competencies to refer to the internalized knowledge of the structure of worldviews that enables them to speak (or demonstrate in any other form they chose) and identify the manifestations of, and generally understand worldviews.
References


Historical View of Japanese-Canadian Citizenship and Freedom

Wakako Ishikawa
OISE/UT

In 1877, the first Japanese immigrant arrived in New Westminster, which had been the capital of British Columbia since 1859. After that, some Japanese came to British Columbia but there is no record of Japanese immigration before 1896. It seems that there were some hundreds in southern British Columbia. The total number of Japanese immigrants was 691 between July 1, 1896 and June 30, 1897. In 1895, the government of British Columbia deprived the Japanese of the vote. They were discriminated in various ways. The Japanese did not have franchise until 1948, when the federal government amended the Dominion Election Act.

The first Japanese immigrant, Manzo Nagano, arrived in New Westminster in 1877, after the Japanese government had opened the country to the western world in 1868. The earliest Japanese emigrants had a great spirit of adventure and an insatiable curiosity about the New World, partly because they sought freedom from the rigid feudalism of the ruling Tokugawa shogunate of Edo Era (1603-1868) and partly because they desired to make their fortune and return to Japan with a superior economic status. According to the Report of the Royal Commission in 1902, under Japanese law every subject is registered in his native prefecture, which he may not leave without permission of the authorities and from which he must obtain his passport, when he desired to emigrate. A passport was valid for three years and therefore, most Japanese intended to go back to their homeland within that period and initially they did not intend to stay in the new country permanently. Many of these Japanese men were second or third sons, often from an agrarian, fishing, or labouring background. Had they been in Japan, they would probably have been adopted by families without a son to preserve the family name and lineage, or would have been sent to a larger city for an apprenticeship. These early Japanese immigrants came mostly from poor rural prefectures. In Japan at that time, the first son inherited all his parents’ assets.

In the 1890s, a major wave of Asian immigration arrived in North America. There were emigration companies which promoted immigration to North America and loaned money for tickets. Young men borrowed some money from these companies as well as from relatives and friends to buy tickets. Moreover, the new Empress ships began service in 1891, creating the key link, a new fast route from Britain to the Far East. The white ships with the speed and efficiency of steam, had scheduled sailing between Vancouver and Hong Kong, Yokohama and Shanghai. Thousands of travellers who stopped at Vancouver en route to some place else suddenly realized that they had found their destination. However, only a handful of wealthy Japanese could travel back and forth between Canada and Japan. Because the boat fare was approximately fifty dollars, most immigrants could not afford to travel across the Pacific Ocean. The Statutes of the Province of British Columbia in 1895 says:

No Chinaman, Japanese, or Indian shall have his name place on the register of Voters for any Electoral District, or be entitled to vote at any election of a Member to serve in the Legislative Assembly of this Province. Any collector of any Electoral District, or Polling Division thereof, who shall insert the name of any Chinaman, Japanese or Indian in any such register, shall, upon

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1 Sessional Papers Vol, 13, Second Session of the Ninth Parliament, 1902.
The British Colombia government was afraid that the province might become more Asians than the Whites so they deprived Asians of the voters’ list.

One of the early Japanese immigrants, Tomekichi (Tommey) Homma, a naturalized Canadian citizen, applied to be included on the voters’ list on October 19, 1900, to Thomas Cunningham, Collector of Voters for the electoral district of Vancouver. When Cunningham denied his request, he appealed to the court. The B.C. Supreme Court ruled in the plaintiff’s favour, and the defendant appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. Chief Justice McColl of the B.C. Supreme Court ordered Homma’s name on the list on November 30. Because barring the naturalized Japanese from voters’ list was **ultra vires** of the provincial legislature. Although McColl’s decision was sustained by the Supreme Court of Canada on March 9, 1901, it was appealed to the Privy Council in London and it was overturned on December 17, 1902. The Privy Council decided it was **intra vires** for the province to deny the right to vote. This provincial law based on race rather than nationality and therefore both naturalized and Canadian-born Japanese were all denied the right to vote in either federal or provincial election. Because the province eliminated Japanese names from the voters’ lists and so, they could not vote in federal elections. Therefore, they could not hold public office, or become pharmacists, chartered accountants and lawyers. To become a lawyer required that the person be a British subject. Moreover, nursing schools and Vancouver Normal School accepted very few Japanese students; most graduates from these schools could not get a job in their professions.

**Riot on September 7, 1907**

Although the Japanese were considered to be second-class citizens, according to Patricia Roy, a historian at the University of Victoria, the Japanese community in Vancouver gained a reputation for being relatively clean and law abiding. However, “‘Little Tokyo’ or ‘Japtown,’ the Vancouver’s Powell Street area was apart as if a ghetto wall defined it.” The Japanese did not have to speak English in their daily lives. In 1907 when the number of Japanese immigrants peaked, there was a racially-incited riot which coincided with an economic slump in Vancouver. On August 12, the first meeting of the Asiatic Exclusion League in Vancouver declared that unless checked, the Japanese would “ultimately control this part of Canada.” Within a month of its start, 2,000 people joined the League and four weeks later, on September 7, they organized a mass meeting and 8,000 anti-Asian White citizens turned out at the city hall. The crowd, including many unemployed Whites, caused terrible damage to the storefronts on Pender Street. The crowd gradually increased to 30,000. Someone threw a stone and broke the window of a tailor’s shop in nearby Chinatown. The mob began smashing windows of Chinese shops and homes, then moved a few blocks to the Japanese quarter on Powell Street. They launched a campaign warning of the growing “Yellow Peril.” On Powell Street, the Japanese area, able-

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3 Roy, 1980.
bodied men and boys turned out with clubs, and knives to battle against the mob. The mob fled. There were some injuries but no fatalities. Fifty-nine Japanese properties were wrecked. The police had failed to halt the riot, but they prevented a recurrence the next night. In the Vancouver *Daily Province* on September 9, 1907:

> We are all of the opinion that this province must be a white man’s country .... We do not wish to look forward to a day when our descendants will be dominated by Japanese, or Chinese, or any other color but their own .... We are an out-post of the Empire, and that outpost we have to hold against all comers.

Thus, discrimination became stronger and all Orientals were denied as ordinary citizens. Moreover, the number of Japanese immigrants was restricted.

The first Japanese Canadian graduate from the University of British Columbia in 1916, Chitose Uchida, had to go to get a teaching job in Alberta. In 1926 when Hide Hyodo graduated from Vancouver Normal School, only five percent of the graduates got appointments. Surprisingly, she became the first British Columbia Japanese-Canadian primary school teacher at Lord Byng School in Steveston, south of Vancouver and she was a homeroom teacher for all Japanese pupils. There was a second Japanese-Canadian teacher, Teruko Hidaka. Although she was accepted as a substitute teacher in Maple Ridge, she was dismissed after she had worked only one day, because White parents and local officials demanded her dismissal with a demonstration. It was not encouraging for Japanese Canadians to attend Vancouver Normal School because they knew that they would not get a teaching position after graduation.

**The Japanese Canadian Citizens League**

Around 1930, Rigenda Sumida and his younger brother who had come to B.C. to join their father earlier bought a rooming house on Powell Street. On weekends some Japanese students of the University of British Columbia gathered there and talked about Japanese-Canadian problems. The discussion led to the formation of the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association in 1935 and it became the Japanese Canadian Citizens League in 1936. Sumida wrote that the Japanese problems in B.C. would be solved through the efforts of both the Japanese Canadians and White Canadians. The second generation had to take the initiative in making known all the facts, while the White people had to be willing to listen and to accept the truth. This became the policy of the Japanese Canadian Citizens League in 1936.

Meanwhile, Angus MacInnis, the member of Parliament for the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a forerunner of NDP, of the East Hastings constituency in Vancouver, suggested that the Japanese Canadian Citizens League send its delegation to Ottawa. Also, he delivered:

> Whereas it is detrimental to the best interests of Canada that there should be in the country groups to whom, because of race or religious beliefs, we do not extend all the right of citizenship; therefore be it resolved, that, in the opinion of this house, the government should take the

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10 Sumida, 1935.
necessary measures to exclude from the country all persons belonging to those groups to whom we
do not grant the full rights and privileges of citizenship.11

However, his motion was turned down, 186 votes to 15. Angus MacInnis also assisted four
selected nisei, the second generation Japanese Canadians, delegates to go to Ottawa. They were
Dr. Edward Banno, a dentist; Dr. Samuel Hayakawa, a university lecturer of Linguistics; Miss
Hide Hyodo, British Columbia’s first and only nisei teacher; and Mr. Minoru Kobayashi, a life
insurance agent. They appeared in Ottawa before the twelve members of the Special Committee
on Elections and Franchise Acts of the House of Commons on May 22, 1936.12 After Hyodo had
introduced the delegation and their purpose, Dr. Banno addressed, “We, the Canadian citizens of
Japanese origin, desiring by organized effort, to ameliorate ourselves and our posterity to the
highest standard of citizenship and to foster good understanding between Japanese and
Canadians. …”13 The Chairman of the Commons committee asked MacInnis if the nisei
delegation would need an interpreter before their arrival. However, they were so fluent in
English that all the committee members were astounded. Despite Hayakawa’s speech, A.W.
Neil, who appeared at the hearing by permission of the committee, felt that the delegation might
not be representative of the whole community in B.C.14 Since the province had the power over
the federal government to determine voters’ eligibility, the delegation to Ottawa was
unsuccessful. Unless the federal government enacted a law to overpower the provincial
government, nisei and naturalized citizens – except World War I veterans – could not get the
right to vote. Eastern MPs probably had not known of this until the hearing but it was not
considered to be a serious problem to them.

World War II
In Europe, World War II started on September 1, 1939, when Germany began to bomb Poland at
daybreak. Japan had a treaty, Tripartite Pact (Axis), with Germany and Italy and therefore,
Canada considered Japan as an enemy nation.15 Furthermore, this event indirectly presaged
evacuation of all people of Japanese racial origin in 1942 as enemy aliens after Pearl Harbour.

On January 8, 1941, Japanese Canadians were excluded from military service and by Order-in-
Council (P.C. 9591), Japanese nationals were required to register by February 7 with the
Registrar of Enemy Aliens and then all persons of Japanese origin in Canada were required to be
registered on March 4, 1941 (by P.C. 9760) on December 6, 1941. However, not Germans and
Italians in Canada were required to be registered. This Order was much stricter than the one in
March of the previous year because they were required to obtain permission for any movement

15 Tripartite Pact (Axis), September 27, 1940. First the German-Japanese Agreement and Supplementary protocol
were signed on November 25, 1936 (Anti-Comintern Pact). Later a Protocol agreed to by Italy, Germany and Japan
was signed at Rome, November 6, 1937. Finally, a Three-Power Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan was signed
in Berlin, on September 27, 1940. They mutually believed that the toleration of interference by (the Communists
International) in the internal affairs of a nation not only endangered that nation internal peace and social welfare, but
also threatened the general peace of the world. Germany, Italy and Japan hoped to cooperate against a Communist
threat.
from one locality to another. From then on, they had to carry a registration card with a thumbprint and a photograph. According to David Suzuki, a third-generation Japanese Canadian:

On December 7, 1941, an event took place that had nothing to do with me or my family and yet which had devastating consequences for all of us—Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in a surprise attack.

Under Canadian law, *jus soli*, the right of birthplace, did not mean anything to the Japanese Canadians who were born in Canada. Not only the B.C. but also the federal government treated the Japanese Canadians very differently from the other ethnic nationals involved in the Tripartite Pact. People from Germany and Italy did not have any wholesale orders. Because the Canadian government thought the Japanese Canadians might cause a problem and imposed restrictions on them. The first one was the impounding of the fishing boats of Japanese-Canadian fishermen. They had been working arduously to acquire them and to make a better life in Canada. Also, after Pearl Harbor, Japanese-language schools and Japanese newspapers, except *The New Canadian* printed in English, were shut down. On January 13, 1942, all persons of Japanese racial origin and Japanese nationals in B.C. were prohibited from further fishing or serving on fishing boats off the coast of British Columbia. On January 16, the Ministry of National Defence with the concurrence of the Ministry of Justice prohibited all or any enemy aliens from entering, leaving or returning to a protected area, a 100-mile zone from the coast, except as permitted. This restriction was based on racial ancestry, not on their citizenship. Then, on February 24, according to P.C. 1457, “persons of the Japanese race” means, as well as any person wholly of the Japanese race, a person not wholly of the Japanese race if his father or mother is of the Japanese race and if a federal agency for relocating Japanese sent a notice in writing to register pursuant to Order in Council (P.C. 9760) of December 16, 1941. On February 26, the government confiscated motor vehicles, cameras, radios and firearms as a protective measure and a curfew was imposed. The radios were one of the most important communication means at that time, because there were no televisions. Therefore, the Japanese were able to know news only from *The New Canadian*. On March 4, 1942, the federal government established its agency, the British Columbia Security Commission, and its members were appointed by the Governor in Council. The Commission was chaired by Vancouver industrialist, Austin C. Taylor, with R.C.M.P. Assistant Commissioner Frederick J. Mead and Assistant Commissioner of the B.C. Provincial Police, John Sirras. The Commission had the duty to plan, supervise and direct the evacuation of all persons of Japanese race from the protected area of B.C. With the assistance of the Department of National Defence, the Commission advised on and assisted in the housing, feeding and clothing of persons evacuated under the regulations. Meanwhile, by the first week in March 1942, many Japanese nationals left for road camps under the threat of immediate internment. After the Commission was established

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17 1988, p.11.
18 *jus soli*: the principle that a person’s nationality or citizenship is determined by the territory within which he was born. The Canadian government takes this principle.
19 P.C. 251, January 13, 1942.
21 P.C. 1542, February 26, 1942.
22 P.C. 1665, March 4, 1942.
on March 4, these aliens were to join the road camps for Canadian-born and naturalized males aged between 18 and 45.

**Hastings Park**

On March 14, the Commission announced the first evacuation of some 2,500 people from coastal villages and towns. The evacuees from northern B.C. and Vancouver Island were sent to the temporary assembling centre, Hastings Park in Vancouver, for Japanese Canadians. Some people called it “a manning pool” or “a bedlam.” A large section in the park was fenced off with high barbed wire. People such as volunteer teachers for a makeshift school there, who went in and out on a daily basis required identification at the gate, where R.C.M.P. officers and veteran guards were stationed.

Huge buildings which used to be cattle stalls became dwellings for the Japanese-Canadian families. On March 16, 1942, a mere week before the first group arrived, 200 civilians and soldiers under the supervision of Colonel Goodwin Gibson, Real Estate Advisor to the Department of National Defence, started the alterations to accommodate the evacuees. The workers erected army-type bunk beds in the odorous Livestock Buildings. They set a hospital, store, post office, dining hall, kitchens, recreation and mess halls in different areas of the park. By March 25, the park housed 1,593 evacuees. The Japanese are human beings but the internees were made to sleep in the odorous stalls. For the early arrivals, the park was ill-prepared and a chaotic mess. Dried manure was scraped off to make the quarters more habitable but the unbearable odour stayed there. There was no ventilation. Bunk beds were made of steel and wooden frames and each had a thin lumpy straw tick, a bolster, and three blankets of army quality. The internee had no sheets unless they had brought their own. They had to sleep on bare mattresses. Men and women were separated and there was no privacy at all. The latrines, not flush toilets, lacked partitions until the internees protested. There were 10 showers for 1,500 women. Unsanitary handling of foods caused diarrhoea for many people numerous times. Within six weeks, the park settled down to a reasonably efficient temporary assembly centre to facilitate the evacuation. However, we can imagine these people were sleeping without any privacy in the stalls where horses slept. They were not treated as human beings in Vancouver in 1942 and they had to stay there from one day up to several months until they were relocated in interior housing projects or family internment camps in the mountainous British Columbia.

The federal government did not mention that the Commission was responsible for the education of the evacuee school-aged children. In peacetime, the Ministry of Education of the Province of British Columbia was responsible for education for every child over the age of seven years and under the age of 15 years. These children should attend some public school during the regular school-hours every school-day under the Statutes of British Columbia in 1922.23 The government, however, did not provide them with any schools. So unqualified volunteers started unofficial schools in interior housing projects and the B.C. Security Commission took over them but the government did not provide any kindergarten or high school education. Normally, the high school-aged children received free education in B.C. Therefore, some religious groups came to help establish kindergartens and high schools in these camps and thankfully, the Japanese students were able to receive free high school education.

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23 The Statutes of British Columbia, (1922), Chapter 64, Sec. 159 (1).
Toward the End of the War

Some *nisei* wanted to enlist in the Canadian Army, when the British Army needed Japanese Canadians badly in Burma, because they wanted some men who could speak and read Japanese. Some *nisei* thought that “volunteering for service would be to their advantage in fight for recognition as Canadian citizens.” 24 One Japanese-Canadian woman, however, thought that these guys who wanted to enlist were out of their minds, because they had been kicked around like a couple of bags and living a life worse than dogs. 25 Nevertheless, the people who wanted to enlist thought that they could defend their country, Canada, when other Canadians, including their White school friends and neighbours, had already enlisted. Secondly, it was an opportunity to prove themselves and so increase the chances that they and all other Japanese Canadians would eventually get the franchise. Moreover, they thought it was an opportunity to prove they were true Canadians, who should be treated just like other Canadians after the war was over. After being labelled “enemy aliens” by their own federal government, and being expelled en mass from the B.C. coast, they were incarcerated in interior camps. It was almost inevitable that the general public should have come to doubt their citizenship. No matter how well they spoke good Canadian English, they would be looked at suspiciously after they left the B.C. camps and moved elsewhere in Canada. This suspicion would be less if it were known that they had willingly joined the Canadian Forces during the war, and served well and patriotically. Most *nisei* who joined the Canadian Forces did so because they thought it was their duty and they were very loyal Canadians.

Meantime, while the Japanese Canadians were forcibly confined in family internment camps or road camps, the Custodian of Enemy Property, a federal agency, sold their properties, including houses, fishing boats and vehicles at ridiculously low prices without the owners’ consent. Moreover, the government wanted to send all or as many Japanese and Japanese Canadians as possible to Japan and it was called “repatriation,” although the people who were born in Canada had not seen Japan and might not be able to speak Japanese sufficiently in their everyday lives. The people of Japanese racial origin had to sign “yes” for going to Japan or “no” for staying in Canada and moving east of the Rockies. Many of them were forced to sign “yes” by R.C.M.P. officers who had the forms and came to the doors. However, some religious leaders started to campaign to save these people, particularly the children, since they had to go wherever their parents decided. Many children, especially teenagers, wanted to stay with their friends in Canada. Finally, the government moved toward fair play on January 23, 1947. As a result, a number of people requested withdrawal of “repatriation.”

Japan surrendered

Although Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945 and V-J Day was declared, the Japanese Canadians were still restricted in various ways. They still had to carry registration cards, if they were over the age of 16. If they had to visit a dentist or a doctor in Vancouver, they had to have a permit. A few Japanese-Canadian students who received a $175 scholarship from the University of British Columbia for their academic achievement or matriculation during and after the war years could not attend the university, because they were not allowed to move into the 100-mile zone.

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Finally, on June 30, 1948, the Federal Government amended The Dominion Election Act and all Japanese Canadians by birth and naturalized Japanese Canadians were considered as equal to any other people in Canada. Nevertheless, Japanese Canadians were not allowed to vote in British Columbia. On December 10, 1948, the government of Canada gave an official approval to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was passed and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations. However, Japanese Canadians were not allowed to move back to the west coast and they did not have the right to vote in British Columbia. Ultimately on March 24, 1949, the government of British Columbia gave assent “an Act to amend the Provincial Election Act.” Then, on April 1, 1949, the last restriction was removed and Japanese Canadians were free to move anywhere in Canada.

Consequently, people of Japanese racial origin suffered from discrimination from the beginning of their arrival in Canada, particularly in British Columbia. They did not have franchise of the country, where they were born, and freedom of movement in Canada. Finally, four years after the end of the war, the Japanese Canadians became full citizens of Canada. Both provincial and federal governments established a policy of how to treat Japanese and Japanese Canadians by birth and naturalized ones, although the ones who were born are Canadians as any other second generation of immigrants. Their policy was based on the racial origin and was not based on nationality. I do hope that in the future people in the world will never have to repeat the experiences the Japanese Canadians had during World War II, because human beings happen to be born with different skin colours in various part of this globe, but we are all equal.
Transformative Learning, Deep Ecology and Moral Holism

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Introduction
About transformative learning, an educational vision for survival in the 21st century, Edmund O’Sullivan states:

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationship with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding and relation of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibility for social justice and peace and personal joy. (O’Sullivan 1999)

Transformative learning is radical. It demands a shift in the way we think and act. It asserts that we must reorientate our fundamental conception of the world and mankind. We must educate for a cosmological consciousness and ecological vision capable of developing our community with other species and life forms, ensuring their sense of well-being as our goal. Only under conditions in which we are successful with this can we also be successful with ourselves. Transformative learning is not only about how humans should be better fit to the natural world in the survival mode. It is also about our development as humans. O’Sullivan argues for an integrative perspective, a perspective which might be considered vital for our responsibility and solidarity towards our fellow man. In short it argues for social justice and moral awareness.

O’Sullivan’s transformative learning perspective is not of new date. It has long been argued for by Norwegian eco-philosophers (Næss 1989). It is no accident that O’Sullivan refers to “deep ecology” as a source of inspiration for his own perspective. Like O’Sullivan, Sigmund Kvaløy Sætereng and Arne Næss’ philosophies are visionary projects. They attempt to write their philosophy and pedagogy under a common standard of cosmo-centrism and eco-centrism. This is particularly important with respect to the place of humankind in the wider community of life. However, they also hold that these perspectives are a way to real expression of human authentic life. Deep ecology and transformative learning perspectives carry within them a “sensitivity” towards our ability to develop our full potential as human beings.

However, cosmo-centrism and eco-centrism are not unproblematic visions. Many are of the opinion that eco-philosophy, as well as eco-pedagogy, represents a dangerous idealism or romanticism. First it is said that these perspectives have no footing in science. In this regard environmental philosophy or pedagogy cannot be respectable unless it is compatible and embodies the best scientific understanding of the world. Marc Sagoff and Christine Shraader Frechette have recently argued for scepticism about ecology as a science. Sagoff states that the “community” concept has played out its role in nature, and Shraader Frechette says that ecology is neither falsifiable nor predictive.
Secondly, such visions, far from developing ourselves as humans might in fact undermine the very roots of humanism. Eco-centrism might conceal a “hidden utopianism” and contain serious and dangerous political agendas i.e. eco-fascism. If we use nature as a norm for how to think and act what guarantee do we have that we won’t give priority to animals or trees at the cost of humans? As we love nature more mustn’t we love humans less? Worries like these have been voiced by a number of philosophers. Among others Herman Tønnessen urged a view in accordance with this early in the 70s. In his attempts to undermine both bio-egalitarianism as well as eco-moralism he announced his message, “down with nature”. By this he wanted to say that what characterizes modern civilization is that we have distanced ourselves from the “tyrannic hold” of nature. Only if we are “masters of nature” can we hope for a better society and greater freedom. Nina Witozec has argued for a corresponding attitude. In her recent book *Norwegian Nature Myths* (1998) she states that “deep ecology” represents a romantic search for the past, a return to the “noble savage” which might destroy human prestigious values as they have developed in our western culture. The French philosopher Luc Ferry advanced a similar view. In his book: *Le nouvel ordre écologique* (1992) he said that we are in danger of searching for a new moral authority in our attempts to counter the anxiety generated by the enormous technological and political changes in our century. Ferry’s fear was that bio-egalitarianism and eco-centrism could support increased hatred of humans.

My concern in this talk is to ask whether this type of criticism is well founded. I will start out by saying something about why we should not fear that to “love nature more is to love human less”. I will then confront of the question whether there is any reasonable scientific grounding for my view.

**Moral Holism**

Aldo Leopold said: “All ethics so evolved rest upon a single premise: That the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. The land ethics then simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include…the land.” (Leopold 1926)

Implications of Leopold’s ethics are that the principle of morality requires understanding that we live in communities. Foremost, morality becomes a part of our acting and thinking within our relation to other people. Thus, moral consciousness implies that the individual sees herself as an integrated part of the larger totality of other people. Morality starts with self-awareness of the need to limit our own freedom as we live in a community with other people. Ego-centrism in ethics is in conflict with what is best for the community in which we live. Hence, being aware of ourselves as members of larger communities requires being aware of putting limits on our own personal ego. The important part of Leopold’s ethics is that he extends the boundaries for what might be understood as a community to include soils, water, plants and animals or collectively: the land. Hence if humans depend upon the larger ecological community we must also limit our own freedom to unbounded exploitation of the land. Leopold reacted against seeing ourselves as “masters” of nature. Only by being members of the widened circle of the land, can we secure ourselves by securing the environment upon which we depend. The “community” was thus the “key log” which must be “moved to release the evolutionary process for ethics”:

Quit thinking about decent land use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A
thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. (Leopold 1949)

Leopold advances moral eco-centrism. The ecological “community” is the basis for a widened and deepened moral attitude. Just as in the relation between the individual and the social community, humans need to see their limits and responsibilities towards the greater community of living things. But, this particular view seems to create a moral paradox i.e. by ensuring the welfare of others, one also ensures what is in one’s own best interests.

Ernst Partridge has argued that this moral paradox is not necessarily a paradox. The basis for his reasoning is Gareth Hardin’s example of collective tragedy. Hardin’s example is connected with cattle and common pasture. If resources are utilized to the maximum, an individual owner of livestock who purchases a new animal – which is something in his own interest – will in a corresponding manner lead to over-grazing and collapse of the common area. The same will apply to all the others who are using the common pastures; if they purchase one more animal – something which is in their own interest – over-grazing and collapse will follow. Since there exist no common norms or rules or organization of the common pasture, each owner’s rational choice is the purchase of new animals for their respective herds. Independent of what the others do, it will be most advantageous for each person to have as many animals as possible. The collective will collapse anyway. On the other hand, as soon as all have agreed to regulate the collective, the welfare of each cattle owner will be ensured. If a person in such a situation behaves in a morally correct manner - is loyal – looking after common interests will also ensure what is best for oneself. This is what appears to be the paradox of morality. Namely, by ensuring the welfare of others, one also ensures what is in one’s own best interests. Many examples can be constructed to illustrate the same result. (Partridge 2002)

The point is then that each person’s potential for safety and welfare is best ensured by accepting, or obligating oneself to, the moral community i.e. a situation where one accepts or attempts to maximize what is in the best interests of all. The collective’s tragedy shows a system-theoretical justification i.e. what a moral perspective is. It shows that what is in the best interests of the community is the perspective, in which the moral actor should understand himself. The moral perspective informs and guides us in our ethical deliberations with respect to the social community, in the same way that this must hold for our neighbors. (Partridge 2002)

What this example reminds us is that as moral actors we must consider ourselves as integrated parts in a more comprehensive community of other people. What we must question is whether it is possible to apply some of the same reflections to an expanded community including nature, so that the eco-centric or planetary perspective is included. Can we by analogues reasoning argue that we ought to include Leopold’s “natural community” perspective into our moral consideration, and what kinds of consequences will this have? Put in another way, perhaps such a viewpoint can help us clarify what it means to be able to develop ourselves as moral beings.

Næss’ “ecological self”
Transformative learning and deep ecology perspectives demand a radical shift in the way we think and act. However, what we must ask is whether this transformation in our thoughts can represent a perspective which makes us see to what extent we are morally better off with it,
rather than what is the case with other alternatives i.e. ego-centrism or anthropocentrism. To see a possible connection between the moral actor perspective and our obligations and responsibilities towards “natural communities” we will start out by Næss definition of an ecological self.

Næss states: We underestimate ourselves. We tend to confuse ourselves with the narrow ego. Traditionally the maturity of the self develops through three stages from ego to social self, and from social self to metaphysical self. But in this conception nature is ignored. Næss then introduces the notion of an ecological self and defines it in the following manner: “Society and human relations are important, but our self is richer in its constitutive relations. These relations are not only relations we have with other humans and the human community, but with the larger community of all living beings”. (Næss 1995) The important part is then that the self is widened and deepened “as we see ourselves in others”. Self-realization is equally hindered if the self-realization of others with whom we identify is hindered. (Næss 1995) The notion of an ecological self implies that self-realization in its most mature form is not possible if we do not count ourselves as part of the non-human world. Thus, we need to understand that to realize the natural world we are at the same time working in a project of self-realization. Næss calls this the enlightened self-interest. He then states, when people feel they must unselfishly give up, and even sacrifice, their interest in order to show love for nature, that through broader identification of nature, they may come to see their own interests served by environmental protection, through genuine self-love. Love of a widened and deepened self (Næss 1995). His conclusion is:

The challenge of today is to save the planet from further devastation which violates both the enlightened self-interest, and decreases the potential of joyful existence for all (Næss 1995)

The question then is; in what sense could Næss’ enlightened self be understood in relation to a moral perspective?

Self-transcendence
One way for humans to develop moral perspectives or to have the ability to be a moral being is said to be in a position to recognize self-transcendence. In a word self-transcendence means our moral awareness of seeing the worth of things that does not have value for us or our own being in a limited sense. Partridge has defined this particular ability in the following manner:

By claiming that there is a basic human need for “self transcendence”, I am proposing that as a result of the psycho-developmental sources of the self and the fundamental dynamics of social experience, well functioning human beings identify with, and seek to further, the well-being, preservation, and endurance of communities, locations, causes, artifacts, institutions, ideals etc., which are outside themselves and which they hope will flourish beyond their own lifetimes...(Partridge 2002)

If they lack this quality, Partridge says, individuals are impoverished in significant, fundamental and widespread capacities and features of human moral and social experience. Such people are said to be “alienated”, both from themselves and from their communities. And if such individuals lack concern for self-transcending projects and ideals because of total absorption with themselves, they are said to be narcissistic personalities.
But, how to be satisfied then, asks Partridge: Paradoxically, by searching for personal satisfaction. Such satisfaction seems to imply our ability to value and care for things that are outside our own interests, not for the sake of ourselves, but for the sake of those things themselves that we value. To be happy in life is closely related to our ability to love, honor and value things, which are outside us, rather than maximizing our own “narrow” interests. Thus if we continue to ask the question what value it might have for me to take care of nature or biodiversity, either by calculating economical or esthetical criteria only, i.e. base conservation only on “the man in center” perspective, then we might in fact exclude ourselves from the prosperity of real authentic lives. This means that to the extent that we are able to “look away from ourselves” in our contemplation and reflection around how to preserve, regulate and care for the complexity and diversity resulting from the evolutionary process and thus give up what kind of goods this might create for ourselves. It is exactly this that might give us our ability to develop ourselves as moral beings. (Partridge 2002)

**Nature and the “community” concept**

As we have outlined our perspective we have presupposed some kind of realistic conception of communities in nature. However, as we mentioned the “community” concept is problematic given the new science of ecology (the ecology of “disturbance and patch dynamics”). Hence, we need to confront the final question, whether there are any scientific grounds which can support our view? If not, then there is nothing there to be preserved, or to be morally concerned about at this level in nature.

Our existent world view is based upon the metaphysics of *partes extra partes*, that is the view that the world consists of discrete objects connected by external relations, such as the objects in the supermarket. A similar view was introduced into ecology by the taxonomist Glaesson, as he challenged Fredric Clement’s “climax model” in an article entitled “The Individualistic Concept of Plant Association” in 1926. In this article Glaesson argues that we live in a world of constant flux and change, not one tending towards Clement’s climax. There is no such thing as balance equilibrium or a steady state in nature. Each and every plant association is nothing but a temporary gathering of strangers, a clustering of species unrelated to one another, here for a brief while today, on their way to something else tomorrow. “Each…species of plant is a law in itself”, he wrote. We look for organized wholes, and we can discover only loose atoms and fragments. We hope for order and discern only a mishmash of conjoining species, all seeking their own advantage in utter disregard of others. Thanks in part to Drury and Nisbet, this individualistic view was reborn in the mid-1970s; by the present decade, it had become the core idea of what some scientists hailed as a new revolutionary paradigm in ecology. A paradigm which, according to Sagoff, gives us that; “there is just one damned thing after another “out there””.

There have been several attempts to show Sagoff to be wrong. Philosophers of different persuasions have been arguing for a renewal of holistic approaches to ecology. They refer to the implications of relativity theory and quantum mechanics (Callicott) or to “the emerging science of complexity” (Kaufman and Prigogine). However, my own preference would be multilevel selection theory argued for by D.S Wilson and Eliott Sober (*Unto Others*). Their argument is based upon the possibility of group selection. According to Wilson and Sober groups might form cooperative units with a functional organization. Cooperation becomes a factor in the emergence
of new units of selection because it trades fitness at the lower level (its costs) for increased fitness at the group level (its benefits). In this way cooperation can create new levels of fitness as they represent new levels of functional organization. Wilson invokes the notion of “social control”. Social control is the evolution of higher level cooperative systems by means of constraining the activities of lower level entities to allow the emergence of those higher-order community level entities. Such cooperation is policed, in Wilson’s vision, through social controls of the higher order entities. This is a law that governs all transition in evolution from lower – level entities, such as genes, which have coalesced into higher-order entities, such as chromosomes, single-celled creatures have come together as multicelled organisms, single organisms have formed social groups, a process culminating in the emergence of higher order multispecies communities or ecosystems. Or as Wilson states:

The recent development in multilevel selection theory has focused largely on the evolution of social behavior within single species and therefore is not well known to community ecologists. Nevertheless, the theory is as relevant to interactions among species as among conspecifics. Just as single species are often subdivided into local populations that can serve as units of selection, communities are often subdivided into local patches that vary in their species and genetic composition (D.S. Wilson 1998).

Thus, groups as cooperative communities relevant for selection in nature are no more or less extraordinary than individual selection (or gene selection) as traditionally understood. Thus, the problem with earlier theories or “the emergent science of complexity” approach is not that they are necessarily wrong, but that they were proposed as if they applied to ecosystems without any attention to mechanism:

It is certainly true that complex systems dynamics can produce striking patterns in the absence of natural selection, similar to the colorful computer art that can be generated to complex systems of equations. However, pattern is not the same as functional organization. An object that is designed to do something well, be it a machine, an organism, or an ecosystem, must be structured in a highly specified way. Complex systems dynamics are no more likely than simple systems dynamics to produce just the right combination of properties in the absence of natural selection. (D.S. Wilson 1998)

Thus, Wilson and Sober’s models gives new credibility to multilevel selection theory i.e. that natural selection can operate at the community level. All of the species in a local community become part of a single interacting system that produces a common phenotype, more like organisms than species as we usually think of them, and the community acquires the properties of adaptation that we usually associate with individuals (Darwin) or from the “genes eye view” (Hamilton/Dawkins). In this regard, Sober and Wilson’s models explain group selection or multispecies communities as possible targets of selection. If we accept Wilson and Sober’s model adaptive ecosystem processes become a genuine possibility

Conclusion
Edward O. Wilson have characterized the biophilia-thesis in the following manner:

The brain evolved into its present form over a period of about two million years, from the time of Homo habilis to the late stone age of Homo sapiens, during which people existed in hunter-gatherer bands in intimate contact with the natural environment. Snakes mattered. The smell of water, the hum of a bee, the directional bend of a plant stalk mattered. The naturalist’s frame was adaptive; the glimpse of one small animal hidden in the grass could make the difference between
eating and going hungry in the evening. And a sweet sense of horror, the shivery fascination with monsters and creeping forms that so delights us today even in the sterile hearts of cities, could see you through to the next morning… Although the evidence is far from all in, the brain appears to have kept its old capacities, its channeled quickness. We stay alert and alive in the vanished forest of the world. (Wilson 1984)

The biophilia hypothesis might suggest that our perspective is more in accordance with what it might mean to talk about human nature. To the extent that this is right we can also state that transformative learning and deep ecology is no dangerous romanticism. Rather it is a perspective which gives us the full celebration and understanding to what extent a realistic approach to nature might have the capacity to enrich our knowledge as well as how it can expand ourselves as human beings. Nature’s diversity and functional organization, and the ecological communities and processes that make it possible, becomes important in order to understand how our species’ psychological, mental and moral “health” might be forged. If but for selfish reasons alone then, moral holism prompts us to manifest an ethics of care, affection, and respect for nature. Or in Wilson’s terms, “The more we know of other forms of life, the more we enjoy and respect ourselves. Humanity is exalted not because we are so far above other living creatures, but because knowing them well elevates the very concept of life” (Wilson 1984).

And if this is true, then Aristotle comes into mind and moral holism could be interpreted as consistent with human nature and fulfillment. The reason is that moral holism endorses the actualization of human potential because it suggests that we are most likely to flourish in a natural environment, just as a squirrel can best manifest its potential “squirrelness” in a biome that is conductive to the flourishing of squirrels. Thus, we can accomplish our fullest potential in the Aristotelian sense - have the best kind of lives – if those lives can develop in an environment that is natural to us, which means to say an environment in which we are functioning well. An ethics of nature conservation and protection then is not a question of “loving nature more and humans less”. Rather, it is the celebration of nature’s capacity to enrich and enlarge our life experience.

Transformative learning perspectives as well as deep ecology perspectives, far from being authoritarian, give us access to understand what the requirement is to fulfill our potentials as moral human beings, not only with respect to the development of our limited moral egos or anthropocentrism, but in our developing solidarity with our fellow humans as well as our understanding of our place in the community of living things on earth. Hence, transformative learning and deep ecology perspectives, far from undermining human prestigious values, might be a route towards founding our “ideals” upon true humanism. A humanism which is in a position to “love” nature for its own sake, not only for our human interests or purposes alone. And if this should not account as humanism at its best, then it would be difficult to understand what humanism is about.

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The arts as a catalyst for social change: Secondary school citizenship learning

Sally Janzen
OISE/UT

“Abandoning the quest for certainty does not mean abandoning the quest for knowledge.”
Carlos Alberto Torres (1998)

Summary Description:¹

FEST 2003: The first annual Human Right Fest held May 27-28, 2003, at Vaughan Secondary School, Thornhill, Ontario, was planned to provide a variety of learning opportunities for members of the school community to share and expand on ideas and information on human rights issues focusing on ethnocultural equity, diversity, anti-racism, peaceful resolutions to conflict, and global citizenship. Activities, workshops and kiosks were planned by the HR Fest Committee to engage participants in a plethora of ways to help them approach issues of conflict and take an active role in the eradication of social injustices both locally and globally.

We had initially planned to videoconference several workshops with schools across Ontario and/or Canada, but due to the technological expertise involved and the need for our ABEL (videoconferencing) Team to be directly involved, we were only able to videoconference one session. However, grateful to the ABEL team, we met with great success videoconferencing the powerful workshop given by Raheel Raza on Islam and Women and issues of Islamaphobia.

Some of the comments received concerning the learning that took place, interaction in the workshops, the overall structure and flow of events of last year’s fest were greatly appreciated and encouraged the committee to expand on the themes and activities.

FEST 2004: This year, the workshops will be arts-based, participatory and more student-driven providing powerful opportunities for citizenship learning. The summary chart of the arts-based activities (figure 1) provides some possibilities for citizenship learning and participatory democracy.² They will provide hands-on activities and bottom-up inclusive strategies that may allow students to experience processes of shared decision-making (Schugurensky, 2004) and will help to ensure that the diversity of voices of the student body are heard and shared on issues related to human rights such as poverty, hunger, racism, identity, multiple literacies (ie. social, critical, cultural literacies), and human security (ie. security/safety in both the public and private environments in which we work, study, think or play).³ To help create and build learning environments free from racial profiling and other discriminatory practices, the fest promotes

² Carol Patemen (1988) in her discussion on participatory democracy explains that the maximum participation for democracy must take place through the process of participation itself stating that the function of participation is an educative one (p. 42) and that the more individuals participate, the better able they become to do so (p. 43).
³ Daniel Schugurensky in his working paper, Citizenship Learning and Participatory Democracy: Exploring the Connections (2004), contends that through participation in deliberation and decision-making […], ordinary citizens develop not only a variety of civic virtues (like solidarity, tolerance, openness, responsibility and respect), but also political capital, that is, the capacity for self-governance and for influencing political decisions. See paper on website, http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~danielschugurensky.
positive and respectful relations through the arts-based activities and events with and between members of the school community and beyond. Following the days events, the students are preparing to hold an evening café open to the public during which the guests will have an opportunity to engage in the art exhibits and demonstrations, take part in theatre and music shows and may view NFB films and video productions created by students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY/INTEREST</th>
<th>Description of Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music Ensembles</strong></td>
<td>• Plan and organize music selections with students for atrium during the day;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Review songs relevant to Human Rights that students may want to sing at fest;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Select ensembles for evening show.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dance Demos</strong></td>
<td>• Assist students choreographing dances that would be shown at various times throughout the day of the fest;</td>
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<td>• Select 5-6(TBA) dances that could be presented during the evening show.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Street Theatre</strong></td>
<td>• Help guide student committee to create various forms of street theatre relevant to Human Rights— theater of the oppressed; mime; monologues; puppetry; marionettes; skits, etc.;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Select several variations of theatre for evening café.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Art Exhibits</strong></td>
<td>• Help direct student committee promote participation in the fest – ie. collecting works of art for exhibits; encouraging teachers to engage students in process so that they may begin thinking about and creating their works now;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Consider developing a cooperative mural (possible workshop idea?);</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Short description of artwork and/or artist may accompany work(s) on day of fest;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Consider works of art created by community members to be displayed – can the artist be present?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Poetry Recitals (Contest)</strong></td>
<td>• Help guide student committee plan, organize, and promote a poetry recital and/or contest for the day of the fest.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Select several poems for evening café.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Film Festival</strong></td>
<td>• This is currently being discussed as a possible school-wide and board-wide event; Any teachers or students with experience or interest in helping us plan and organize a film festival, please let us know as soon as possible- thanks.</td>
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<td><strong>NO-Sweat Fashion Demonstrations</strong></td>
<td>• Help assist students understand the importance of no-sweat fashion;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Help committee plan and organize fashion demos/show. Demos could be mini presentations that take place throughout the day of the fest;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Select a combination of demos for evening café;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Stress importance of diversity, various cultural fashions, etc.;</td>
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<td><strong>Cafés (food) Fundraising Initiative: HIV/AIDS AFRICA</strong></td>
<td>• Oversee/approve selection and cost of international foods for the day of the fest and the evening café;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ensure # of students/teachers to assist with money, food set up, etc.;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Proceeds to be determined – possibly for HIV-AIDS assistance/relief in Africa.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Arts-Based Workshops/table displays</strong></td>
<td>• Invite community organizations to facilitate interactive arts-based workshops and/or to set up a kiosk in the atrium;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Seek/guide a group of students and/or teachers to facilitate a workshop;</td>
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<td>• Ensure proper AV equipment is in place – may need to book months in advance.</td>
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<td>• Work with fest coordinators to book classrooms and possibly small gym for workshops.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aesthetics of Atrium</strong></td>
<td>• Design setup for day of fest and also for the evening café;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Work with all committees to ensure they understand when and where they present their works;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ensure Custodians are well aware in advance of assistance that is needed and any equipment that is needed;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Work closely with Art Exhibit Committee for overall setup;</td>
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<td>• Set up of stages, tables for kiosks, food, benches, decorations, etc. early morning of the fest;</td>
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Figure 1: Summary of Arts Based Activities
**Global Citizenship, Literacies and Multiple Identities**

We are currently in the process of designing the setup for the *boulevard* in our Atrium. Arts-based activities will be taking place along the atrium and possibly in branching corridors. These activities include no-sweat fashion demos, art exhibits, music ensembles, poetry recitals, film festival, book displays (both made by students and published books that may be purchased), dance demos, street theatre, and more, all of which are expressions of our literacies and identities.⁴ We are hoping that the organizations from last year that have developed peace education, global citizenship, and anti-racist and ethnocultural equity initiatives will return along with other organizations to set up kiosks in the atrium, provide information and discuss their plans, projects, opportunities for volunteer work, etc. to our students and others who plan to visit.

The committee felt that, in some way, we could support ethnocultural and gender equity in an international context. Last year, the food sold in the atrium was provided by the Afghan Women’s Association. As our first initiative, we donated all proceeds from the sale of the food to education for women and girls in Afghanistan. This year, the committee will focus on the devastating pandemic of AIDS in Africa. We are in the very early stages of considering, planning and developing a community project and workshop for the fest that will help to promote a greater understanding of HIV/AIDS. Our fundraising initiatives will help support African organizations that are badly in need of funds.

The workshops, arts-based activities, art exhibits, atrium tours, fundraising for an international cause and the possibility of ABEL-panel (videoconferenced) discussions will all help to ensure that members of our school community understand the importance of citizenship engagement, participatory democracy, and respecting racial and ethnocultural diversity in all aspects of life and living. We feel that the first annual human rights fest, as one of many possible initiatives, has helped to provide the basis for an empowering school environment that would help to provide students regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, faith, language and nationality, opportunities to understand more fully the fluidity, complexity and multiplicity of their identities – within themselves and of others. We hope that our arts-based approach this year will even further deepen the process and understanding of this notion (multiple/diverse identities). We hope that it will give space and security for a sense of belonging, thus, helping all participants to reach their fullest potential in various contexts and prepare for responsible citizenship.⁵

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⁴ Paulo Freire challenged the *banking model of education*, where information and skills are deposited in students’ memory banks, and wrote extensively on his model of dialoguing and consciousness-raising as a means to better the life chances of the oppressed, underprivileged, and school children (Cummins 1996, 152 on Freire, 1983; Freire and Macedo, 1987). He rejected education that stifled criticism and imposed silence and passivity, believing that learning to build knowledge, thinking critically and making informed decisions resulted in a more socially and politically aware and literate population. As a teacher himself, he initiated popular cultural programs, using plays, films, leaflets and radio to direct attention to the people’s own problems while raising awareness of socio-political issues (McLaren 2000, 168; Mayo 1999, 95; Coben 1998, 105).

⁵ In the context of feminist thought, responsible citizenship could be seen as a moving sphere that reshapes the terrain where people deliberate and collaborate, as opposed to debating, negotiating, or competing, towards a better world. Victoria Carrington’s article, *Globalization, Family and the Nation State: Reframing family in new times* (2001) offers a feminist analysis that helps us to challenge traditional notions of family, community, nationhood and globalization. Demonstrating, for example, how the nuclear family is fragmenting and no longer accepted as the norm, Carrington supports the concept of family as a form of social space that is more inclusive of racial, cultural and sexual differences. If we allow ourselves to explore more fully the shifting nature of our complex and multiple identities, we may understand more deeply how we create meaning in and meaningfulness with the communities in which we live, thus, experiencing a deeper sense of belonging and responsibility in a constantly evolving global citizenry.
The fest had taken several approaches to aesthetically represent the diversity of our cultures last year. For example, as the month of May is designated by the board as a time to focus on and celebrate Asian and South Asian cultures and the fest occurs during this month, we decorated our Atrium to express the diversity of Asian and South Asian cultures. We planned to assemble a tower of shoeboxes, each created by our students to express the diversity of their identities within and, assembled with others, to represent our border crossings. Student volunteers giving Atrium tours to our classes briefed participants on the objectives of the fest and the possibilities for learning, including the importance of the cultural symbols.

This year, we feel that the arts-based activities and exhibits will capture the diversity at VSS, including both local and global communities. The committee has yet to decide how the setup components and aesthetic representations in the Atrium will ensure a welcoming, professional, and inclusive learning environment yet may ethically challenge and enrich our views, values and beliefs.

**When and how did it start?**

Several initiatives/activities of the Diversity and Equity committee at VSS provided the platform for students and teachers to discuss various possibilities that could, for example, promote a deeper understanding of Human Rights and engage the school community more actively in social justice issues. These initiatives/activities include attending board-wide and community-based conferences such as B’nai Brith Human Rights Conference for Youth, the RISE Conference (YRDSB), OCIC March Conference (ie. Global Citizenship Conference: Bridges with Youth), and, possibly, the United Nations Conference for International Youth. A few students who attended these conferences began to share ideas with teachers in informal contexts – usually in passing in the hallways of the school. Last year, students also discussed these ideas with their peers and eventually came forward showing interest in organizing a fest or coffee house of some sort. We only had a few months to get it off the ground.

*The May 2004 HR Fest* began much earlier this year, in fact, by the first week of September. Students and teachers brainstormed ideas for a fest that would be arts-based. By the second week of September, the school community had been informed and invited by memos, emails, and in person to take part in the organization of the fest and/or to contribute in some way to the activities and events being considered. A chart (Figure 1) with descriptions of the various arts-based activities had also been distributed to all teachers and to the student organizers who have attended the HR Fest meetings. They have been asked to encourage their peers to come on board and/or contribute art, music, dance, street theatre, etc. that in some way expresses their understanding, thoughts and/or concerns of HR issues. It is hoped that teachers will also adopt assignments over the next few months and earlier part of the second semester, so that students will have time to create art-based works for the fest.

By mid-November, the groundwork for the fest was still in progress as the students and teachers taking leading roles were overloaded with other responsibilities; however, they continued to discuss the possibilities for promoting the fest at VSS and also at other schools, in the local community and possibly beyond in national and international contexts (ie. ABEL videoconferencing). One of the student coordinators is planning to create a website for the fest.
This may not be ready for promotional purposes this year, but is certainly a consideration for next year. RAV (VSS Radio Station) and possibly Rogers TV may also help promote the fest and fundraising activities over the course of the year. Our first fundraising initiative, a Fair Trade Bazaar, has been postponed for next year’s fest.

As the student committee will begin meeting more regularly in February, financial matters regarding the funds needed and the festival fees are still being discussed. We hope that the workshops will be confirmed by the facilitators and submissions for the exhibits and demonstrations (eg. actual works of art, poetry, street theatre scripts, etc.) will be received by mid-April of 2004, approximately one month before the fest.

**How does the process of Citizenship Learning and Participatory Democracy take place?**

There are several dimensions to the process of citizenship learning and participatory democracy that must be considered not only on the day of the fest, but also in the actual formation and changing roles of the HR Fest Committee. The actual process of the planning and organizing of the fest is itself a process in citizenship learning and participatory democracy. Flattened hierarchies in which community members, teachers and students work collaboratively will be stressed, not only to organize and plan, but also to contribute (eg. participation in various activities, contributing works of art, poetry, etc.). Roles should be outlined, but not carved in stone, thus, open to changes, flexibility, and crossings depending on the nature of the responsibilities.

We are still in the process of considering responses to certain questions concerning our roles and inclusivity. How do we ensure that all members of the school community feel invited and included in the organization of the fest and the actual fest day activities (eg. ESL students, learning disabled students, etc.)? How do we ensure the interaction of all those involved at all levels is carried out democratically, such as students with students, teachers with teachers, teachers with administration, and students with administration? Who is asked to come on board and how democratic is this process? Should teachers always be present at committee meetings where decisions are being made? Who should be contacting local community, other schools, the media, workshop facilitators, etc.? How should contact to/from members of the local community (beyond the immediate school community) be designated without too much overlap? How student-driven should it be? The roles of those directly involved in the organization of the fest need to be discussed sometimes at great length and then clearly stated, with some flexibility assumed. This will allow certain individuals to project ideas and solutions to problems as they arise, but keeping in mind the need to deliberate and find a common ground with the group before certain decisions are made. For example, the creation of a website for the fest should be observed, edited, and open to further/ongoing input and change by the group, including both teachers and students before being posted to the public.

We must also decide how students and teachers are involved on the day of the fest? Do students choose workshops or are teachers signing up their classes? Would in-school field trips be the answer allowing students to choose workshops and to take part in Atrium activities? Should this be with or without an assignment at hand for accountability? How do we ensure that more
students and teachers are wilfully engaged? What is the extent of the students’ decision-making powers? How student-driven can it be? As we discovered last year, there will be a number of issues related to human rights presented during the workshops. Some of these and others will be expressed through the arts by our student body and possibly others (eg. teachers, members of the community, etc.) in the atrium. Once we have confirmed the themes/topics of the workshops, we may need to pass information regarding human rights, citizenship learning, and participatory democracy on to the teachers which may help in some ways to lead discussions that are related to the workshop(s) and consider ways to follow up after the fest.

The participants and educational dimensions

The entire school community has been invited to participate in the HR fest Committee and the actual fest activities on May 19, 2003. The school is very ethnically diverse. Last year, we estimated that 300-400 students and staff would be directly involved in the facilitation of and participation in the workshops. This year, we anticipated the numbers to be much higher as schools board-wide and community members were expected to be more involved. We are still considering holding a film festival that may draw on more community involvement. As part of the opening ceremonies, we had planned to have a guest speaker for approximately one hour at the beginning of the day after which the fest activities and workshops would begin, but are now reconsidering this possibility for next year. The students will need to consider whether or not they would like to engage the ABEL (videoconferencing) team such as having an across Canada singing of our anthem, followed by traditional opening ceremonies of the First Nations (or vice versa). The students are also planning an evening café open to the public during which the guests could view the art exhibits and take part in the theatrical and musical presentations.

Participants are engaged in formal, nonformal and informal educational contexts. Last year, the workshops were organized formally as teachers signed up whole classes to attend and, in a few cases, students were allowed to choose the workshops that interested them. This called for in-school field trips and follow-up discussions and papers assigned by the teachers. The teachers could link the information and ideas shared, discussed and learned at the fest to the expectations of the courses they teach. For example, in The Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12 Canadian and World Studies, the expectations of courses that refer in various ways to human rights, citizenship learning and participatory democracy include Canadian and World Issues, World Geography: Human Patterns and Interactions, World History: The West and the World, Canadian and International Law, Canadian Politics and Citizenship, and Canadian and World Politics. The expectations of Health and Physical Education (all levels especially Healthy and Active Living), English, International Languages and Social Sciences and the Humanities (eg. Family studies – Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society) all link to the objectives of the fest activities.

Informally, students were given opportunities to engage in citizenship learning and participatory democracy through their participation in the committee, participation in creating art forms for the fest, interacting with other participants, facilitators and guests at the fest, and learning about educational initiatives in nonformal and informal contexts through NGOs, volunteer possibilities and future engagement. As Schugurensky indicates (2004), drawing on Livingstone (1999) and previous writings (2002), informal learning is often hidden, seldom recognized, rarely valued
and largely unexplored. The fest opens a window for what Schugurensky (2004), drawing on Polanyi (1966), refers to as tacit knowledge acquired through informal learning processes that are usually unplanned, unconscious and unnoticed. In this context, the informal dimension of the fest allows for the acquisition of knowledge that may be difficult to identify and express, and which may even remain inarticulate. It is hoped that our arts-based approaches will help the participants understand and accept multidimensional meanings of citizenship, social justice, literacy, human rights, etc. that may need to be revisited and given time for reflection as they continue to be in-the-process, changing, ambiguous, and difficult to articulate.\(^6\)

**What are the main accomplishments? What remains yet to be achieved?**

It would seem that a festival promoting Human Rights, especially one that in its planning has, in some ways, sought to challenge traditional ways of learning and explore alternatives and greater possibilities for social change through the arts, that the participants and their ways of knowing and understanding the world would be enriched; however, is it possible that some individuals, perhaps many, would have great difficulty exploring or understanding the arts as a platform for raising awareness on social issues that would lead to active thinking and participation? There are also the activities of various, seemingly or not, disenfranchised or, perhaps, unconscientized, groups and individuals who unforeseeably create circumstances that can cause havoc on the day of the fest (e.g. students take advantage of a “day off” or causing disturbances in/around/outside school grounds). Other problems include workshop cancellations, financial affairs handled improperly, etc. It is hoped that with the support of the experience and expertise of the teachers involved, the school administration and board members, the student body may be protected from such circumstances that could be anticipated.

There are many questions regarding the broad base of the arts and the kind(s) of social change they may support. They certainly engage critical thinking, but when and in what context may the arts be unethical? Despite the committee’s great intentions, time must be taken to allow all those involved to take a conscientized\(^7\) approach to the planning and implementation of all facets leading up to and during the fest activities and events. We must ask ourselves if the arts can be a catalyst for social change? How is that possible? Does art make us better people? Does it help us to understand ways to engage in issues of social justice, to allow ourselves to be conscientized and to take action to eradicate social injustices in the multiplicity of contexts in which they occur.

Will the planning process and participation in the fest be a liberatory practice? How can we ensure that the students who have taken on leadership roles have not re-established hierarchies of power and decision-making that excludes the majority of the student body? How, then, has the group of student leaders taken steps to ensure inclusivity? How is this group and/or individual leaders of the group perceived by the student body? Do each of the student leaders understand the notion of multiple selves, inner diversity, fluid identities, and the risks and possibilities involved? Will students choose the artwork to be displayed or performed? To what extent

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\(^6\) Jennifer Simons (1997) contends that tolerance of ambiguity is one feature of creativity. She explores ways that cognitive and affective meaning can be enhanced by sustaining, rather than attempting to eliminate multiple ways of seeing.

\(^7\) Drawing on Freire, I see conscientization as an internalized raised awareness of issues that gives one impetus to think critically and move towards informed action.
would they be able to engage in art forms that challenge the status quo? And, how do we know to what extent their creative works may be interpreted as offensive or intrusive? Will students find ways to promote cohesion at the same time find and promote difference? (Simons 1997, 196).

These questions are only a few that may help us assess if and how students are wilfully engaged in the fest and the impact it has had on their learning. Follow-up participant responses (ie. feedback forms) may help to analyze the success of the event, however, and most certainly, experiences can not always be articulated in written form and not necessarily orally through interviews or casual conversation with the participants during or after the fest. Perhaps we need to begin as teachers and learners to ask ourselves how we can ensure that the borders between cultures are not homogenized within the dominant culture, that we are indeed opening spaces for new ways of knowing, making us better able to understand the multiplicity of ways of creating meaning and exploring the depths and complexity of our identities and our relationship to and within issues of social justice.

Perhaps the experiences we have or in which we are engaged at the fest will allow us to think how different meanings and our understandings of social justice can be realized or renegotiated over time (Simons 1997, 198). Our reflections may divert the neatly packaged lesson of the day to a more powerful learning experience that allows us to drop expectations and see that meaning does not need to be completed at the site of engagement. The arts-based approach could be considered an ongoing process that allows for alternate meanings to co-exist and change with time (Simons 1997, 198). The aesthetic experiences in which we find ourselves could be understood as stepping stones, layered learning spirals of shared creativity and ideas. Goals are unarticulated, possibly vaguely in mind. Perhaps an aesthetic experience could be a skipping stone moving rhythmically across oceans of ambiguity. At times, our understanding of the worlds within and around us are crystal clear and may have us walking on water, completely nauseas and overwhelmed by the experience. Perhaps certain goals are reached; as homeless, we find a home; as jobless, we find employment; we suddenly become consciously aware of how certain power relations are at play; we are more able to put into context the hierarchical order of things, whether they are positively purposeful or not; we find new meaning(s) in life; we create new images or ways of communicating, or; perhaps we find ways to resolve a personal conflict that has been haunting us for years. When is it then that the fragility, fluidity and dense complexity of our identities are taken off guard by the unknown, the unseen, the curiosity, creativity and spontaneity of our seemingly competing multiple selves? Do we relish in the ambiguity or comply to thinking inside the box? It would seem that we need to allow ourselves to sink into the realms of uncertainty and be washed ashore or out to sea, time and time again, in search of other havens with new ways of seeing, doing, thinking and learning.

If there is any accomplishment that could be accredited in some small way to the fest, it would be the impact that the activities and events of the fest have played on the participants and the continued role that the arts play in citizenship learning and participatory democracy and in the life and lives of our school communities. The fest provides opportunities for social, situated and experiential learning allowing knowledge to be socially constructed and learning to occur in social interaction (Schugurensky 2004). The fest represents one of many possible initiatives that, with our continued efforts, provides the time and space for teachers, students, parents and
other community members to engage in arts-based teaching and learning for a greater understanding of the many dimensions of our identities, literacies, global citizenship, and the possibilities for social change.

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Transitions and transformations: Ways of conceptualising specific contributions by learners in higher education to the development of active citizenship through learning careers and communities of practice

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Introduction: Purpose and stance

The research that is the basis of this paper is shaped by the different roles that I have and the stances that I am taking towards specific policy initiatives at a University in the North West of England. The research is more than merely an ‘insider’ account. I am using these particular experiences to ask questions about the analysis of specific policy texts, how policy is framed and implemented, the identities and purposes of the learners I am working with, and the choices and stance I have made in conceptualising research on the contributions of these learners as participants in the construction of policy. The research questions reflect my own purposes, values, and theoretical stance, and particular interest in active citizenship and lifelong learning as a practitioner researcher.

The paper will explore how research on policy development at the institutional level, and the implementation of those policies themselves, can be shaped by the view that adults bring something, which derives both from their experience of adult life and from their status as citizens to the education process; that adult education is based on a dialogue rather than a mere transmission of knowledge and skill (Thompson, 1983: 46).

By contrast, Fairclough’s work (2000) on the language of policy texts and New Labour argues that language has been used by New Labour to construct, not reflect, its political project and that its use of language within these texts is promotional not dialogical.

As a practitioner, I am responsible for the implementation and evaluation of an element of a Foundation Degree in Community Governance and the co-ordination of a Socrates/ Grundtvig funded European Co-operation project; Citizens And Learners As Mentors (CALAM) within a specific institutional setting and time. As a practitioner researcher, I have asked the following research questions

1. What are the objectives of each activity and their policy context?
2. How are learners represented in specific policy texts?
3. How do their specific individual and collective experiences of formal, non-formal, and informal learning shape their conceptions of active citizenship?
4. What are the actual ways of conceptualising these contributions by learners, and the University, to the development of active citizenship through specific ‘communities of practice’?

The research questions relate to different dimensions of the policy process but are also designed to explore how these social relations structure knowledge. Whereas some of the questions relate to how these specific policies have been framed, my argument is that the role of adult learners is
minimised in these specific policy texts. Their place in the policy texts are either marginal, or they are represented as a homogenous group who are passive recipients of a given good, rather than as active agents who may shape that policy. As an alternative, my research draws on symbolic interactionism and particularly the notion of the ‘learning career’ where the “subjects give subjective meanings to their life experiences” (Schutz, 1932). It provides a way of conceptualising the specific contributions by learners to their transitional and transformative learning and the knowledge, abilities, and dispositions of active citizenship that they have developed through episodes in their individual learning careers and shared through specific communities of practice. Making sense of and interpreting their perspectives on their experiences of policy reveals the multiple meanings they use. I would argue that understanding these meanings is essential in developing a critical and reflexive approach and that the meanings drawn from the focus groups are an important corrective to the normative assumptions that are embodied in the specific policy texts that are analysed in the next section of the paper.

The research questions that I pose, and the methodology I have chosen, reflect not only my purposes but also my values as a practitioner. In turn, my theoretical stance and purpose as a researcher are also shaped by my practice. As such my practice and research are informed by the critical social science project that Ozga outlines (2000) and which is concerned with highlighting and challenging dominant and “‘common sense’ assumptions about the desirability and rationality of the official logic of outcomes and indicators” (2000:47). Ozga (2000:82-83) reiterates the choices that are made by researchers in the collection and interpretation of evidence and cites Harvey (1990:2 in 2000:83) who argues, “Knowledge is structured by existing sets of social relations. The aim of a critical methodology is to provide knowledge which engages the prevailing social structures”.

Analysis of policy texts

The following section analyses policy texts, in relation to the Foundation Degree and the Citizens And Learners As Mentors project, using the work of Ozga (2000) and Fairclough (2000). Ozga argues that texts are significant in the messages they convey – or seek to convey - in relation to the sources, scope and patterns of policy (2000: 94). I apply her framework to specific policy texts to analyse the source, scope, and pattern of policies. I argue that these texts are not neutral and that by analysing the ‘actors’ cited, the organisational priorities, and language used to describe them, I will illustrate the assumptions, framing, and patterns of the policies (Ozga 2000: 95).

Ozga’s framework is combined with Fairclough’s work (2000) and applied to specific policy texts to analyse how language has been used to construct, not reflect, the political project of New Labour. Fairclough notes how agents are not represented as social actors, but have an abstract character, and how an emphasis is placed on the inevitability of change. Therefore “The absence of responsible agents further contributes to constructing change as inevitable”(2000:26). In his analysis of the language of government, Fairclough argues that New Labour, whilst appearing to initiate ‘great debates’, “tends to act like a corporation treating the public as its consumers rather than as its citizens” (2000:12). The language of government is promotional not dialogical. A specific device that Fairclough calls the ‘cascade of change’
(illustrated by the use of lists and bullet points within texts) is used to suggest the cumulative effect of change and inevitability and the language of the texts are univocal and monological.

In the promotional language of the HEFCE prospectus on the Foundation Degree (2000) learners were defined in terms of “student supply” and as “evidence of marketing opportunities”. The context for the Foundation Degrees was evident in that “Bids must demonstrate clearly that their programmes will meet employer and skill needs, and show how they will develop students’ employability.” (2000: 19). The document located the notion of ‘outreach’, not in terms of community development, but in terms of outreach to the local business community, not least SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) and in marketing Foundation Degrees to all local ‘stakeholders’. In terms of the relationship between policy actors, learners themselves were neither included nor implied as being stakeholders. In terms of the patterns of policy, and the forms of organisational development suggested by the text, the only policy actors who were explicitly defined were HEIs (Higher Education Institutions), Colleges, and employers.

By contrast, the language of the European Commission “General Call For Proposals” (2003) offered a different perspective on the relationship between specific policies and wider policy assumptions. It followed the target groups and themes in an earlier Commission “Guidelines for Applicants”(2000). The key themes defined for applicants included valuing learning, learners and training opportunities, and innovative pedagogy. The document referred to the European Commission Communication “Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality” (COM: 2001) which represented learners, and defined forms of organisational development, in contrast to the Foundation Degree document.

The Commission argued that

…. lifelong learning should encompass the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. The consultation also highlighted the objectives of learning, including active citizenship, personal fulfilment and social inclusion, as well as employment-related aspects. (2001: 3-4, original emphasis)

**Discourses of citizenship**

Martin (1999) argues that the normative appeal of active citizenship within policy texts conceals tensions between the economistic and political discourses of citizenship. He offers a typology that problematises the notion of active citizenship. He argues that “the idea of lifelong learning can be ‘articulated’ to very different conceptions of citizenship. These, in turn, have very different implications for our notions of what it means to be active citizens in a socially inclusive democracy” (1999:1). The economistic discourse centres on the individual adult learner as a worker/producer and customer/consumer, whilst the political discourse focuses on the adult learner as a political agent/social actor (1999: 4). These competing discourses will be applied to the specific experiences of the learners within the focus groups in my research and the transitions and transformations in their learning from ‘useful knowledge’; their understanding of ‘what’ their local authorities are wanting to do and ‘how’ they are seeking to achieve those reforms in community governance, to ‘really useful knowledge’; their understanding of ‘why’ those reforms
have been introduced and their understanding of why the meanings of citizenship itself, in terms of the economistic and political discourses, is contested and dynamic.

Communities of practice and situated learning

In this paper learning is conceptualised as a process of social participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Transitional learning is a product of changes in the dynamic between learners’ lives and their social background and them having to identify, consider, and possibly re-shape aspects of their lives. Hence different learners experience different tensions between the structures they live within, their personal circumstances, their experiences as an adult, and how their individual values and attitudes are shaped by these structures (Merricks and Edirisingha, 2001).

Merrifield (2001) identifies several assumptions about the nature of learning. Firstly, that “Learning is social even though it occurs within an individual. It takes place in specific social contexts that shape what is learned, by whom and in what ways” (2001:8). Secondly, learning is shaped by external factors but also by factors that are intrinsic to a particular group- what Lave and Wenger (1991) referred to as engagement with and in ‘communities of practice’. Thirdly, the notion of ‘apprenticeship’ emphasises for Lave and Wenger the process of developing participation through communities of practice. Merrifield concludes “research on socially situated learning suggests we must view learning as a developmental process, a process not just of proficiency at a skill but of engagement in a community” (2001: 12).

The two specific examples, drawn from my current work, analyse the complexities of these processes of learning. As such, I am not assuming that the development of ‘communities of practice’ are either unproblematic nor that learning takes place in a social, economic, and political vacuum. Giving voice to the learners’ experiences has enabled me to adopt a critical stance towards the normative assumptions of policy makers in relation to adult learning and active citizenship (one is necessarily good for the other). The benefit for the learners in my research (see Dominice, 2000) is that they have developed an understanding of the complexities of the policy process partly through their participation in the research. In two sets of focus groups they have collectively traced the inter relationships between their learning on the Foundation Degree in Community Governance, learning in their workplaces, and learning through their engagements in community action. Reflections on this learning within the focus groups have formed part of their processes of using these experiences and understandings of their biographies as learners, as a means of engaging differently in social and political action (Merrill, 2002:11).

The focus groups explored the implications of

- Why the learners joined the Foundation Degree and/or the CALAM project
- Their experiences of it/ them
- Whether, and if so how, these experiences of being a learner have made them ‘more active’ as a citizen
- The relationships between the Foundation Degree and work given that the overall focus of the Foundation Degree is on community governance and they are either employees of local authorities and/or community activists
**Purpose and value of focus groups**

The next section summarises how focus groups were used between May 2002 and March 2003 to explore the nature and experiences of different sites and forms of adult learning in developing knowledge, skills, and self-understanding for active citizenship through communities of practice. Focus groups are appropriate to the research theme and specific research questions because they “enable researchers to examine people’s different perspectives as they operate within a social network” (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999:5, see also Merrill, 2002).

I conducted six focus groups with thirty participants so that I could explore the implications of their participation in those groups as part of their collective learning. Whereas life history research has tended to connect agency and structure at an individual level, the following section follows Merrill (2002:5) in extending this “to a group/collective level where the mutual benefit for learners and research is that “Life history reflection can foster the dialectic between the personal and social aspects of learning” (Dominice, 2000: xvi).

**Focus groups: How expectations and experiences of formal and non-formal learning shape learners conceptions of active citizenship**

The following analysis uses the notions of the ‘learning career’ and of ‘communities of practice’ to explore the conflicts of expectation and experience for these adult learners and how the ambiguities and volatilities of these experiences (Merrill et al, 2001), at a particular point of time, have shaped their conceptions of active citizenship.

In the focus groups with the Foundation Degree students they reflected on their expectations at the beginning of the course. Each group wanted support from other members of their group and the expectation that “I wanted us to support one another” was shared. Participants also emphasised general and specific work related issues. Two other learners within the same College group reflected this when one said, “I could see so much was changing within the Council…(I thought that the course would) put my job in background context” and the other that the Foundation Degree “would cover topics in the ‘Local Government Chronicle’ (a national magazine for local authority employees) and different sets of issues”.

When the same group reflected on their experiences of the Foundation Degree, after a year of their course, three sets of issues emerged around personal and collective experiences. At a personal level “It’s like coming up against a huge hurdle at the beginning of each semester” and “Learning can be painful…my daughter said this when I have been struggling… painful for me and everyone who knew me”. However each group also suggested other transitions in their personal and collective experiences of work.

At an individual level they spoke of changes in their own learning, that it “Makes you more critical” and another that you have “More ammunition to make judgements….concrete reasons”. A third student in the same group said that “I have learnt more in the last 6-9 months than in the last 10 years at work….(the course) …has made me think differently about work and myself”. When I ran a focus group with another set of learners at another College the same broad themes
emerged but they specifically referred to changes in the context of their work, their understanding of their role at work, and access to information.

**Changes in the context of their work**
All of the participants in this focus group referred to changes within the work of the local authority and how this impacted on them as either local authority employees or activists within voluntary organisations, or as local authority employees who also engaged in voluntary work in addition to their paid work. At one level three out of eight learners had been promoted to other jobs within the local authority. It was when they spoke of the intrinsic benefits of the Foundation Degree that their language suggested the impact of the course.

**Their understanding of their role at work**
The learners reflected on their understanding of their current role in paid or voluntary work and transitions and transformations were suggested. One member of this cohort of the Foundation Degree, an activist with a voluntary organisation, reflected on how she perceived her role and understanding of the relationship between her voluntary group and the local authority and said that “It has turned it inside out”. Another learner within this Foundation Degree group reflected on his learning, and in particular how his learning from other students was such that his view of the relationship between the local authority and the voluntary sector had moved “From black and white to colour”. The mutual understanding of the needs of the local authority and voluntary sector was also clear. They all agreed that through the course they now could now “Make links in the process”.

**Impact of access to information**
The third theme to emerge from this group was access to information. One learner spoke of how “Information has always been there …now I can get to it”. That was either because he now “Knew where to look” or, in another case, he was “Provided with access because of the Foundation Degree”. What the two students then did with that information was to extend their involvement beyond different perspectives on their roles at work and into other roles in the community. One spoke of how he was taking the skills that he was learning through the course into a new role as a school Governor and the other of how he was using the skills as part of a campaign against the closure of another school.

Although engaging in new roles is one measure of the impact of formal learning on active citizenship, the focus groups suggested that other experiences were more complex. A recurring theme, in each cohort of the Foundation Degree, was that learners were now more critical of the policy aims of their local authority. They were not necessarily negative but now had a greater understanding of the complexity and limitations of what was possible in terms of organisational change. However, another dimension of the impact of their formal learning was that several learners, in each of the Foundation Degree groups, said that they now had less time because of the demands of the course and had resigned from other community roles.

**Ways of conceptualising these contributions by learners, and the University, to the development of active citizenship through learning careers and communities of practice**
These experiences reflect the objective and subjective dimensions of the students’ individual learning careers and how this relates to their own understanding of the contested meaning of active citizenship. The objective dimension of the learning career can be measured in terms of career progression and the subjective in terms of their changing experiences and identities. Through these different experiences, and changes in their self-identity, they are also experiencing the tensions between the normative assumptions of the policy texts and the model of individual employability, the local authority employers assumptions of rational organisational change symbolised by a Performance Management model, and their own experiences and understandings of the complexities of that organisational change. Whereas their expectation in joining the Foundation Degree was located in the economistic discourse of worker/ producer and consumer, their emerging experiences suggest that they are moving beyond an understanding of the ‘how’ and ‘what’ of useful knowledge to the ‘why’ of ‘really useful knowledge’, which they are couching, in the political discourse of political agent/social actor. In the focus groups they collectively articulated this discourse in terms of a greater understanding of the dynamics in the relationship between local authority and voluntary sector, and their own active roles in these processes as local authority employee or voluntary sector representative.

A recurring theme within each of the focus groups with the Foundation Degree students was also the support and learning from the group. Therefore, although some external factors are particular to each local authority and cohort of students there were also common factors and experiences that were intrinsic to each group. Each group reflected on their collective learning through their shared insights into these experiences.

**Individual and group learning through CALAM**

The CALAM project is another example of a community of practice. Six of the overall Foundation Degree cohort were invited to join the CALAM project to work as peer mentors in addition to their other paid work within the local authority or their work as a volunteer. The learners who are mentors have been engaged in each stage of the development of the CALAM project; recruitment, training, activity, and shared learning through national and trans national meetings. They are working to support and signpost the next cohort of learners who may join the Foundation Degree.

When the mentors reflected on their experiences of the CALAM project they referred to the contrast between their work role within the local authority and being a mentor

> I might go to a lot of meetings, but I tend to be there minuting meetings and not actually making a contribution so from that point of view, you know, it’s developing my skills, and my confidence, as well as coming here (mentor review meeting)

Another learner reflected on her role as a mentor and what she was learning from others within the mentoring project

> I think that by being a mentor and being on even something like this where you meet as a group I think that we pick up a lot of skills, we share skills and exchange
Interpreting a policy which they are participants in

When they reflected on their participation in the CALAM project, mentors referred to a wider understanding of policy through understanding the expectations and needs of learners who were active in the voluntary sector and an understanding of what other learners that they are mentoring were saying to them

I listen to people and I’m working on the surface level of what they are telling me, but I think that with this you will find people are telling you something deeper of their own.

The mentors are developing an understanding of the complexities of the policy process and of their roles within it. If their reflection on their knowledge of this social world started with what Schutz (1932) called a ‘stream of experience’ then through processes of ‘typification’ they have built up meaning. Through the focus groups a series of individual experiences have been shared and participants have collectively constructed “classes of experience through similarity” (Craib, 1984:85). They have begun the process of building up what Schutz called ‘meaning contexts’ and these form part of their ‘stocks of knowledge’.

Focus groups, adult learning and active citizenship, and communities of practice

Learning active citizenship through participation in socio-institutional and cultural processes is complex and the attributes for active citizenship have been constructed by these adult learners through their experiences at a specific point in their learning careers. By reflecting on their own shared experiences of learning within the focus groups they have engaged in their “own conscious identification of the activity as significant learning or training (and) the retrospective recognition of both (1) a new significant form of knowledge, understanding or skill, and (2) the process of acquisition” (Livingstone, 2001: 4, my emphasis).

In this paper, I have combined Martin’s notion of competing discourses of citizenship, with Ozga’s work on policy texts and specifically Fairclough’s work on the language of New Labour, to argue that the language of specific policy texts has constructed a narrow emphasis on individual employability. By contrast, the analysis of focus groups with adult learners on a Foundation Degree, and those who are also working as mentors on the CALAM project, has traced the tensions for learners between the economistic discourse of citizenship (as worker/producer/consumer), and their experiences around a political discourse of citizenship. The transitions and transformations in their learning have been conceptualised through the notion of a learning career and of emerging communities of practice. Through the focus groups students have engaged in processes of developing their identities as workers and learners and constructing meanings that in turn offer them possibilities of engaging differently in social and political action.
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I. The Edge of the Abyss: The Dance of Global Capital and Ecological Catastrophe

As we begin the 21st century on Earth, the living inhabitants of the planet stand positioned at the foot a great wave of social crisis and global ecological catastrophe. They are already nearly drowned in an ocean of Post-WWII social transformations, in economies of capital, and in the cultural revolution that has resulted from rapid advances in military science and technology—that which is frequently referred to under the moniker of “globalization.”¹ Thus, our moment is new—never before have the collected mass beings of the planet Earth been so thoroughly threatened with extinction as they are now and never before have so many of us raised this problem consciously and desperately together in the hopes of transforming society towards a better, more peaceable kingdom. And yet, the present does not arise in a vacuum, but rather out of the concreteness of history itself. We move, then, in a sea of possibilities and swirling energies. Amidst these energies arises the great wave; and it is crashing and we who are threatened with annihilation and asked to threaten others with the same are its driftwood. Will we be smashed to splinters upon the polluted beach of no tomorrow? Will we surf the awesome tube of this grave peril and move laterally across it into newly imagined freedoms? Or will we head outward into deeper waters still, floating upon unfathomable depths, dangers and possibilities even as of yet unforeseen?

To think and live historically is to be ecological, to move in a bed of context. The ecologist Gregory Bateson pointed out that the code for understanding the basic ecological unit of survival is “organism plus environment.” This relationship – to think ecologically is to think about the relationships between things – declares that a threat to either the organism or environment is a movement towards the ecology of death. The life process requires both and any process that so binds the one or the other so as to threaten “both” is moving away from life. “There is an ecology of bad ideas, just as there is an ecology of weeds.”² Transnational technocapitalism, as we know it today, has arisen historically as a conscious threat to both organisms and environment, turning both into little more than “resources” for its own assault on a greater rate of profit reaped. It plays the one against the other to their mutual demise and while technocapitalist heroes, such as Bill Gates, imagine a new “friction-free” capitalist world in which services and money are exchanged much like oxygen and carbon-dioxide used to be, the fact of the matter is that capitalism as we know it rests by definition upon friction. It is predicated first and foremost by competition and growth, a predatory survival of the fittest approach to life in which “fittest” means most mighty and therefore able to grow further and out-compete rivals. There is no ecology of symbiosis in the dominant system today, no ecology of mutuality and compassion;

and again, this lack exists not by accident but rather as the result of concrete historical forces at work in our world – many of which have coalesced into a global technocapitalist spectacle only these last few decades.

In his book, The Enemy of Nature, the ecosocialist and activist Joel Kovel begins by documenting the terrible legacy of natural resource degradation that spans the thirty-odd years that have now elapsed since the first Earth Day and the release of the Club of Rome’s benchmark economic treatise The Limits to Growth (1969). Echoing the findings of eminent environmental and ecological groups and personages such as The Union of Concerned Scientists and Peter Raven, the picture that emerges from Kovel’s work is that of an institutionalized, transnational, phase-changing neoliberalism that acts as a cancer upon the Earth, a form of “endless growth” political economy that is literally over-producing and consuming the planet towards death. Wholly without precedent, the human population has nearly doubled during this time period, increasing by 2.5 billion people. Similarly, markets have continued to worship the gods of speed and quantity and refused to conserve. The use and extraction of “fossil fuel” resources like oil, coal, and natural gas – the non-renewable energy stockpiles – followed and exceeded the trends set by the population curve despite many years of warnings about the consequences inherent in their over-use and extraction, and this has led to a corresponding increase in the carbon emissions known to be responsible for global warming.

Likewise, living beings and organic habitats are being culled and destroyed in the name of human consumption at staggering rates. Tree consumption for paper products has doubled over the last thirty years, resulting in about half of the planet’s forests disappearing, while throughout the oceans, global fishing also has doubled resulting in a recent report finding that approximately 90% of the major fish species in the world’s oceans have disappeared. Mile-long nets used to trawl the ocean bottoms for commercial fishing enterprises are drowning and killing about 1000 whales, dolphins, and porpoises daily, some of species near extinction from centuries of hunting. Further, since the end of the 1960’s, half of the planet’s wetlands have either been filled or drained for development, and nearly half of the Earth’s soils have been agriculturally degraded so as not to support life. Finally, as giant corporate agribusinesses have consumed the family farm and as fast food has exploded from being a cultural novelty to a totalizing cultural staple, vast, unimaginable slaughterhouses – brutal production-lines in which thousands of animals are murdered for meat harvesting every hour – have also become the business standard. In his recent book, Dominion, Matthew Scully estimates that nothing less than 103 million pigs, 38 million cows and calves, 250 million turkeys, and 8 billion chickens are slaughtered annually.

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6 The statistics in this paragraph, unless otherwise noted, are listed in Joel Kovel, The Enemy of Nature, pp. 3-5.
in America alone. When we add to these the numbers of animals that are hunted each year for sport or pelt, and those that are cruelly killed in scientific experimentation practices, the numbers magnify by many tens of millions more. All told, then, running alongside the contemporary growth of the global environmental movement is the red stain of trillions of dead animals – a symbol of the radical amplification of the global human population, on the one hand, and of the extreme increase in certain sectors of that population’s use and consumption of the planetary life that it deems a “human resource,” on the other.

Almost all of these trends are escalating and most are accelerating. Even during what amounts to a current economic downturn, transnational markets and development continue to flow and evolve, and the globalization of technocapital is fueling yet another vast reconstruction of the myriad planetary political, economic, and socio-cultural forces into a futuristic “network society.” Over the last three decades, then, humanity has unfolded like a shock wave across the face of the Earth, one which has led to an exponential increase of transnational marketplaces and startling achievements in science and technology, but one which has also had devastating effects upon planetary ecosystems both individually and as a whole. Most telling has been the parallel tendency over this time period toward mass extinction for the great diversity of species deemed non-human, including vast numbers of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. Comparing the numbers involved in this catastrophe with the handful of other great extinctions existing within the prehistoric record has led the esteemed paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey to coin this age as the time of “the Sixth Extinction,” a great vanishing of creatures over the last thirty-odd years such as the planet has not seen during its previous sixty-five million.

But, lest we make the mistake of thinking that our present globalization crisis proceeds along the simple lines of human flourishing and resource wasting, it should be noted that even as world gross economic product has nearly tripled since 1970, these gains have been pocketed by a relatively few advanced capitalist nations at the expense of the poor. Recently, the United Nations Development Programme issued its Human Development Report 1999 which found that the top twenty percent of the people living in advanced capitalist nations have eighty-six percent of the world gross domestic product, control eighty-two percent of the world export markets, initiate sixty-eight percent of all foreign direct investment, and possess seventy-four percent of the communication wires. Meanwhile, the bottom twenty percent of the people hailing from the poorest nations represent only about one percent of each category respectively. The divide between rich and poor has been gravely exacerbated, with the gap between the two nearly doubling itself from an outrageous factor of 44:1 in 1973 to about 72:1 as of the year 2000. Much of this is directly related to a series of loans begun by the World Bank and the World

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10 For the connections between transnational capitalism and Leakey’s Sixth Extinction see my forthcoming paper for Social Thought & Research at http://getvegan.com/holesnotwholes.htm.
Trade Organization in the 1990’s, which ultimately increased Third World debt by a factor of eight compared with pre-globalization figures.\textsuperscript{13}

So, as approximately 1.2 billion people live on less than $1 per day and nearly 3 billion live on less than $2 per day, the roaring heights of global technocapitalism have been unfortunate indeed for nearly half of the human population.\textsuperscript{14} Globalization has been especially torturous upon poor women and children, who are denied basic human rights \textit{en masse} and who, in the attempt to combat their situations of mass starvation and homelessness, enter by the millions each year into the relations of slave-labor and the horrors of the global sex trade. Even more tragically, millions of additional poor (many of whom are women and children) have been violently pressed into the circumstance of outright slavery! Thus, when this is properly related to the neo-colonialist conditions fostered upon the Third World by the explosion of transnational capitalist development, we can rightly assert that these very same cultural, economic and politically hegemonic practices constitute a form of global “family terrorism” meant to oppress those who already suffer the most.\textsuperscript{15} As these Third World families almost invariably disclose themselves along racial and ethnic lines when compared with their over-developed Caucasian counterparts, it should be noted that such family terrorism constitutes the oppression of planetary difference generally.

New advances in capitalist lifestyle and practice are then directly responsible for grave exacerbations of widespread poverty and suffering, species genocide, and environmental destruction. It is axiomatic for this paper, then, that the exploitation of species, of the environment, and of the poor by the rich, have a single underlying cause (and those fighting in the name of these, a single enemy) – the globalization of technocapitalism.\textsuperscript{16} Those interested in animal liberation and its correlates must find and develop solidarity with those working towards the conservation and preservation of nature; and each of these groups must also expand their reach – both theoretically and practically – to include the fight for social justice. Clearly, the project before us is immense, we face nothing less than the unprecedented transformation and domination of the planet. One might wonder about the efficacy of our successfully seeing through an international revolution that is capable of unifying many different social movements together under the banner of immediate ecological crisis.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13} Joel Kovel, The Enemy of Nature, p.4.
\textsuperscript{16} In John Bellamy Foster, \textit{Ecology Against Capitalism} (New York, Monthly Review Press, 2002), p. 60: This oft-quoted memo from when Lawrence Summers, President of Harvard and former Treasury Secretary for Bill Clinton, worked for the World Bank serves as the penultimate articulation of how oppression of the environment and poor are linked together by technocapitalist elites:
\textit{Just between you and me, shouldn’t the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs [less developed countries]?…I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that…}
I’ve always thought that under-populated countries in Africa are vastly \textit{under}-polluted; their air quality is probably vastly inefficiently low [sic] compared to Los Angeles or Mexico City.
\textsuperscript{17} In this light, see Tom Athanasiou, \textit{Divided Planet: The Ecology of Rich and Poor} (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1998).
Thus, to speak of education – as has the U.N.\textsuperscript{18} – as a key process by which we might fend off the worst aspects of today’s globalization, and realize more of the utopia in which animals, oppressed peoples, and the planet are not wholly exterminated but rather ecumenically brought into a new ecological society generally, may be misreading what present educational practices can in fact accomplish. Examining the burgeoning movement of Environmental Education over the last thirty years, we can trace both its positive and negative pedagogical effects – the ways in which it furthered progressive causes and the manner in which it became co-opted by establishment powers, was technocratic, and altogether too marginal. Tomorrow’s sustainable society – one that sustains all life, and not just its most powerful elements – if reliant upon education, will require a pedagogical revolution equal to its present socio-economic counterpart. What will this educational movement be if not Environmental Education? In what follows I will attempt to take up this question by first examining the history of Environmental Education and then moving to a discussion of some of its recent critiques and reformulations. I will conclude this essay with an examination on the U.N.’s own Sustainable Education proposal, wondering if it is progressive enough to integrate themes of animal and earth rights, environmental justice, and anti-imperialism into its educational strategy.

\textbf{II. Charting Environmental Pedagogy’s Big Bang and Fizzled Finale}

While education has always involved forming knowledge and attitudes about the environment, it is only within the last three decades that Environmental Education as a formal discipline has become solidified. Drawing upon the wide publicity and academic debate furnished by the first Earth Day – occurring on April 22, 1970, to enhance and preserve feelings for the global environment – the United States passed the National Environmental Policy Act, the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) was founded (1971), and the United Nations held the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden during 1972. However, the initial U.S. policy (while forming the Environmental Protection Agency and sanctioning educational strategies) involved little more than vanguard rhetoric. It was not until the U.N. Stockholm conference, then, that the issue of the environment was recognized as being of truly crucial import for the global community and that a new mode of education needed to be constructed both for and around it, with Recommendation 92 of the Stockholm report stating:

\begin{quote}
Organizations of the United Nations, especially UNESCO, should establish an international program in environmental education, interdisciplinary in approach, in-school and out-of-school, encompassing all levels of education and directed toward the general public, in particular, the ordinary citizen living in rural and urban area, youth and adult alike, with a view to educating people as to simple steps one might take to manage and control one’s environment.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{18} “Even the most casual reading of the earth's vital signs immediately reveals a planet under stress. In almost all the natural domains, the earth is under stress – it is a planet that is in need of intensive care. Can the United States and the American people, pioneer sustainable patterns of consumption and lifestyle, (and) can you educate for that? This is a challenge that we would like to put out to you.” – Noel J. Brown, United Nations Environment Programme, National Forum on Educational about the Environment (October 1994).

Over the next two decades, further debate and information exchange were held by the world community, with the notion of “environmental education” increasingly contextualized to include notions of participatory approach, the necessity of adequate teacher education and training, a general systems orientation, ideas of holism, conservational strategies and values, and a furthered commitment to “sustainability.”

In 1990, the U.S. importantly passed the National Environmental Education Act and pledged governmental “support, development, dissemination of model curricula, educational materials and training programs for students of all ages.”

During 1992, at the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, an attempt at a systematic statement about the interrelationship between humanity and the Earth was conceived of and demanded, a document that would formulate environmental education once and for all in both ethical and ecological (as opposed to merely technocratic and instrumentalist) terms. This document – now known as the Earth Charter – failed to emerge from Rio, however, and instead Chapter 36 of the 1992 Earth Summit Report addressed the issue in the following manner:

Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues...It is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behavior consistent with sustainable development and for effective public participation in decision-making.

In 1994, Maurice Strong along with Mikhail Gorbachev renewed interest in the Earth Charter and received a pledge of support from the Dutch government. This led to a provisional draft of the document being attempted in 1997, with completion, ratification and launching of the Earth Charter Initiative at the Peace Palace in The Hague occurring on June 29, 2000. The Initiative’s goal was to build a “sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.”

The Earth Charter’s announced mission was nothing short of revolutionary, attempting a bold educational reformulation of how humans perceive their cultural relationship to nature, casting environmental and socio-economic/political problems together in one light, and demanding long-term, integrated responses to the growing planetary crisis.

It was hoped that at the second Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, held late last year – the World Summit for Sustainable Development – that the U.N. would adopt and endorse the Earth Charter, providing a truly comprehensive framework for the Environmental Education agenda the world over. However, in marking the approximate anniversary of three decades worth of global Environmental Education programs, the Johannesburg Summit proved disappointing in many respects and most activists and critics could not see past the neoliberal measures invoked there by the Bush administration (and kind) to find room for the sort of optimistic summary promoted by Kofi Annan at the Summit’s end. Certainly, the “W$$D” (as

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24 For coverage critical of the Bush administration's hand at the W.S.S.D. see the stories dated August 26 to September 6, 2002 on my weblog at http://getvegan.com/blog/blogger.php. On Annan, see "Sustainable
its critics called it) articulated a central divide that had been growing within the Environmental Education movement all along – a split between large-scale corporate and governmental technocrats and the more grassroots-based theorists, activists, and environmental educators proper. With pressure exerted by the interests of the United States (and the additional political and economic interest of the other large states and NGOs), Earth Summit II successfully tethered education about “the environment” to a wholly co-opted neoliberal vision of “sustainable development” – one that meant little more than sustaining increased development on a global scale. Gone, suddenly, was the U.N.’s own holistic, pointedly socialist in spirit, and non-anthropocentric language of the Earth Charter. Instead, the United States has pushed for a commitment to educating for development (and not sustainability), pressing internationally the Bush administration’s own domestic criticism that Environmental Education is not “environmental advocacy.” If it’s not that, however, we might ask, what is it?

III. From Environmental Education to Ecological Literacy: Recasting the Vision for a Better World

Part of the problem in effectively implementing Environmental Education as a solution to stem the tides of the current global crisis may be that the field itself has never been adequately defined as a discourse. The standard definition has been provided by William Stapp (1969), who is considered the “founder” of the movement. His definition stressed knowledge of the natural environment, interdisciplinarity, and a framework that valued using Deweyan inquiry and problem-solving as a method for overcoming intractable conflict and ideology. More currently, educators such as David Orr, Chair of Environmental Studies at Oberlin College, have attempted to update Sapp’s model by stressing “ecological literacy.” This approach de-emphasizes Stapp’s delineation of environmental issues as social problems demanding the consideration of national citizens in favor of an Earth-centered approach that perceives the growing wealth of human societies as an environmental problem with which the complex web of natural, social, and planetary relationships (e.g. Lovelock’s “Gaia”) must deal.

Complicating the matter in Environmental Education, it was noted only last year at the International Standing Conference for the History of Education at the University of Birmingham, UK, that aside from one purely Australian effort (Gough, 1993), as of yet there has been no rigorous attempt to reconstruct the History of Environmental Education proper – it is literally a discourse without a chronicle. So while the last thirty years have seen the emergence of Environmental Education as a fledgling utopian hope blossom into a core-curricular requirement operating in over 55 countries worldwide, the truth is that academia itself has been slow to incorporate, ground the discipline, and offer it as a meaningful part of academic debates about global policy and social direction. Most glaring is Environmental Education’s inability to gain a


consistent foothold within Graduate Schools of Education proper, with even top-rated Education departments like that at UCLA (a department otherwise admirable and exceptional in its outspoken commitment to issues of social justice) seemingly uninterested when it comes to studying and lobbying for social justice’s environmental components.

Without the large-scale support of the academy, and with little grounding in university teacher-training programs, “environmentally-oriented” curricula have had trouble finding their way into schools – even at a time such as this when the need for their establishment is critical. In lieu of a sure academic base, Environmental Education has had to rely upon a complicated and diverse network of governmental policy makers, private think tanks, NGOs, activist-oriented organizations and individual scholars for its framework. Thus is the case, for instance, with the contemporary movement for Humane Education – which stresses humane character formation (via non-violent and respectful learning experiences with animals, the environment, and living things generally), a critical understanding of consumerism, and the promotion of good citizenship skills. While platforms for Humane Education exist at the national and state levels, and while it is supported by The Humane Society of the United States and the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE), Humane Education has only slowly earned support in North American universities. This lack of university support has made funding Humane Education programs difficult and the lack of these programs has prevented its further integration into schools and other local educational institutions. All told, then, while Humane Education is an increasing force in Education today, its lack of presence in universities may be responsible for both its lack of a clear theoretical definition and also its haphazard and pragmatic adoption on the ground.

The lack of a clear theoretical focus, which typifies Humane Education now, is also typical of Environmental Education overall. A major detriment to the successful evolution of Environmental Education, then, is that a wide-range of disparate information and activities are often allowed to present themselves authoritatively as Environmental Education – national programs of action have even been funded as such – that are directly contradictory to the messages of the original Earth Day and the environmental movement it spawned. Nowhere is the stakes higher than in the educational sphere, which may be the least prepared to absorb the environmental movement as its own.

29 For example, see Julie Andrzejewski’s description of her development of a Master’s degree in Social Responsibility at her university in her CALA paper at: www.cala-online.org/journal_articles.html#julie_article. Though herself connected with Education, it apparently was not possible to achieve the new sorts of educational “no-brainers” that Julie is offering now within Education proper, demanding a side shift to Human Relations and new programs. This, I am arguing, is typical of Education at present – the discipline that we would expect to be “out in front” towards helping to transform and re-direct our current social-ecological problems.

30 See, for instance, the Master of Arts in Teaching in Multidisciplinary Studies, with a Humane Education Focus, offered by Webster University at http://www.humanesocietyu.org.

this more apparent than in recent attempts at corporate educational “greenwashing” – in which corporations promote themselves as defending environmental curricula, even as they work behind-the-scenes to defeat such curricula at the state and national level and act internationally in an unsustainable manner.\textsuperscript{32} I myself was victim to such greenwashing on a handful of occasions, in 1998, through my teacher-training Master’s program at Pepperdine University. On one occasion, the California Dairy Council was graciously on hand to guide our mandatory health seminar, in which they passed out a variety of classroom materials that promoted dairy as a necessary source of nutrition and the Dairy industry as an honored and humane member of society.

Ironically, then, in the midst of a varied and tepid university response and the competing claims of transnational corporations and grassroots activists, Environmental Education today may be chiefly defined and legislated by the same U.S. government (and government lobbyists) that have recently worked to undermine it at the global level. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that, on its online homepage, the U.S. Office of Environmental Education (OEE) connects environmental education up with environmental consciousness and public responsibility, even as it is also explicitly clear that the federal government’s notion of environmental education “does not advocate a particular viewpoint or course of action.”\textsuperscript{33} That the OEE no longercondones “advocacy” effectively de-politicizes Environmental Education and undermines any attempt to interpret it pedagogically along more radical lines. Further, the Office tethers Environmental Education directly to a neoliberal form of standards-based excellence and presents a version of Environmental Education fit more for a techno-scientific corporate society than it is for either grassroots environmentalism or planetary ecumenical harmony. Finally, among the other stated U.S. goals for Environmental Education is that it should create jobs, promote environmental protection alongside economic development, and encourage the stewardship of natural resources – all goals that specifically tie Environmental Education to a social vision in which the capitalist economy dominates and remains insignificantly transformed from its current highly exploitative form.

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), for its part, takes a more pragmatic approach to the issue, its sole ideology being the necessity to link up environmental organizations with educational institutions around the world and to implement environmentally-based curricula as often as possible and for the widest possible audience. Unlike the United States government, NAAEE has direct connections to many of the local organizations with which it works, and as a private association, it is free to take strong stands on issues like biodiversity and the Earth Charter that public institutions often approach cautiously (if at all). On the other hand, NAAEE does depend upon the Office of Environmental Education for monies and directed leadership. Thus, it is not surprising to find NAAEE promoting a version of “environmental literacy” that is both a “non-confrontational” and “scientifically-balanced approach to promoting education about environmental issues.”\textsuperscript{34} This hardly seems promising

\textsuperscript{33} Office of Environmental Education at: http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/.
for affecting the sort of shift necessary in the American mind that would either seriously entertain the rights of animals or radically transform cultural lifestyle practices towards global sustainability. In the end, then, the Association tends towards modes of mainstream progressivism – favoring an educational approach that teaches citizenship and develops students’ capacity for understanding scientific complexity. In so doing, it mostly follows federal and state guidelines that are apt to see environmental education as being more about implementing environmental content into the traditional curricula and less about transforming those curricula themselves – in both form and content – towards producing a new kind of student and knowledge for a planetary society that exists beyond capitalist domination.

Both the U.S. government’s and NAAEE’s approach to Environmental Education align themselves with the standard definition of the field first provided by Stapp. In this version, Environmental Education is consonant with training for environmental science, basic citizenship information about products, government campaigns like recycling, team-work, and innovative thinking. Countering this notion directly, the deep ecologist and educational theorist Chet Bowers has produced a number of books about modern education’s many environmental and ecological failings. He finds mainstream Environmental Education programs, such as Stapp’s, to be typical of (and complicit with) highly problematical forms of modern Western thought practices. For Bowers, the contemporary U.S. psyche is constituted by a programmatic worldview that values a heightened sense of autonomous individuality, cultural impermanence, and human dominance – all factors that lead to wider ecological devastation and capital proliferation and which Western education thus serves to help reproduce in its students. Therefore, Bowers questions techno-scientific fixes regardless of their label and is dubious about the current role computer-assisted and self-actualizing, constructivist pedagogies are playing in and around schools. Instead, he proposes a vision of education for “eco-justice” that promotes community learning and place-based pedagogy, the formative role of traditions that value connectivity and commonality such as in many non-Western cultures, and a respect for value-systems that are non-anthropocentric.

Also contesting the standard account of Environmental Education is Murray Bookchin, the founder of the Institute for Social Ecology and author of such seminal works as The Ecology of Freedom. Akin to Bowers, Bookchin is deeply critical of environmental policies, which he criticizes as tending to serve and institutionalize hierarchy, oppress local communities, and reproduce social inequities. In Bookchin’s critique, Environmental Education is inherently technocratic, as its central theme – “the environment” – is a technocratic concept that serves to delimit a space that can then be mapped and controlled by government and bureaucracy. Unlike Bowers’s deep ecological perspective, as a social ecologist Bookchin locates his critique of the educational system within a framework of modern critical theory and a radical framework that is more favorable to Western values and norms (such as anthropocentrism). Thus, Bookchin’s

social ecology is decidedly more eco-humanist in spirit than its “deep” counterpart. Whereas Bookchin ultimately maintains the now dominant division between human culture and nature – though he sees them as importantly related and mutually informing, deep ecologists like Bowers tends to envision the separation from nature itself as a product and development of a particular social pathology (i.e., modern Western industrialism). Despite their differences, however, both of these thinkers share a sort of cultural ethos and sense of political engagement that distinguishes them from other critical educators like David Jardine, whose “Under the Tough Old Stars”: Ecopedagogical Essays, draws upon phenomenological philosophy and transcendental imagination to arrive at a critique of the environmental present. \(^{39}\) Jardine must be mentioned in this account as representing a more New Age alternative to more radical critiques which are attempting to unify around the term “ecopedagogy.”

Frijtof Capra, author of The Web of Life (1996) and Chair of the Center for Ecoliteracy, draws upon the systems-oriented nature of ecological thinking in calling for a postmodern education model that favors the ability to synthesize instead of analyze and which defines systems of relationship in an ever-evolving, holistic perspective. Noting that non-holistic paradigms of Environmental Education are built upon the Cartesian model of science, Capra disavows the language of “building” and instead focuses attention upon the nexus of existence. In Capra’s model, direct experience of natural systems should be balanced with an ever-emerging “network” of relations that learners make as part of their conscious inquiry.\(^{40}\) Some educators, like Brian Swimme, are experimenting with Capra’s notion of Ecoliteracy by combining it with other pedagogical models, such as Alfred North Whitehead’s rhythm of ideas and process-orientation, Loren Eiseley’s literary naturalism, and Teilhard De Chardin’s notion of an evolving Noosphere of the spirit.\(^{41}\) On the other hand, in Britain, Capra’s work is being applied alongside the critique of capitalism by Stephen Sterling.\(^{42}\)

There is also a critique of standard Environmental Education practices occurring beyond the United States. O.I.S.E.’s Transformative Learning Center at the University of Toronto, under the coordination of Edmund O’ Sullivan, is imaginatively combining visions of “Transformative Education” with a biocentric approach that is also critical of contemporary geo-political practices and which attempts to foster positive pedagogical experiences of the art, beauty and spirit of the planet as we might know it. O’ Sullivan himself promotes the Earth Charter as a meaningful example of how radical social positions can be articulated within global institutional frameworks and he is helping to develop a Master’s level course in Education that will be built around the Charter’s core principles.\(^{43}\) Further, drawing upon Thomas Berry’s notion of the important role of cosmology in education, as stated in The Dream of the Earth (1988), O’ Sullivan has called

\(^{41}\) See, for example, Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, The Universe Story: >From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era – A Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos, (San Francisco, Harper, 1994).
\(^{42}\) Stephen Sterling, Sustainable Education: Re-visioning Learning and Change, (Bristol, Green Books, 2001).
\(^{43}\) Edmund O’ Sullivan, “The Earth Charter as a Foundational Core for Transformative Learning Studies,” draft article given me as correspondence, (2002).
for “a new story” that will value the Earth and planetary equity in place of our current stories built upon notions of human mastery and oppressive domination.⁴⁴

Yet another international perspective that is critical of mainstream Environmental Education approaches comes from the South in the form of the leading Mexican environmental educator Edgar Gonzalez-Gaudiano. Gonzalez-Gaudiano exhibits a form of highly politicized, critical Environmental Education that he believes is generally to be found lacking in G8-type nations because the terrible issues of environmental justice and cultural racism are for them “not even on the map.” The reason for this, he feels, is because the institutional leaders of highly industrialized and economically well-off nations generally export their environmental problems to less powerful regions (such as his own) that are more easily subjected to social-environmental injustices. Further, drawing upon the modern notion of “security,” Gonzalez-Gaudiano calls for a new educational approach to “human security” that would displace common ideas about national security in favor of learning to construct an understanding of how the environmental factors that contribute to disease, famine, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and other forms of sexual, ethnic or religious violence can be examined as complex social problems deserving of everyone’s attention.⁴⁵

In his own work, spanning the last decade from Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World (1991) to The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture, and Human Intervention (2002), David Orr wonders why there might be a general version of problem-solving Environmental Education that so many environmental theorists, activists, and educators have come to feel is inadequate to the present task at hand. His answer is that built into the emerging environmental discourse of the last three decades has been a sort of equivocation of terms – as is the case, he argues, with the talk surrounding “sustainability.” On the one hand, says Orr, many (chiefly politicians and CEOs) have called for a “sustainable society” that is really a code for a form of “technological sustainability.” Technological sustainability views the human predicament as a rationally-solvable, anthropocentric, scientifically-directed state of affairs, one that will solve its problems through the proper top-down management of an endless-growth economy. On the other hand, many others (chiefly environmentalists) have talked about a “sustainable society” in terms of “ecological sustainability” – a view that questions human rationality and motives, emphasizes the importance of natural systems and their equilibrium for life, and which sides with a critical view of the dominant social practices that appear to breed disequilibrium.⁴⁶

Orr’s notion of “ecological literacy” ultimately arbitrates the problems inherent in disputes over Environmental Education by resolving them within a postmodern “both/and” logical approach which integrates and incorporates insights from all of the various models previously enumerated. While critical of the potential complicity of Environmental Education curricula and policies with

truly unsustainable lifestyle practices, Orr nonetheless feels that they too have something to contribute. While drawing upon Capra’s notion of holistic systems, as well as from critical pedagogy’s conceptions concerning power and dialogue, and from ideas about Earth-centered cosmology, Orr’s ecological literacy believes in balancing real experiences of the natural world with scientific perspectives on balancing natural systems. However, where other Environmental Education perspectives may end their curricular objectives here, Orr’s describes this as being but the beginning of a fuller emerging literacy into how to be in the world. As students move beyond the mere observation and understanding of natural and social systems, always with an eye towards harmony and balance, Orr contends that students naturally come to recognize an ethical responsibility to model such balance within their own life practices and relationships with people, other species and the environment. Thus, while Orr recognizes a responsibility to act on behalf of the world (potentially radically when it is being fiercely degraded), he also realizes that part of becoming ecologically literate is the adoption of a standpoint for behavior that values complexity, process, and the sort of temperance that is bred only by being actively involved in a lifelong practice of critical understanding and spiritual wonder. Therefore, akin to what the Freirean educator Moacir Gadotti has articulated as the new practice of “ecopedagogy,” ecological literacy asks of us that we each remain open to listening to a manifold of different knowledge systems, that we act collaboratively with a diversity of others (in a non-anthropocentric fashion), that we remain rigorous and critical in our ethical stance towards life, and that we constantly integrate our own life experiences towards the general end of helping our home planet Earth to sustain the rich and beautiful tapestry of life with which it provides us.

IV. Environmental Education as Contested Terrain

The present moment for Environmental Education is best categorized as a “complex and contested terrain” and it would be inappropriate to describe it simply as embodying a general trajectory of either “rise and fall” or “continuous evolution.” The last thirty-odd years have seen a tremendous rise in the transnational institutional adoption and maturity of Environmental Education as a field of study and practice. But, as was noted earlier, in some sense it is a mistake even to characterize Environmental Education as a new field, for all education has always involved sowing knowledge and values (whether implicitly or explicitly) around the relationship between humanity and the natural world in which it finds itself. Still, it must be affirmed that in the face of a growing ecological crisis – one affecting both global culture and nature – that environmentally-related themes have come to take on a more exact and pointedly formal disciplinary status as a result. There have been an increasing amount of international educational curricula (much of it formally directed by the UN itself) which focus explicitly on such important issues as the mass extinction of species, the role of biodiversity in the world, and the ecological relationship between cultural habits and natural environments. Additionally, nonformal education movements, such as Humane Education, are moving onto the world stage to provide a meaningful pedagogical platform for powerful contemporary ethical developments like animal rights. The effect of this has been to create numerous openings for linkages between nonformal and formal institutions around allied themes and shared strategies, though to this

moment very few of these bridges have actually been crossed. Therefore, animal liberationists, rightists, and humane educators should exploit the current vogue within formal Education around the issues of sustainability and the environment by demonstrating the important role of human/animal relations in each of these and by seeking greater integration with formal approaches to these topics wherever possible.

Yet, let us remember that the relatively recent frenzy around the corpus of Environmental Education – especially at the global level – itself represents a sort of danger sign that should be heeded with caution. For over the same period of time that the field has emerged as a legitimate, the planetary environment itself has undergone radical discontinuities, there has begun an unprecedented move towards the whole scale slaughter of creatures large and small, and human culture (in both its rich and poor varieties) has left an increasingly heavy “ecological footprint” across the face of the Earth. Seemingly in response to such dangers, Japan suggested at the recent Earth Summit II in Johannesburg that the years of 2005-2015 be hailed and promoted by the United Nations as “the decade of Environmental Education.” However, notably, under pressure from the global corporate leadership the United Nations adopted Japan’s proposal but went on to distinguish between Environmental Education (EE) as a singular field of reduced importance in comparison with the new State-promoted agenda of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This is also being promoted now as Education for Sustainability. Contrary to both traditional Environmental Education practices and more recent challenges to those practices, then, ESD represents a reactionary new third development within the field – one advertised as especially worthy of international monies, institutional investment and attention.49 Though UN documents, like the Ubuntu Declaration, also recently called for educators to play an important part in sustainable development policy formation, and for the Earth Charter’s central role as a guiding vision for the same, one cannot help but fear that powerful social forces have further co-opted whatever legacy and promise Environmental Education still offered. At such a time such as ours, when Environmental Education practices might (it is hoped) come to represent a radical pathway to a more decent, loving and beautiful world, we have much reason to doubt that they will be anything more than a strategy to inculcate the practices of capitalist resource management coupled with rational economic and social planning.50

In response to such changes, radical educators concerned with these issues have been left wondering if transnational organizations are capable of interpreting the idea of a “limit to growth” in any fashion beyond permissive neoliberalism. For the present standard of living enjoyed by those across the planet is estimated to utilize somewhere between two to four times the amount of sustainable resources provided by the Earth proper. Therefore, as the world population continues to rise toward nine billion people and living standards increase in commensurate measure, it is reasonably calculated that to have a sustainable planet by the year 2070 would entail techno-scientific advances capable of enabling sixty times as much production and consumption as is presently afforded, while only generating one-half to one-third the amount


of present resource and environmental cost.\textsuperscript{51} But, according to the U.N.’s own UNEP GEO-3 report, released just prior to the Johannesburg Summit, a vision of continued growth of this kind is consonant only with earthly extinction; either great changes are made in our global lifestyle now or an irrevocable crisis will descend upon the planet by 2032.\textsuperscript{52}

In conclusion, then, while Environmental Education appears to be growing professionally as a field and should continue to become ever-more central to educational and political discourse over the next decade(s) under the banner of sustainability, the immediate institutional trend in Environmental Education is a depressing move away from establishing anything like a radical “ecological literacy.” Further, liberation literacies involving topics such as animal liberation, the possible rights of animals, or anything involving students to engage in a real confrontation with the realities of oppressed beings generally, seem not to be up for wide curricular mandate or approval.\textsuperscript{53} Instead, schools will trend toward interpreting the present questions surrounding the treatment of animals, rising environmental crises, and burgeoning social problems as requiring little more than training in the (“learn how to be”) technological and (“please don’t do any”) critical thinking literacies that are the fetish of Education today.

This is an ominous indicator on the field’s horizon line (and on society’s as well) – one that speaks to a deep fracture that exists between the majority of the people in and around Education that favor a rational planning and “wise use” economic approach and the revolutionary minority that are bent on realizing an ethical “revaluation of all values” that will ultimately be capable of meeting the present challenge set before us by the growing global ecological catastrophe. To this end, a rising wave of conservationists, animal rights activists, academics concerned with social and eco-justice, and Earth-centered educators are beginning to search for solidarity and find a common language amongst them. Their plan for action is a radical ecopedagogy – a term both educational and ethical – which marks their unflinching opposition to the murderous, anthropocentric, and technocratic language now invoked by the global institutions of capital exchange as both the map and the territory. This is the beginning of a new pathway ahead – one that returns liberation to the classroom, or that liberates the classroom entirely even as it liberates the suffering beings in and around it. This is the dream; but to animal liberationists and other radical educators green, red, black, or rainbow, know that in this age of institutional fads, new literatures, and academic innovation, the path ahead in Education is dark indeed. It is out from the developing new social movements, then, such as the movement for animal liberation, that radical educators are attempting to draw strength and insight and to shine what light they find therein into the catacombs of our teacher education programs and beyond. Whether liberationists themselves will find this challenge facing education today compelling enough to warrant the investment of their own energies and interests may be worth their future reasoned debate. At least, they should be informed about the current educational realities and their likely result. On

\textsuperscript{53} The main reason for this, of course, is because degree-granting programs like Education tend to represent socially conservative forces, or be checked heavily by them. On the other hand, nonformal institutions and radical grassroots organizations have not necessarily tried as hard as they might to engage the academic community proper. This has resulted in the widespread failure of contemporary progressive causes to be better integrated into schools of all ages. Organizations such as the Center for Animal Liberation Affairs are notable for its strategy of academic engagement. In this respect see its upcoming 2003 Academic Awareness Day on the ALF at: http://www.cala-online.org.
the other hand, as Education remains a primary institution towards affecting social change, it deserves to be fought for, transformed, and wizened – the Ecopedagogists are placing their feet inside the door and calling in solidarity for the help of liberationists everywhere as we speak: let’s storm the entrance! I believe it is worth the chance – it could mean the difference between today’s rage and tomorrow’s hope.

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**Endnotes**

**Youth: Independent Thinking and Human Agency in the Transition to Citizenship**

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This paper will critically examine the preparation of youth as citizens in the context of the teaching of history in Ontario schools. The paper will start by examining the role of independent thinking and human agency in determining citizenship and juxtapose this with the reality of the world of the students in a classroom. The paper will achieve this by presenting data from a research study where students were asked to respond to a historical situation where the government abdicated responsibility to the rights of its First Nations citizens. Responses from three different classrooms, where students reacted differently to the idea of responsibility as part of citizenship will be examined closely to determine how closely students are trained to think independently, as part of the school situation. The paper will end with a critical analysis of the curriculum to determine whether independence of thought and the fostering of responsibility are important components of citizenship education in Ontario today.

The spirit of democracy cannot be a gift; it cannot be obtained by wishful thinking or by outright purchase. It is a quest; a pursuit of enlightened imagination. It is born in the natural rights of all humankind; it is nurtured in a civil public discourse; it finds expression in the virtues of how we live together. (Hughes, 2002)

**Introduction**

At a recent conference, researchers from Manitoba in charge of the Democracy 2002 project told of an interesting conversation that they had with their Argentinian partners in promoting research on democracy. Argentinean educators, working to foster an emerging democratic culture in their country said “Don’t teach us about the structures of democracy - we know all about the structures of democracy; teach us the spirit of democracy.” Thus the Democracy 2002 project was set up to:

focus not on sterile mechanisms such as how elections are conducted or bills passed, but on the ideas and principles which underlie these mechanisms and infuse them with vitality (Democracy Project, 2002).
In this paper I posit that citizenship education is only powerful, if it demonstrates to students the importance of human agency – the responsibility for action that citizens must take in order to engage themselves in the political process. I also posit furthermore, rather bravely, that that stance has to be an ethical one – one that forces the government and citizens to engage in a civil society by taking into account the fortunes of all, but especially those of the weak and marginalized. And finally, I posit that the task of demonstrating to students that citizenship is active, moral and responsible, falls to the teacher. It is the teacher that moves citizenship education from sterile mechanisms to ideas and principles that empower.

I will demonstrate these positions through findings from a research study that took place in 1993 – a research study, which entered directly into the classroom to determine how Grade 8 students dealt with a historical problem that engaged them in moral and ethical dilemmas and which made them question the wisdom and fairness of their own government’s decision. Through this paper, I demonstrate that it is, at least in this case, the teachers that lead the students in interpreting the case study and in engaging in or neglecting or ignoring the ethical dilemmas that the case presents.

Background
In a recent literature review on youth and the transition to citizenship, Beuvais, MacKay, Seddon (2001), state that according to them, citizenship is composed of three analytical dimensions: (1) rights and responsibilities, (2) access, and (3) feelings of belonging (that is, identity. Each is required for citizenship to take place and for people to actively engage themselves as citizens.

Beuvais, MacKay and Seddon go onto explain that unless youth are financially independent, have equal access to resources and are included in society (one way which they describe this inclusion is through acquiring an education), it is difficult to envision that the youth can be full citizens. However, it is my position that each of the above: the perception of rights and responsibilities, the access and the feeling of belonging can be engendered by situations other than finance and are very much the purview of the school and the surrounding community awareness. I will demonstrate this by showing 3 different teachers engaging with the same materials, and producing different responses from their students – responses that are directly linked to the approach of their teachers.

The Other Story Project
In the fall of 1994, I received a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Education to develop a project to promote inter-cultural understanding using networked computers across the country. The project was entitled The Other Story, and during the two years of its duration, approximately 40 schools in Canada, and one school in the Caribbean participated in the project.

The main objective of the Other Story project was to use existing technologies to provide a forum for those stories and peoples, who traditionally have not been included in the school curriculum. The Internet provided a unique opportunity to allow different voices of the world to come right into the classroom and to present their stories to students. These students could then pose questions and discuss relevant issues with the people who are actually living these stories.
Most of the data for this paper is derived from classroom observations and on-line text derived from the First Nations history project set up as part of this project. In Spring 1995, eight Grade 8 classrooms, including two from First Nations schools, participated in an Internet conference "First Nations Peoples: The Untold Story". This examined a significant event in Canadian history and presented it to students both from the conventional textbook view and from the perspective of the First Nations people. Students read and responded to a story written by two First Nations authors (Dion and Fletcher, 1995) about Mistahimaskwa (Big Bear of conventional text books) who defied the encroaching Canadian government forces who wished to occupy and take over his people's land. Students were encouraged to look for information on this event in other resources and consider: Have we been exposed to the First Nations viewpoint before? Why or why not? What does this tell us about our history and about ourselves?

Responses from each classroom were shared on a listserv. One project objective was to encourage reflection - have we as teachers, students and adherents of the various cultures learned anything from this exchange of experiences? How does this portrayal of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples affect our relationship? How can we use this learning experience to affect a change in the relationship between us?

There are eight classes that participate in this project, but this paper will concentrate on three: the first is a suburban school in a wealthy neighbourhood, the second is another suburban school but with a teacher who is an activist, and the third is a First Nations school in Northern Manitoba.

**A.S. Dawson School and its Participation in the Other Story project**

A.S. Dawson is a suburban school in a large metropolitan city. It stands in the middle of a first generation immigrant neighbourhood close to a wealthy residential area. The students are hard-working and well above their grade level in reading and computational skills. They introduced themselves to the other students in the project clearly confident of their strengths and their ability to see the "other" view:

> As students, we have been influenced in many ways. We watch videos which influence us in our ways of thinking. We take trips to educational areas which help expand our thoughts. By having these privileges, it helps us think more clearly and assists us in deciphering what's right and wrong. This enables us to see the Native's aspect of the situation.

**A.S. Dawson's Response to the Story of Mistahimaskwa**

The story of Mistahimaskwa, is the story of a Cree chief, who, during the 1870's, resisted treaty agreements with the Canadian government and attempted to form a united front against the government's appropriation of aboriginal land (Fletcher, 1995). Mistahimaskwa does not succeed in keeping his land. In fact his attempts at compromise and his treaty arrangements with the government result in betrayal. This story is very much a reflection of Canada's history - who we are and where we have come from.

The story was delivered to the students on-line and their first response was:

> When we first read the story, we had very strong and intense feelings about it. We felt very sympathetic towards the Cree and their chief, and we felt very outraged towards the Europeans who tried to take away the land which the Cree lived on. These feelings continued to surface as we read on, which concerned us about certain issues brought up in the story.
The issues included the wanton killing of the buffalo by the Europeans, the "heartless and ignorant" snatching away of the Cree land, the fact that the Europeans didn't uphold the treaty and the lack of understanding they betrayed toward the Cree culture:

If the Europeans had tried to put themselves in the Cree position, history probably would have changed for the better. We feel the Europeans acted unfairly towards the Cree, treating them as if they were inferior. We felt infuriated with the Europeans while we could sympathize with the Cree.

Initial analysis of the language used in this passage displays two examples of bias (Fletcher, 1995). Firstly, students do not believe the perpetrators of this injustice are the Canadian government. They identify them as Europeans. From this story and their study of history, the students should be well aware that the Canadian government sanctioned land acquisition.

The Canadian government dispatched 8000 troops to vanquish Mistahimaskwa's several hundred tired and hungry men. The students don't notice this. Distinguishing between European and Canadian is an attempt to distance the actions of the perpetrators from the students' own government and thus from themselves (Fletcher, 1995).

The second example of bias is the underlying tone that the Europeans could not be "blamed" for what happened because they did not "understand" the other culture - if they had not perceived the Cree to be inferior, they would not have treated them in this manner. The greed and injustice of the situation is downplayed - a refusal to acknowledge responsibility and guilt on the part of one's government.

After examining other resources the students commented:

We compared the story from the text book and the story by Dion and Fletcher and noted differences and similarities. Some similarities mentioned in both stories was the way the native Indians were acknowledged as poor and starving from the lack of buffalo. Surprisingly, the textbooks also looked at the grievances the natives had. The location of the battles specified in each story was also identical. Both mentioned that Big Bear was tried and found guilty of the deaths caused by his warriors. The similarities the stories shared were basically the clean cut facts.

Because the information in the text books was slightly more European oriented, there were a few differences in views compared to the Natives' story. The information was still mostly factual - not as personal as the story by the Dions. The text books did a fairly good job in reporting Mistahimaskwa's story even including the views from the Natives.

Interestingly the most important conclusion the students reached was the determination of which text was more accurate.

As any historian will explain, it is not just facts that are important in history: it is their interpretation that tells us not only what happened about who we are, and how we see ourselves. Facts can never stand alone - in choosing the facts to include in their version of events historians from both cultural groups made choices. The facts, rather than being neutral and value-free, become in and of themselves an extension of the historians' perspective and interpretation. For these students, it is the factual analysis that is important - the emotional response of the Cree is not recognised for what it is - the unfairness of the situation.
Susan Fletcher was interested in the students' interpretation of the event - in what they thought it told them about themselves as human beings, as Canadians. She felt they couldn't complete this process until they examined the interpretation of the event from both perspectives - "those who did it and who it was done to".

The students, in avoiding the question of what happened in the larger context of whether it was right that it should have happened also avoided bringing themselves and their own positions into the story. In understanding history from the objectivity of facts, they avoid the larger question of whether the government acted fairly and the question of how the historians interpreted this event.

**The Story of Mistahimaskwa and Students at Shoreside High**

These students interpreted the same story in a totally different way - which led to different insights. After comparing the story with what they found in their books they commented:

"the Cree killed nine whites at Frog Lake, burned Ft. Pitt, and were defeated at Loon Lake'. The article in the encyclopaedia does not include the fact that eight thousand government troops were sent after them (as mentioned in the Dion article). We think that one reason this was not mentioned was because the author of the article did not want to make the Canadian government look bad.

Here students are looking at the historians' "intention" and bias. Only some facts are reported so that the Canadian government is not portrayed as evil. This is a form of critical thinking that goes beyond consideration of the given facts. The students then go beyond motive for interpretation to how the vocabulary and images one uses affect how one views events and people.

"In the encyclopaedia "Encarta '95", a brief article on the Cree Indians states that they practised cannibalism in times of hardship. Cannibalism is one of the quick reference words that shows up highlighted!!!"

The students are beginning to understand the use of vocabulary to represent reality. They realise that linking "cannibalism", an entirely unjustified connection, will affect the way that the Cree are perceived. As they indulge in criticism and in historical analysis of this order, they are becoming historians in their own right - no longer accepting history as mere physical events but rather as explanations and interpretations of past events by the historians of their text books. Their intellectual development is illustrated by this response:

We now see language has a big impact on us and different words, even if they mean the same thing can give a whole new meaning to a statement. We also think that First Nation's people should be listed by their native names rather than by their English "names" because the meanings can be degrading. We now know not to believe just one account. Depending on who wrote the account seems to colour what facts are recorded or not recorded.

I would argue that by juxtaposing the text of the textbook, the encyclopaedia and the field visit with the text of the "other", fresh vistas of criticism are revealed. Students begin to question why they have never seen this perspective before.

Recently our class went to Fort York and stayed overnight in one of the blockhouses. When we looked through the books we learned the views of the soldiers, the officers and Mrs. Simcoe. At no time did we read about or hear from the Fort York interpretative staff what the native point of
view was. It's like this in many historic accounts in our books. We were wondering if there was a website or e-mail address where we could get more information.

These students are beginning to move away from the textbooks alone to what their own society provides as the official history of the relationship between the two peoples. They're beginning to see other sources, such as the First Natives perspectives as possibilities for information. They are also beginning to question formal knowledge - the knowledge of their own society and whether it portrays what really happened.

When A.S. Dawson students read the Shoreside responses, they accused them of being "politically correct" and not being interested in objectivity. The Dawson students were practising critical analysis from a position of logic, of fairness of representing both sides - Shoreside is beginning to question who was right, what was ethical, and how one side could unfairly represent another - issues of motive, interpretation and values.

**The role of the teachers**
It is interesting that the teachers’ interpretations are very much reflected in the students’ attitudes. In the case of the A.S.Dawson school, the teacher was uninterested in the issues of fairness, role of the government and the rights of the First Nations peoples. Her main interests were in ensuring that her students came across as articulate and intelligent – they did not wish to be “politically correct” as they described Shoreside High’s responses.

On the other hand, the teacher at Shoreside High, was actively interested in politics, in First Nations issues and had explored these themes with her students before. She really wanted her students to question history and historical perspectives as portrayed in text books, she wanted them to explore language and she wanted students to hold their government accountable.

To underscore this issue of teachers, at one point, the researcher attached to this project visited another school, Hillside High, and she noticed that students were apathetic and uninterested in First Nations issues for the first few weeks. However, all this changed, when the classroom teacher acquired a pre-service student from the university. He managed to get students to explore issues of unfairness, First Nations anger and the unfairness of what had happened in the past and continued to happen in the present. In the next section, we shall see how, sometimes even without the presence of teachers, the unfortunate circumstances that communities face, brings them together and turns them into activists that know exactly what is happening and wish to hold the government accountable.

**Lakeside School and the Story of Mistahimaskwa**
When we meet the Lakeside students we begin to understand that citizenship education is not just understanding institutions but it is what government does to people. And we cannot arrive at this stage until we understand the impact of history on a people (especially when that people are without power and subject to the whim and will of a sovereign government). The school we now meet, is a First Nations school in a small town in Northern Manitoba. The students' introduced themselves to the conference:

We are all in grade 8. There are 23 students: 11 boys and 12 girls. We live in Lakeside, Manitoba. It has about 1000 people, three stores, one cafe, and one small motel. Languages spoken are Cree and English. In our recent past (mid 1970s) Manitoba Hydro flooded the lake and river system we
live on. Our entire community was moved to higher ground. Our old homes were burned and the fishing industry was devastated. Our people are still recovering from the disaster.

These students identified closely with the story of Mistahimaskwa.

The story makes me feel sorry and angry at the same time. Sorry for the people whose lives were being destroyed and changing the way they've lived for years, because they really had no choice. Angry because those people whose lives were being destroyed are a part of me and I am a part of them. Today things like that are still happening. It was sad because they tried to accept the government's promises but they were not honoured until they lost their temper and killed a lot of people. When that happened the government over reacted and sent 8000 people to capture 200 of Mistahimaskwa's people.

Two powerful issues emerge from this interpretation of the story. Firstly, it is their story. They cannot help but identify with the feeling of fear, hunger and loss of one's land, culture and heritage - issues of objectivity and impartiality are secondary. The second related issue is that the oppression is continuing to happen to them today. Participation of the Cree students should bring alive to non-First Nations students the political importance of the story of Mistahimaskwa. This political perspective is present in all historical analysis of events that involve peoples of disparate powers.

The historian who is outside the event and forms part of the dominant group that reaped the benefits of this relationship sees only the violence of the situation. It is left to those who have been deprived of their land and their very identity to begin to see where the violence came from and who was its true perpetrator.

The story of Mistahimaskwa cannot remain the historical analysis of an event - an impartial, objective reporting of "what happened". In its interpretation lies the explanation of what Canada was and, through the story of the students at Lakeside, the interpretation of what Canada continues to be today. This interpretation cannot be impartial and objective - like all other history it has a moral dimension.

In that context the story as told by the victim becomes critical. Citizenship education that promotes the idea of the responsibility of the citizen to hold the government accountable is impossible until and unless you juxtapose the view of the dominant group with the view of the "other". The whole story cannot emerge until both stories are told. It is in placing oneself as part of this history, in critically examining one's position and identity within this story that true citizenship education can take place. And this true citizenship education – the introducing of students to the power and spirit of democracy, cannot take place without powerful teachers.

How do we analyse the Lakeside students' participation in the re-creation of this historical event? I believe that in the listening and in the creation of the audience for the stories of the Other through information technology, we are providing a new context for understanding of the other and also of ourselves. History is not the history of the dominant group - it is the history of the relationship created by that domination. We cannot understand that domination unless we see it from the perspectives of both dominated and dominator. The Internet provides a unique environment to juxtapose these two realities providing more complexity to one's acquisition of knowledge and one's understanding of one’s vital role in keeping governments accountable and ethical to the interests of others.
Thus it is that history from more than one perspective – that of the official history account found in the textbook with the juxtaposition of “those it was done to”, provides to students the idea of human agency. It shows them that history, or politics or even being a citizen does not just happen: it is humans who make decisions to act in a certain way and these decisions affect the country but more particularly those who are the most marginalised and who cannot control their own destinies (as with the Cree both in history, but also as we observed in the case of the Lakeside students).

Analysis
Through the case studies presented above, I have tried to show that an educational approach that is geared toward critical analysis from an ethical stance, is more likely to engender the idea of the citizen as being ethical and responsible for himself or herself as well as for what happens to others in the name of their government.

In the case of the teacher at A.S. Dawson, the emphasis was on students responding well in a technical manner, of appearing articulate and being objective. The teacher at Shoreside was interested in having her students actively question history, the role of their government and their responsibility as citizens to participate in questioning their role in what happened.

However, in the case of Lakeside, there was no question that a teacher would not have mattered. The students here identified with this history: this was their history, it was their present, they were victims – victims of history but also of the recent past, of the government’s actions and continued role in taking their land and livelihood away from them.

It was important that teachers engage their students in these discussions – in showing that being a citizen did not simply mean being a voter, but also in engaging in issues and holding their government accountable. It is the apathy of these students and more than that the apathy of the teachers that is reflected in our society today as we continue to ignore the concerns of the First Nations people.

What then are the solutions? Are the new courses on teaching civics in the classroom the solution to the problem? Are they going to move away from what the Argentinians described as the structures of democracy to what they desired the power of democracy. It is my position that they can only do this if teachers enter the fray and educate their students on what a democracy is.

What is the approach being taken in the Civics course. The first step is to determine the course’s expectations:

As Meyers (2000) explains:

One example of an overall expectation is that by the end of the course students will: (from the Active Citizenship strand)

- demonstrate an ability to apply decision-making and conflict-resolution procedures and skills to cases of civic importance;
Specific expectations in this area state that by the end of the course, students will:

- analyse approaches to decision making and conflict resolution that can affect their own lives;
- analyse important historical and contemporary cases that involve democratic principles in the public process of conflict resolution and decision making;
- demonstrate an ability to apply conflict-resolution and decision-making strategies (e.g., identify points of view and values, collect data) to public issues affecting their own lives.

But as Meyers (2000) elucidates, there are 4 aspects to the curriculum: the taught, the intended, the hidden and the learned curriculum. In the case of the Other Story project, what was taught, emerged quite differently from what was learned. It was largely the teachers and the atmosphere they created, whether the teachers problematized the situation through the given knowledge in the text book by comparing it with the First Nations perspective that determined what students learned.

So in the end, the difference between democracy as an institution with beautiful buildings and other structures to be admired at a distance and to be engaged with only at election day, and democracy as an empowering element in everyone’s lives is finally one of engagement, participation and questioning. This last task falls, in my opinion, in the purvey of the classroom where the relationship with the teacher and his/her engagement with the curriculum will help determine how students see citizenship.

And as Schugurensky (2003) makes clear:

participatory democracy is a particularly effective school of citizenship. Through participation in deliberation and decision-making (and in collectively elaborating fair and workable criteria for making decisions), ordinary citizens develop not only a variety of civic virtues (like solidarity, tolerance, openness, responsibility, and respect), but also political capital, that is, the capacity for self-governance and for influencing political decisions. In this framework, political capital includes five components: knowledge, skills, attitudes, distance to power, and resources (Schugurensky 2000a).

Thus it is, that when students see that government, citizenship and decision-making all depend on human agency, which must be based on moral and ethical decisions, that true participatory democracy can take place.

**The Role of Responsibility in Democracy**

In their book, Habits of the Heart, Bellah et al, muse over the idea of citizenship. When asking their interviewees the question: What would you want me to tell my students about how to fulfill their responsibilities?", almost invariably the characteristic American answer was: "Tell them to get involved". (p. 179, Bellah) According to Bellah et al, when we trace our history back in North America - in the early settlements, there was a sense of community, a sense of everyone belonging. There were small towns where each contributed to the public good. Everyone was a citizen, everyone had a role to play towards the common good of the town - the sense of community and the sense of calling for one's employment was important. (Beulah, p. 179-180).
This is no longer the case both geographically and socially. In the modern Western metropolis the demands of work, family and community are sharply separated and often contradictory. It is a world of diverse, often hostile groups. The metropolitan resident's work could be in large corporations that produce commodities for national or international markets or it could be in the government where his or her work could involve delivering a range of services in response to conflicting interest groups. It is difficult in this context to develop a sense of calling to one's customers or even a sense of belonging to one's community which is constantly changing and which becomes more diverse with each passing day.

Thus it is that it falls upon the teacher to create this sense of community and responsibility and to engender the importance of human agency – human agency that concentrates on the ethical dimension of fairness to all, and especially to our responsibility to those that we tend to exploit. It is the teacher’s responsibility to shed light on the honesty or the lack thereof, on the part of the government. It is the teacher’s responsibility to show that it takes the involvement of all to create true citizenship.

References:

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Introduction

I grew up being told that every individual can make a difference. I was taught at a very young age that if I worked hard enough in my daily life to be a good Canadian citizen that the world would be a better place. I believed this for quite some time, until I began to become more deeply involved with others working on issues of social justice and the environment. I began to question if putting my empty pop can in a recycling box would have any impact relative to the incredible amounts of waste produced by large factories or the entourage of chemicals being developed and dumped into the water and air. I also questioned how much change would really come from participating in a multicultural day when it seems that systematic racism is ever increasing. Although I, in no way intend to discount the importance and value of what one person can do, it is necessary to take a deeper look at the dramatic shift from collective to individual actions the last few decades. One prominent proposal is that this shift deliberately diverts attention from the structural challenges and root causes of today’s social ills.

Many people involved in social movements around the world share this proposal. They are citizens of all flavours who have come together for a common cause. They are people who recognize the power that working in coordination with others can hold for increasing learning and action. In the late 1990s, the world saw an explosion of what has been termed ‘the new social movements’ coming to a head in Seattle, where citizens groups waged massive demonstrations and protests at the World Trade Organization’s “Millennium Round”. In a personal account Tony Clarke and Maude Barlow observed:

“They watched as governments smoothed the way for the commodification of the commons – areas like seeds and genes, culture and heritage, health and education, even air and water – access to which was once considered to be a fundamental right. Citizens questioned the very existence of democracy in such a system” (Barlow and Clarke, 2001, p. 4).

Since then, the world has witnessed massive mobilization for democracy and strategic organizing that is unprecedented. This has manifested itself in continued pressure on governments and corporations along with annual meetings of the World Social Forum, a space for international movements to come together and discuss prominent issues. Yet, despite the massive increase in democratic citizens movements, fast tracking of trade agreements through the neo-liberal agenda has fostered increasingly unregulated markets that give more power to corporations and less to citizens. This has resulted in a loss of national sovereignty over social programs, resources and governmental decision-making power threatening the very premise of democracy (Barlow and Clarke, 2001).
In Canada the result has been an increasing focus on people, not as citizens but as consumers. The perspective of consumer implies a direct relationship with the market, as profit becomes the most important factor in economic, political and social policy. The battle being waged to regain citizenship and democracy by social movements involves the struggle by citizens to control these markets. This paper will focus on this process as opposed to the actions, which will be left for another discussion. Specifically, I will examine how, through participation in food justice movements, people are working to reclaim democracy and their citizenship.

The food justice movement is one that brings together many critical issues in Canada and around the world including poverty, un/underemployment, environmental degradation to name only a few. It brings together and balances various aspects of the discourse including those of food security (from the minority world) and food sovereignty (from the majority world). Food is also an important entry point into this debate that has the power to galvanize people from diverse backgrounds and opinions. Beyond subsistence, food is a social and cultural expression of individuals. Food is a part of everything from the political and social world to daily life to ecological systems. According to food policy analysts Welsh and MacRae, “food, like no other commodity, allows for a political reawakening, as it touches our lives in so many ways” (Welsh and MacRea, 1998, p. 241).

To date there has been little social analysis on what many advocates describe as the ‘human right to food’. According to Graham Riches from the School of Social work at UBC, the human right to food should be at the at centre of social policy making and democratic debate (Riches, 1999a). Robertson, in Canada’s Human Rights Yearbook, has defined the right to food as:

“A condition in which each person can eat food which, by prevailing medical standards, is judged adequate for the full realization of mental health. A person’s diet should also consist of food which satisfies cultural preferences. The food should be obtained in a manner which is not an affront to the dignity or self-esteem of the person. The process in which the food is made available should be stable and sustainable, thus ensuring continuing access to food of acceptable standards” (Robertson, 1990, p. 188).

Healthy food has been widely recognized internationally as a basic human right and a necessity of survival (see the United Nation’s International Bill of Human Rights 1948, the UN International Covenant on Economic, the UN Social and Cultural Rights 1966 and the UN Covenant on the Rights of the Child 1989). The recent Rome Declaration on World Food Security, which Canada is a signatory to, affirmed “the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger” (FAO, 1996). Despite these guarantees, Canada has done little to support the ‘right to food’ within its domestic law.

Food justice movements constitute powerful spaces to address these issues and, more important, for citizenship learning. Through participation, people develop strong civic virtues, the capacity for self-government, critical perspectives and learn how to influence policy maker’s decisions increasing their political efficacy and political capital. The term ‘food citizenship’ is used to explain the overarching goal of the movement which “draws on and helps nurture authentic relationships. It has the potential to generate active citizenship . . . Food citizenship suggests both
belonging and participating at all levels of relationship from the intimacy of breastfeeding to discussions at the World Trade Organization” (Welsh and MacRea, 1998, p. 241).

The Creation of the Consumer Through Corporate-Globalization of the Food System

Before discussing the conceptualization of people as consumers and movements of resistance, it is important to understand the prevailing context. For this I will draw upon the work of the Italian political theorist and activist, Antonio Gramsci. ‘Hegemony’ was a concept Gramsci used to describe the forces of coercion and consent to explain why people accept the dominant system even if it goes against their better interests (Gramsci, 1971). He explained that there is a ‘political society’ and a ‘civilian society’ that work together to exert control in different ways. The former, composed of the army, the police, judges and their laws maintains the system through repression. The latter, which includes the schools, political parties and the church, works by consensus. Resistance, found in small spaces of autonomy, through education and awareness raising, can be a powerful counter force for change. Food policy is also a result of these social forces competing for influence and power and can provide a space for resistance through the activities of social movements.

Capitalism is the main driving force behind the commodification of food and people as consumers. Griff Foley explains that “capitalism is a system of economic, political and cultural domination, based on two processes: the alienation of labour (the separation of workers from the process and product of their labour), and reification (the commodification of all relationships). These relationships of power are learned, and can be unlearned” (Foley, 1999, p. 5). As capitalism becomes more pervasive and forces of globalization increasingly assert themselves, the commodification and the corporatization of food is evident. Relegating food to the whim of market forces directly threatens democracy, putting profits ahead of people. Economic benefit takes precedence over people’s needs for survival.

Riches explains that the “giants of the transnational corporate agriculture and food industry have taken over local control of the production and distribution of nutritious food, and their bottom line is profit, not nutritional value or the health of the community” (Riches, 1999b). Examples can be found in various sectors including the development and patenting of sterile seeds in 1997, where DNA was programmed to kill a plant’s own embryo. Labeled “terminator technology,” this innovation ignores that food is a necessity of survival. Instead, it encourages profit created by a dependency that forces farmers to continuously purchase new seeds along with the specific agrochemicals necessary to grow them. Farmers fear that centuries of cultural practice, skills and tradition will be lost while the repercussions on our health of ingesting these genetically modified foods is yet unknown.

Through corporate led capitalism, the globalization of the food system strips people of their citizenship in favor of the more profitable identity of consumer. Since the driving force in the corporate food economy is the desire to make money, people are becoming increasingly separated from the sources of their food and nutrition. In his work, Brewster Kneen describes this process as ‘distancing’ – the disempowering and deskillling of people from producing their own food and being able to eat well (Kneen, 1993). Put simply, “citizens are being transformed
into consumers (and the illusion of choice this entails) and are being increasingly disconnected from the sources of their food” (Riches, 1999a, p. 208, see also Barlow and Clarke, 2001, Klein, 2000, Welsh and MacRae, 1999).

The identity of people as consumers is limited and destructive since it “acknowledges a person’s power and interests primarily in his or her ability to buy or reject products or services” (Welsh and MacRae, 1998, p. 240). Furthermore, it favours the market over people leading to the corporatization of the food industry, a major factor in the growth of inequality. Healthy food is consistently becoming accessible only to those who can afford it. This is especially evident where large supermarket chains have popped up around North America offering upscale organic goods. Most of the produce sold comes from large corporate owned, factory-style farms in California who operate under questionable labour practices and environmental impact. According to Tony Winson, when food becomes just another commodity “the production, transportation, distribution and consumption of food are subject to the same fundamental social forces and economic “laws” that work on and apply to other commodities” (Winson, 1993, p. 1).

Evidence of this can be found in the fact that internationally, even though there is more than enough food to feed the entire global population, nearly 35,000 people die each day from hunger and even more suffer from constant malnutrition (Koc et. al., 1999, p. 1). A major factor in low food supplies is the common practice of burning millions of tons of grain each year in order keep prices high. Another factor is the, often forced, export led economies of poor economies. Countries like India, which face massive levels of starvation, produce excessive amounts of food that are shipped to wealthier consumers where more profit can be attained. In these cases and many others, international trade rules give preference to market forces in spite of peoples needs. This results in imbalances of wealth and resource distribution keeping the majority world in a constant state of dependence and poverty.

In Canada, about 10% of the population is hungry or at the risk of hunger and food bank use has more then doubled since 1989 providing food to about 778,000 Canadians in March 2003 alone (CAFB, 2003). Over forty nine per cent of those food recipients are children and estimates suggest that almost sixty per cent of households accessing food banks are families with children (Riches, 1999b). At the same time, over-consumption by the privileged few in wealthy countries leads to the agricultural degradation of the planet. The exploitation and poisoning of workers from pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers promises cheap, standardized produce. Other damaging effects of this trend include the loss of farmland and farmers, impoverishment of rural economies, the decline of small towns, soil erosion, pollution of air and water, the spread of monoculture and a decline of biodiversity.

Food however is more than just another a commodity and people are more then just consumers. Food justice movements argue that all people should have a right to feed themselves and this should be an essential attribute of the social rights of citizenship. Winson argues that although food has always been a commodity, it is actually much more. It is an ‘intimate commodity’:

“In the process of their consumption [food and drink] we take them inside our very bodies, a fact that gives them special significance denied such ‘externally’ consumed commodities as refrigerators, automobiles, house paint or television sets. Moreover, unlike many other goods that we produce and consume in capitalist society, food is an essential commodity: we literally cannot
live without it (although this is not to say that all of the processed food products for sale today are essential)” (Winson, 1993, p. 4)

Citizenship Learning and Social Movements

Education is a key tool in building and maintaining a strong democracy. Strong civic virtues (to be an active, informed and critical citizen) and the rights and responsibilities associated with the status of citizenship are two vital areas of learning. In a working paper, Daniel Schugurensky rightly alludes to the fact that “we are not born democrats” and that we must learn and practice democracy (Schugurensky, 2003). To maintain a healthy and functioning democracy, society must find ways to instill the values and activities that are necessary for democracy within its citizenship.

Juliet Merrifield outlines a scale of the ways which people can learn these ideals and become active citizens (Merrifield, 2001). On one side she discusses the deep-rooted assumptions developed through the socialization into political cultures through family, community and the hidden curriculum. On the other side she examines formal civic educational institutions that teach the knowledge, abilities and dispositions of citizenship. Somewhere in the middle, and most pertinent to this study, she discusses the indirect learning that occurs through participation in groups. She explains, “learning through doing seems to be the key root to active citizenship although there is little hard evidence” (Merrifield, 2001, p. 8). As an example Merrifield explains that popular social movements raise new options for political participation and have the ability to be prime sites for ‘conscientisation’ (in Freirean terms).

Schugurensky agrees with this proposition stating that the informal learning sector, “together with the school, the family, media and community associations are among the most powerful socialization agencies for the development of citizenship values and political competencies” (Schugurensky, 2003). As mentioned by Merrifield, there has been little research into this area since emphasis is often put on the school and other formal institutions to teach democratic citizenship. According to Derek Heater, “it is utterly artificial to treat the civic educative process as a school responsibility in isolation from the community at large and from the individual’s experience as a citizen over his or her lifetime” (Heater, 1999, p. 172). As expressed by Gramsci and others, too often these state controlled educational institutions reproduce ways of thinking and acting which support the status quo. Thus, it is clear that formal education is only one way in which citizenship education occurs.

Participation in social movements is an invaluable way for citizens to learn about democracy through their active participation. As opposed to simply studying civic activities, “one of the best ways to learn democracy is by doing it and one of the best ways to develop effective civic and political skills is by observing them in the real world and exercising them” (Schugurensky, Summer 2003). Rose views social movements as schools for democracy. Through participation in movements, citizens “learn what they can never understand from formal civics classes or from armchair infusions of media sound bites” (Rose, 2000).
Schugurensky explains this learning acquired through participation in democracy as having an “expansive effect”. As people become more familiar with local democracy through their involvement, they become more interested and engaged in broader issues encouraging them to work for the common good. Within social movements learning is often incidental and informal, although many organizations increasingly include education and awareness raising as an important part of their work. The food justice movement is an example of this, various organizations from diverse sectors coming together to work for the common good.

Reclaiming Democracy and Citizenship Through Food Justice Movements

As discussed, capitalism and the corporatization of the food system has led to a focus on people less as citizens but as consumers which is a direct threat to democracy. The food system is a good indicator of the broader picture because, according to Tim Lang, “ultimately food is both a symptom and a symbol of how we organize ourselves and our societies. It is both a vignette and a microcosm of wider social realities” (Lang, 1999, p. 218). Thus the concept of food democracy can be used to understand these challenges and others within the present social context. Food democracy refers to the idea of public decision-making and increased access and collective benefit from the food system as a whole. It implies a reconnection to the earth and the process of growing, preparing and eating food. Food democracy directly challenges anti-democratic forces of control, exploitation and oppression. According to Neva Hassanein:

“At the core of food democracy is the idea that people can and should be actively participating in shaping the food system, rather then remaining passive spectators on the sidelines . . . [it is about] citizens having power to determine agro-food policies and practices locally, regionally, nationally and globally” (Hassanein, 2003)

The transition to a food democracy requires that we develop policies to make food a human right in Canada which move beyond notions of food as a strictly as a commodity and people as consumers. Food citizenship implies a “complex membership in society with both rights and responsibilities. Citizens have capacities (rights and responsibilities) beyond those of consuming goods and services. Similarly, society is more then a marketplace” (Welsh and MacRae, 1998, p. 240). Through social movements collective groups of citizens are able to work together to raise awareness, put pressure on governments and build viable alternatives to the current system.

Food organizations and movements are expanding rapidly. As an organic farmer, Elizabeth Henderson observes, “sustainable agriculture is swelling into a significant social movement with a national network and an effective policy wing” (Henderson, 1998). Growers are only one small part of the movement which includes a coming together of local food advocates, environmentalists, academics, small businesses and many others working to bring about change. What many of these groups have in common is the vision of a sustainable agro-food system that meets the needs of all people: One that balances concerns for environmental soundness, economic viability, and social justice among all sectors of society.
The movement’s vision of food democracy, often termed *food justice*, is a transition from the traditional (emergency response) approach of the early 1980s. It moves beyond anti-hunger advocacy, which accepts the logic of consumer rights and does little to challenge the structural barriers to food justice. It includes an explicit critique of capitalism and the global food system and frames initiatives in the context of increasing citizen democracy, which involves delinking local economies from the corporate controlled global food system (Starr, 2000). Moreover, the movement has incorporated local and regional food production as a key requirement for achieving a sustainable urban system.

In his work on deep democracy, Arjun Appaduri discusses how groups rooted in a local context and able to mediate globalizing forces are “internationalizing themselves, thus creating networks of globalization from below” (Appadurai, 2001, p. 38). Food justice movements are often coalitions of groups and organizations that are able to do this. Networks are established that link grassroots activists and provide a strengthened and unified struggle towards revitalizing democratic principles. Through this process, they validate local knowledge connecting it to a global perspective while encouraging the active participation of marginalized communities.

One example is the Community Food Security Coalition (FSC) based in the United States. This North American organization is dedicated to creating self-reliance among all communities in obtaining their food and creating a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, making available, and selling food that is regionally based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy, and sustainability.

“The Food Security Coalition provides the tools to build a more democratic food system by reconceptualizing the food economy around community needs. The Community Food Security Coalition has developed new linkages between food banks, family farm networks, anti-poverty organizations, community development organizations, farmers’ markets, and the sustainable agriculture movement, seeking to organize them around the notion that all people should have access to a nutritious diet from ecologically sound, local, non-emergency sources. Challenging corporate agriculture by de-concentrating the market and production are seen as necessary elements of the movement” (Starr, 2000, p. 123).

One of the FSC’s achievements, in partnership with the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture in the US, is the establishment of the Community Food Projects Program. Passed as a part of the 1996 US Farm Bill. The program created a competitive grants program to make funds available that support projects working with low-income people to improve the ability of communities to provide for their own food needs, and that promote local food, farms, and nutrition.

The learning that ensues from participation in food justice movements is vast, yet little documentation of it has been compiled. There are many sources of research on social movement learning in general, yet most studies either focus strictly on theoretical discussions or solely on case studies (see for example Gottlieb, 2001, Barlow and Clarke, 2001, Buttel, 1997, Foley, 1999, Eyerman, 1991). Learning from food justice organizations and coalitions can be conceptualized in three broad, interconnecting categories: Learning from the actual activities, the collective experience and the individual experience.
The first, which is the broadest, is the learning that comes directly from the activities being undertaken. Participation in social change activities on a policy level or in shifting public awareness on an issue can have vast effects on the political efficacy and self-esteem of individuals involved. One project that underwent an evaluation in this regard is The Stop Community Food Centre, a Toronto based organization working to widen its approach to food security issues. In the process of an evaluation of The Stop’s urban agriculture project in 1999, learning self-esteem was one of five emergent themes (The Stop, 1999). During focus group interviews, participants in the community garden expressed a heightened sense of self-esteem from sharing knowledge and skills with each other. They also felt proud of the production of organic veggies that were donated to The Stop’s food bank. Over the years, people have expressed that they have felt good that they are making a change in contributing to organic agriculture in the City and breaking dependencies on supermarkets and the market economy by producing their own food.

Through the food justice movement, Hassanein shows that “building coalitions to work on particular issues increases citizen power and enables organizations to effect change that they could not achieve on their own” (Hassanein, 2003). In this sense, there is value in the diversity and wide approach of the movement. As observed in the FSC, many different organizations and groups come together to discuss common concerns. This enables a deeper social analysis and broader understanding of issues.

In various case studies, Foley accounts that learning in social movements makes connections between education and analysis of political economy, micro-politics, ideology and discourse (Foley, 1999, p. 9). Exploring these relationships provides a framework for analysis.

Another important result of this type of learning is the strengthening of community that occurs from groups of people working together on a common concern or issue. Through taking ownership over communal space and/or issues that affected their community, a greater sense of control and power was established. In the case of The Stop’s urban agriculture project the host of the garden, Earlscourt Park in the Davenport West community, has become a magical space that encourages communal work sessions, celebrations, quiet relaxation and reflection.

The second category of learning emerges from the group process of coming together in collective spaces to organize around an issue. Since citizenship is something that necessitates community, citizenship learning is also enhanced in social spaces (Merrifield, 2001). By creating democratic spaces and participating in democracy, participants are able to directly experience, practice and learn democracy (see Schugurensky, 2003). Certain marginalized and non-marginalized groups of people may have little exposure to such processes in the formal sector and thus become alienated from politics. Thus social movements that operate in a democratic fashion and include mechanisms for diverse participation provide a unique and important forum for learning.

In the case of The Stop, another emergent theme in the evaluation was in the area of leadership. Many participants expressed increased confidence in public speaking, and serving on various advisory committees. The democratic participation and involvement in the garden structure taught new skills and gave participants opportunities to take on roles they did not have elsewhere (e.g. leadership, decision making, social interaction, etc.). Most of these same people who took on the responsibilities expressed that coming to the garden and participating in activities was one
of the few times in a week that they left their home. For other volunteers, working in a community and educative setting gave them opportunities to experiment with leadership.

In the summer of 2002, a grade-ten curriculum on food security developed by myself and The Stop’s staff provided an incredible opportunity for volunteer facilitation, student leadership and learning. Throughout the ten-week curriculum there was a major transformation in the group. Using popular education techniques and a hands-on greenhouse planting component, the group and facilitators had the opportunity to interact socially and reflect on their activities. Volunteers and participants often discussed feelings of belonging and socializing during sessions, on trips and during events. The social atmosphere created in the garden gave volunteers the opportunity to meet new people and interact in a safe space.

There are many other cases of social learning. Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) projects, for example, provide unique opportunities for farmers to partner with a community who invest in farm shares over the course of a growing season. In return for a fixed annual sum, people take risks with the farmer and receive fresh local produce as it is harvested. Many CSA projects invite the community to visit or help on the farm either to understand the growing process or to supplement their costs. CSAs provide an important opportunity for people to learn about seasonal produce, the growing cycle, the joys and difficulties of farming and about each other.

Another example of social learning exists in food cooperatives that are owned and operated by their membership. Food coops, like other parts of the food justice movement, open up democratic spaces and engage people in collective decision-making and participatory activities. Food justice movements enable actors to create new social identities, understand the challenges that face their communities and develop strategies to engage them.

The third category relates to the area of individual learning. This can come in the form of basic skill development or acquiring knowledge necessary to democratic citizenship. One of the most important aspects of the food justice movement in this respect is its focus on critical learning which “extends the learner, [moving] her beyond her current understanding” (Foley, 1999, p. 105). By challenging the status quo and reframing the way we understand the current food system and new approaches to changing it, the food justice movement presents an opportunity for personal transformation.

In the case of The Stop, knowledge and skill development were important themes that emerged from the evaluation. Participants identified new skills and learning in the areas of gardening, environmentalism, problem solving, discovering other community resources, cooking, organics and nutrition. Many of The Stop’s programs encouraged this through workshops on gardening techniques, creating value added products and cooking with fresh organic produce. Other opportunities and activities such as garden planning and making policy links with the greater community were also a valuable learning experience. Participants in food-based activities and popular education workshops often expressed ‘conscientisation’ in the form of ‘ah ha moments’. In one workshop I facilitated with the Sierra Club, participants made connections between food and issues of economics, politics and culture.
Other Stop programs that contribute to individual learning include: Meals Made Easy, a weekly community kitchen drop-in cooking and nutrition workshop; Various political advocacy programs such as a housing advocate, legal advice, an ID clinic, a homelessness prevention program, a justice for workers group; Drop-In Programs which provide healthy meals and a safe meeting space, and Healthy Beginnings, a nutrition program that provides resources and leadership development for low-income, expectant mothers.

Foley accounts for the personal learning that occurs through the participation in environmental social movements, which can be associated with issues of food justice. In his studies on a campaign to preserve a rainforest in the Terania Creek basin in eastern Australia he identifies skill development in rainforest ecology, working with bureaucracy and the political system, mass media, building democratic forms of organization, group dynamics, movement politics and strategic thinking (Foley, 1999). Another important learning Foley documents is that faith in experts was replaced by a deeper understanding of the way authority is embedded in social interest and power relations. People learned they could acquire expertise and build new forms of organization, take action and make change.

Outside of the more specific skills acquired, these learnings are not unique to the food justice movement (as seen in Foley’s example of the Terania Creek basin). Many are common to those in other social movements. The diversity of the food justice movement does enable citizenship learning in a wide array of areas and on various levels. Through participation citizens gain knowledge and understanding of social, legal and political systems in which they live and operate. They also gain skills and aptitudes to make use of that knowledge and understanding. And they are able to acquire important social values and dispositions, based on democratic experience, to put their knowledge and skills to use.

**Challenges to Learning**

There are some challenges within food justice movements that can present blockages to learning. One of the main stumbling blocks within the movement is its structure, which is inherent in the nature of its existence. Buttel (1997) observes that there is “no underlying notion or strategy that can serve as a singular unifying focus of the movement”. Since, as with many of the new social movements, it is a coalition of many different groups and organizations, diversity can cause confusion and disconnection. For example, one prominent debate within the movement is that of ‘diversity of tactics’. There is disagreement on strategies of direct action and approaches to activism (e.g. French farmers physically dismantling a McDonald’s vs. political lobbying and education). The challenge in overcoming this is for the movement to make diversity a strength by embracing its richness and the decentralization as opposed to letting it fragment and disorganize.

Another major challenge facing the food justice movement is the deliberate depoliticization of hunger by governments and the corporate sector. This manifests itself in the encouragement of volunteerism and the downloading of state responsibility. Many food banks for example, are maintained by volunteer and religious organizations. These groups take the task of sewing up the holes in the social safety net. Communities are continuously shouldering more and more of the support that had once fallen on government. Food justice movements, are working hard to
pressure governments to take responsibility to establish, and in some cases resurrect the national public programs that are needed to address the root causes of hunger in Canada.

Finally it should be said that all learning is not necessarily good learning. Since food justice movements are organized by regular people, they are subject to make mistakes. Many aspects of the movement are under constant and deliberate criticism and reconceptualizing. Although a challenge, this is also an area of strength within the movement. Contradictions exist in every aspect of life and by recognizing, embracing and developing a dialectical relationship with them, the movement moves closer to exposing the fallacy within the hegemony or dominant ideology. Thus the food justice movement is in a continuous process of becoming, changing and learning through dialogue and in the creation of knowledge through this process.

**The Toronto Food Policy Council**

An important achievement of the food justice movement in Toronto was the development and establishment of the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC). The TFPC is an important and innovative example of how citizen engagement in food justice issues can lead to the establishment of a formal political initiative. It is one of few organizations that has direct influence on policy-making decisions and municipal activities. It is a concrete example of food democracy that brings together representatives from a wide range of local food system stakeholder groups in both the public and privet.

Created in the fall of 1990 by Toronto City Council, the TFPC emerged out of years of food advocacy work by the movement and committed individuals. Today, it exists as a subcommittee of the municipal board of health. Although it has no authority to pass or enforce laws it has been very influential. The council is made up of both city councilors and citizens. There are representatives from the farm and rural sector, anti-poverty activists, community organizations, food systems analysts, the conventional business sector, the organic business sector, education, labour, multicultural organizations, the Toronto Board of Health, and city politicians (Welsh and MacRae, 1998)

Its founding mission explains its motivation: “The Toronto Food Policy Council works with community partners and City staff to promote food security initiatives that foster healthy public policy, social equity, economic renewal and environmental sustainability” (TFPC, 2002, p. 10). Currently its goals are close to those of the food justice movement which include addressing both social justice and environmental sustainability issues and to provide a mechanism for food democracy and food citizenship.

One major gain of the TFPC came in May 2000 when the city voted to adopt the City of Toronto Food Charter which lays out a plan that works towards making Toronto a food secure city (TFPC, 2002, p. 44-49). It addresses the movement’s idea that every Toronto resident should have access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food within the principals and practices of a sustainable food system. It gives directives to city departments to serve as a model for food purchasing, develop partnerships to increase access to healthy foods, promote composting, work with the food industry to reduce packaging and promote initiatives to reuse and recycle.
A second major achievement of the TFPC was the establishment of the Food and Hunger Action Committee made up of five councilors. The committee has been very active in policy analyzing making recommendations to the city. In 2001, it developed the first comprehensive multi-sectoral food security plan created by the municipality of Toronto. The plan proposed a new approach of working with other agencies and a range of initiatives including support for urban agriculture, working with food banks to compost waste and advocacy, a one million dollar grant program to support community gardens and community markets and cooking (Food and Hunger Action Committee, 2001).

The TFPC is thus an important example of the gains of the food justice movement, giving those concerned with food issues a forum to have an effect on the formal political level politics and to find support within it. However, citizens must continue to challenge the contradictions it embodies. As it becomes institutionalized, it depends on citizens initiatives to engage with the political system and assure that the values and attributes of democratic practice are upheld.

**Summary and Conclusion**

A result of capitalist-led corporate-globalization is that food is increasingly becoming viewed as commodity and people as consumers. Social movements, and specifically food justice movements can be important sights of transformatory adult learning. The learning from the actual activity can be a valuable way to reclaim public space and basic rights. It also has the ability to empower citizens by increasing their political efficacy. Learning from collective endeavours can be valuable experience through groups practicing and understanding democracy and creating viable alternatives. The individual learning that can occur through food justice movements can also be an important way to acquire valuable skills and knowledge necessary for democratic citizenship.

More research however needs to be done to document the learning from food justice and other social movements. Few studies exist that examine the learning that comes from participation in these democratic activities. It would be valuable to have more analysis of specific activities from the perspective of the actors as opposed to the existing general academic analysis.

Foremost in the work of food justice movements is an attention to the process of activity. As they focus on social endeavors and policies that support the right to food, they work internally to maintain their democratic fervor and participatory nature. Through their participation in food justice movements, people are able to work to reclaim their citizenship and democracy.

**References**


1. Theoretical Framework

As we know, the privatization of public housing projects emanates from the construction of a degenerative-type public policy [1] initiated in Puerto Rico in the 90’s [2], consonant with the North American public policy begun a decade before [3]. This had the objective of returning the State to a residual role; that is, reduce the Benefactor State to being “a facilitator”..., “Less bureaucratic”..., “less interventionist”; smaller and more agile [4]. Its strategy was to promote and give incentive to private industry, (to who was ascribed the characteristic of being more efficient and advanced) to provide the services which previously had been provided by the State: services of public interest housing, education, health, and jobs, among others, and in this way guarantee private investment, the reduction of the government apparatus and its resources.

In the last two decades privatization of construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of low-cost housing was developed to respond to the need of the more than 250,000 people of low to moderate salaries [5]. The Health Reform was also implemented, being nothing more than the sale of public hospital facilities to private groups and the privatization of health care services to health insurance companies. The State offered tax incentives and direct profits to corporations willing to buy into the public housing industry, yet kept the supervision of the implementation of the services. Thus private industry absorbed some of the laid off public workers, created other jobs, offered the services at the lowest possible cost, billed and gained additional earnings for services that were not offered or offered with minimum investment.

In the case of the public housing projects, earnings for the private corporations accumulated by fixed charge for each housing unit served; for offering services at the lowest possible cost, and/or obtaining the services and resources for the residents through proposals submitted to the government. All these earnings or savings were added to the quota assigned to these businesses that provided the purchase of equipment, maintenance services, charging rent, location or eviction of families, training to Boards and residents on topics related to the regulation of public housing, help or counseling services or referrals for jobs or studies, among others [6].

These private corporations have used the signing of collaborative agreements with groups of residents that form incorporated boards supported by community assemblies, that work voluntarily, unpaid, and that are subject to the Bylaws prepared by the Public Housing Agency (AVP, by its Spanish acronym) and the private corporations themselves, as their implementation formula. These agreements and Bylaws wax poetic on the benefits of working free for the government. The private corporations, supposedly responding to the ideal of a so-called self-sufficiency, participation and quality of life, submit residents to continuous supervision and intervention, requiring work plans, services, coordination of resources, orientation and services to the community, vigilance of the behavior of the residents and their participation in meetings, activities, training, monitoring, audits, and continuous fiscal, programmatic and collaborative work for the private company, among others [7]. This strategy seemingly legitimizes the voice of the residents through a board whose custody is held by the private company and Public
Housing Agency (AVP), and at the same time frees the private company and the public housing agency of being identified as those directly responsible for the good or bad administration; something which then falls to the shoulders of the community leaders.

2. Methodology

As we know, qualitative research is frequently used to gather facts about organizations, groups and individuals in a given situation [8]. In this case, it is used to gather the experiences of agencies and community groups in the implementation of their citizen participation programs.

This study was done based on case studies, using interviews with open-ended questions. Based on the interview method, it is possible to obtain social facts that only the subjects can offer. In addition, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, intentions, and conduct in specific situations can be gathered [9]. Beyond what is stipulated by law, ordinance and policy established in the programs, we examined how each group interpreted or implemented said policies. Even though it is known that this method can have the disadvantage of offering imprecise information for reasons such as the subjectivity of the subject (because of feeling committed to what he/she says), or due to the inability of the subject to offer information (due to the partiality of memory or other variables) [10], it was understood in this case that it was a viable choice because it would permit completion and contrast information obtained about the implementation of public policy with specific directives of said laws and ordinances.

Information about public policy and directives was obtained based on analysis of the documents provided by the groups. An inventory of the projects, programs, and services researched was gathered to gain a wider and more complex vision of the settings and their impact. The laws and ordinances, as well as documents prepared by the agency with the intention of implementing the laws, were evaluated. Based on both these analyses, it was possible to establish a relationship between the State discourse, the configuration of its practices in projects or trainings and the impact that, in the eyes of the organizations, had been concretized in their groups and communities. The sequence of the research study process was: gather facts based on documents such as laws, ordinances, executive orders, training manuals, brochures and informational memorandums and other documents from which information relevant to the topic could be obtained. From the information drawn from the documents the instruments for the government agency interviews were designed. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed. This data was used in designing the interviews done with community groups and organizations.

2.1 Cases studied

The groups researched were the Public Housing Administration (AVP), which amended its laws as of 1989, the corporations privatizing the public housing projects, and the Resident Boards of these housing projects. A community-based organization selected for each of these agencies and institutions to interview and measure the impact of these programs and services. The results of these interviews were analyzed summarizing the information of the inventory that was made before beginning the interviews.

3. Analysis and Evaluation of the Implementation of the Privatization Model in the Public Housing Projects
3.1 Participation

In the review of the documents emitted by the Administration of Public Housing (AVP), the private corporations and the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that the discourse and the policies referring to self-sufficiency and citizen participation were accompanied by strict bylaws and collaborative agreements aimed at a supervision and control of all the goings-on of these organizations. The activities that these organizations can undertake on their own account are few and far between. The equipment, structures, human resources and materials are tightly held by the private company. The organizations are regularly subjected to monitoring and audits, their relations with other associations are closely supervised, and they are penalized with dismissal if they do not comply with the parameters of activities and community work that is assigned them. These controls are justified with the incentive of an improved quality of life, safety, and accomplishment of goals.

3.2 Community Education

The improvement programs offered to the organizations included topics related to activism, and organization and mobilization of communities. Training was offered in leadership, group dynamics, accountability, and state and federal level housing regulations. Also, there was coordination with agencies and private groups such as the universities and schools to offer vocational training principally aimed at self-employment. All of the above lack a curriculum certified by an academic institution, nor were they offered by professionals specializing in the field. They are fragmented in both duration and content, do not award any type of professional degree or title upon completion, and in many cases are inadequate for the job market in the housing project or the market in general. Given that this training lacked the minimum academic or vocational requisites the community-based organizations or the rest of the residents could not qualify for permanent positions within the public housing project administration or outside of it. The only option for many is to generate a self-employment position, known colloquially as a “chiripeo”; activities that do not generate enough income for the individuals to assume personal or organizational independence. These halfway or fragmented training practices are accompanied by discourse relative to the inability or apathy of these residents to undertake study of more complete curricula aimed at professional degrees, or at the convenience of the mini-courses in guaranteeing the creation of small businesses led by themselves or in their own housing project. The interview conducted of residents and community boards demonstrate a high level and need for receiving a complete preparation that breaks the vicious cycle of innumerable training endeavors that do not lead to any job or employment. Several community boards claim to feel fully capable of studying, preparing themselves professionally and aspiring to positions in the hierarchy of their own housing project.
3.3 Mistrust in the boards and natural leaders as legal representatives of the residents

The leaders indicate in the dialogues and interviews that they are used as a front by the private corporations to send promotional messages for activities and resolve daily problems. This notwithstanding, the private corporations delegate to their employees and supervisors the orientation and discussion of situations and decisions of the residents relevant to activities such as self-administration, problems and need for change and others. In addition, they indicate that they do not hire residents for administration and coordination of programmatic and administrative issues.

A point of great resonance in the reactions recorded in the interviews was that the private corporations resisted working under equal conditions with the boards and that they were not included in the decision-making process: “they use us to resolve their needs but they don’t give us any recognition or what we do”, “even when there are regulations that they establish, they make decisions about mandatory changes and we find out after the change has been affected”.

The positions that are offered in the housing projects are for the most part for structural maintenance and grounds upkeep. Positions for executive functions, coordination, or direct service to residents are not made available to the residents. The training programs for the residents’ boards are poor and inadequate; in many cases they are presented without a curriculum or training strategy that leads to a professional degree or management of a job as sub-administrator. The workshops on accountability, processes leading to self-administration, laws and regulations of HUD, to mention a few, are either too technical or far-reaching, in a way that does not permit an adequate management of the information or provide a practice strategy for internalizing the information along the way. In reference to these training programs, it was indicated that “they take us to many training sessions, and none of them are complete or efficient for preparing us for administration (of the housing project)”.

There is a fairly generalized practice of providing half information and of generating uncertainty and insecurity among the leaders of what can and cannot be done. The private corporations do not provide, in many cases, the information that the boards need, nor the powers to which they have a right, to keep control of the complete programmatic and fiscal administration. This is clearly illustrated by the following quotes:

“they train us and then they don’t hire us or they don’t let us practice what we learned”,

“...they hide important information from us that could let us make better decisions as a board or as residents”.

The persons interviewed emphasized the need to prepare and advise the boards on the topic of housing projects administration and not on topics that steer away from that objective.

3.4 Ambiguity in the relation between private corporations and residents’ boards

A point of analysis in the group was about the relations between private corporation/board, board/private corporations’ support services vs. the residents’ boards support services.

In the first relationship (private corporation/board), interview subjects of the groups analyzed the roles and functions that each party has and concluded that the boards work without
being provided the necessary information by the corporations so as to make decisions about their housing project. They indicated that they did not participate in all of the decisions made at the level of policy design, and that their role and their work is ill-appreciated, since they work without being paid for tasks that the corporation then assumes recognition for and in fact bills for doing: “They (the corporations) put ill-prepared persons to administrate and for us, with experience and training, they tell us that we can’t do it because we don’t have a title”; “…we do work that is supposed to be done by the corporation, putting us in situations of confrontation with the rest of the residents in the community”.

Concerning the relationship board/support services, they claim that much of the staff are not prepared to work in a housing project: “Sometimes they are afraid of us and think that here all they’ll find are criminals and addicts; they don’t know or don’t have work experience or they spend all day closed up in their offices, leaving their work in the hands of the leaders of the board”.

In the third level of the relation (board-residents) various points were held in contrast: the residents have not attained a vision of the role of the board, the reaches of its power and what this implies for the housing project: “Many people believe that we have the power to stop an eviction, a transfer or the execution of some regulation. They see us as part of the corporation”.

Others raised issues about the attitudes of some residents or community leaders that do not respect them, don’t support them or try to impose their ideas for personal benefit. “When they hire residents to do maintenance work, some of them don’t attend our service complaints, they stay hanging out in the offices of the administration doing nothing and we have to be on their case for weeks at a time, with the residents pressuring us”. “We can’t do anything except complain with the administration, but at the same time it’s a difficult situation because they are part of the community”.

3.5 Excessive interference of the private corporations in the private lives of the residents

The interference from the corporations into residents’ private lives included at times blackmail, reprisals, favoritism, conflicts and division of groups (the pro- vs. the contra-corporation factions, for example). No clear line has been traced between issues that the corporations can intervene and those in which it cannot, thereby generating the idea that it can then intervene or interfere in absolutely everything, violating many of the residents’ rights.

A central point was the evaluation of the level of participation and the impact of this participation in their work and in their lives as residents of the particular community: “With the pretext of watching out for the fulfillment of the state and federal regulations, they enter in our homes, our places of work, they monitor us constantly, they investigate us, generating insecurity in everything we do”. “Also, they use residents and even members of the boards as informants (narcs)… thereby pitting some residents against others and dividing us as a community”.

The impact that the interference of the private corporations has had in undermining the psychological sense of community [11] of these residents is worrisome. Subjected to a relation that promotes anonymity, alienation, social isolation, violence and insecurity; limiting the sense of belonging, of power, trust in themselves and their fellow humans, in what they contribute to the larger picture; elements so necessary for the development of a capable and productive human being for themselves and for others.
3.6 Maintain dependency and insecurity of the residents and the personnel boards of the private corporation

This process takes place for decision-making, for holding activities, for the coordination with other agencies and private groups and for presenting and implementing projects. The criteria (unwritten, but practiced) is that everything has to be reported and permission must be requested for everything, as if they (the corporation) was the owner, not the residents.

A last point of analysis was the evaluation of the relation that Public Housing has with the boards: “They meet with us, they train us, they say that we have are in charge, that we have the power, but in the end it’s them (Housing and the corporations) that make the decisions for us”; “They don’t include us in the design, planning and regulation; things come already set in stone waiting for our signature”. On these points they analyze that the information that comes from “above”, seems to be complete and “correct”, like the presentation of the budget to be spent for the housing project. But later, when the equipment, services or repairs aren’t received, or bills and receipts for these expenses or the boards do not participate in the evaluations of the job bids or the personnel or company that finally is hired. They can not either hire, evaluate or manage the budget so as to guarantee the effectiveness of the services that the corporation provides the housing project.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Public policy

It is evident that the public policy and who designs them should be reviewed. There is a strong perception that the public policy set for achieving the self-administration and the self-sufficiency of the residents contradicts its purpose in practice when it so clearly favors the interests of the private corporation. The cost effectiveness of the impact of the work achieved in the last ten years should be measured in accordance to task the corporations were commissioned with, and evaluate if the residents have gained confidence and power over their destiny; or if to the contrary they step aside ever further, leaving a space for the corporations to justify their tenure and perpetuate their existence in the housing projects as substitutes of the state. It is important to evaluate the implementation of these policies and determine if they have worked to maintain the dependency of the residents on the inferior quality services of the private corporation, thereby impeding that they rise out of social and economic poverty. The executive orders, bylaws, and programs of the last two government administrations should be reviewed to evaluate if they respond to the mandate of self-administration and self-sufficiency. If to the contrary, they propose keeping the practice of offering training that has no demand in the job market, or for temporary or part-time employment and a fragmented and deficient training program for the boards so that none of them feel able to take their destiny in their own hands. It is also important, to evaluate the possibilities of the new executive order emitted by the Governor that creates the Community Action Counsel, [12] and that it is being coordinated by the Administration for the Rehabilitation of the Communities (ARCO, by its Spanish acronym), since it proposes a relation of more participation of residents in the evaluation, design, implementation, coordination, and supervision of the services and resources that the communities need to be self-sufficient and productive.
4.2 Relation between private corporations-residents

The efforts of the corporations in the housing projects have been to try to project themselves as substitute for the state in guaranteeing the services and the orientation of the residents so that they achieve their objectives of becoming self-sufficient. It is evident that this relation obscures their intentions for profit and their objective of perpetuating their existence in the projects. It is necessary to rescind the seasonal agreements of the corporations and that they commit to a transition plan for handing over their powers to the residents, guaranteeing them adequate content and processes and the confidence of achieving their objectives in short, medium and long term. It is also important that this relation, while it lasts, be transparent and rational, based in the fulfillment of the goals of providing quality service. Towards this end the process should be assigned to a body or office of Ombudsman of the Residents or a Transition Committee where the services and relation of the corporations with the residents can be supervised, insuring that their rights are not violated, that correct and pertinent use is given to the resources, and the fulfillment of the objectives that justify their existence in the housing projects.

4.3 Relation of the residents with other groups and agencies

The support and collaboration among groups and other agencies with the boards and residents should springboard from studies, requests, and a direct relation with them, not as filtered through the private corporations. It should not either be through executive orders that present a uniform mandate for resources, services and activities for all Puerto Rico’s housing projects. A direct relation, collaborative in nature and aimed at the specific necessities of each housing project, would provide conditions for advancing work projects, committing the groups to the project and investing resources in furthering work currently underway. This would avoid duplicating or delaying efforts underway, save time and money and give a sense of direction to the citizens. They would thereby feel accompanied in the process.

4.4 Training

The persons interviewed proposed a contract with HUD, through Public Housing, that establishes the following conditions and activities: “That we be truly trained in what the administration of a housing project consists of, and that we have the space and the conditions to put into practice what we have learned”. This process should be accompanied by consultants similar to what the corporations have, and in phases. They also indicated, “That the private corporation and its support personnel be trained how to work with communities of public housing projects and that they work to improve their discriminatory attitudes. “That the residents be trained in how to achieve their self-sufficiency accompanied by, yet supporting and respecting the boards as their official representative to the Public Housing Agency (AVP) and HUD. “That we select the topics, the times, and the trainers (staff) so as to ensure the content and the quality of this training”. In summary, they requested training programs aimed at self-administration and self-sufficiency. This point was expressed by the leaders of Pre-Cumbre: “It is necessary that the curricula and training processes offered to the boards to insure that they are aimed at self-administration and self-sufficiency. I recommend that the curricula and training processes be revised and redesigned by institutions and educational bodies that have experience
in alternate methodologies so that it can be guaranteed that the contents are appropriate for all populations, regardless of their level of schooling.

5. Acknowledgements

A special appreciation to the leaders Minerva Reyes, Glorica Santiago and all the leaders of these communities that have committed their time and their wisdom with the hope for change.

6. References


[4] Ibid.


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From A Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace

Geraldine (Jody) Macdonald, Anne Goodman, Vicki Adelson, and Liane Macdonald

This paper is written in preparation for a panel presentation that was offered in a workshop format, a workshop that supports dialogue and creative expression. This dialogue between the four authors offers a model of the dialogue that hope to facilitate during the workshop.

What led you to being part of this panel presentation?

ANNE
The world we live in is a violent one. The violence is not just the direct violence that forms the subject matter of most of our news and it is not only present in the world's "hot spots", the unfortunate places faced with ongoing wars and armed conflicts. No, the violence exists everywhere, frozen into the very structures and institutions of our life, inhabiting our consciousness and legitimizing our persistent violent practices.

To change the world we will need to change our consciousness. Moving from a culture of violence to a culture of peace will require a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations, our relationships with other humans and with the natural world, our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender, our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living, and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy.

JODY
When I was a doctoral student I met Anne Goodman and Edmund O'Sullivan at OISE. My experience learning with Anne and Ed was transformative. I felt as though I had lived in a tiny little world, quite separate from the rest of the world and suddenly I was invited to think about the world from a global perspective. It was transformative, because when you think about the world from a global perspective, individual pain and suffering is connected to the global reality. At the time I had four young children and I was spending a tremendous amount of energy caring for them on a day to day basis, and I could not imagine how I would manage if I didn't have food for them or shelter, or they could not get health care or an education. We have so much here in Canada to be thankful for and yet here we also have too many who have too little. Too many children who do not have a home, or loving parents, or food when they are hungry. Too many people who live on the streets of Toronto because there is not any housing available even if they had money to pay for it. And too many people who care for their own loved ones, but have little to spare for more vulnerable people. And so I began to learn about the world, the many levels of violence in the world from the individual to the family to the community and I began to dream of a world where peace was central.

And then the Gulf War began and for the first time in my life, I realized that my country was at war. It didn't feel good. It felt as though my personal identity and that of Canada had suddenly shifted, without anyone really wanting it to, but it had anyway. And I was angry and fearful. I
questioned the politicians, the people who supported the war, and citizens who felt that the answer to the violence in the world was more violence. It just didn't make any sense to me. As a nurse, I had cared for so many sick and vulnerable people. I knew that more violence would solve little if anything, and although going to war for your country might have been a very courageous act 50 or 100 years ago, today it was not. Today, it was simply refusing to face the reality that we have the capacity to totally annihilate the world and that flexing our power over others was no longer the solution. I realized that I would never want my children to go to fight a war that I felt had no meaning. Instead we - meaning my family and friends – were faced with a much more demanding challenge - we were charged with creating a culture of peace.

VICKI
For me, a culture of peace was always assumed as the goal. I grew up knowing no different since my mother had always been a peace activist and raised me and my sisters in a very aware and conscientious way. I was exposed very early on to thoughts of anti-racism, anti-sexism and anti-violence. I went to peace rallies, protests and political meetings and was surrounded by a people from a variety of backgrounds who shared the same beliefs in human rights, equality and freedom. For me, peace as a goal is natural. It is the only logical choice.

I have grown up in a peaceful place, with few threats to my safety or freedom. I have always been able to speak my mind, to ask questions and to openly share my thoughts and culture. I have always known that not everyone in the world is as lucky as I am. I have always known that the world is not perfect, as that as one of the lucky ones, it is my responsibility to do something about it.

I recently became an elementary school teacher. I teach in two inner-city schools in Toronto. I teach children who have witnessed wars, lost family members, and suffered much more than I have in my lifetime. For me, the notion of a culture of peace has to start in childhood. Although the children I teach have parents with various ideologies, preconceptions, priorities, ideas, and worldviews, for the most part, the children seem to think the same way. They want what all children want - the freedom to be themselves, a feeling of safety and security, to make friends, to accomplish goals, to have fun, to have people to love and people to love them and to feel comfortable and healthy. Children all seem to want a culture of peace. It is only as adults that people's priorities seem to change and that they seem to lose sight of the basic building blocks of a happy and successful life for everyone.

LIANE
Little did Anne, Ed O'Sullivan, or University of Toronto know, but my mother’s doctoral program fees afforded two educational journeys for the price of one. And so my extracurricular play and learning occurred not only at piano lessons, choir practice or in the swimming pool, but also in nightly conversations with my mom. My mother’s awakening into feminist and global perspectives informed my first forays into intellectual thought. Although I’m sure it failed to earn me any popularity points, sharing my nascent feminist insights with my grade seven classmates seemed as natural to me as raising my hand.
Like my mother, the Gulf War elevated my awareness of the interconnections that linked my self, my family, my community, and my country to the rest of the world. I remember my mom, in the pool change room, delivering the bad news: Bush had declared war on Iraq. The stinging pain of a painful bellyflop, just minutes before, has forever fused with my understanding of global violence - on a scale I had never before witnessed in my lifetime. Later that night, that I felt gratitude to escape into a novel - Harriet the Spy, to be exact - and leave behind my fears of violence, mass destruction, and my implication in it.

In the years since, fiction has ceased to function merely as an escape mechanism in my life. Rather, fiction has proved my greatest ally in my attempts to problematize peace and conflict. In particular, postcolonial, feminist and contemporary Canadian literature have provided an intimate window through which my mind and heart have reached out to the global, and reflected inward once again.

As my own sense of self in the world evolved, I began to look for other young women’s voices. Yet in a culture so saturated with images of young women, I strained to hear their multiple opinions and experiences, their fears and dreams. Where do young women locate themselves within the increasingly complex interconnections of a single, global space? Thankfully, Maude Barlow and Naomi Klein lent me frameworks through which I began to address the discourses and processes of globalization.

My participation in a SSHRC major collaborative research initiative on "Globalization and Autonomy" affirmed the deficit of young women involved in the dialogue on globalization. At a recent forum, the Association for Women in Development took a step toward improving the inclusion of young women, by generating discussion around questions such as, "What inspires young women to effect change in a globalized world?" and "What impact does the current process of globalization have on the identities and cultures of young women?" I feel passionate about the potential value in further exploration of these issues, and designed my undergraduate honours paper accordingly.

My analysis, titled "Young Canadian Women and Globalization: Fictions of Crisis and Complicity", trains a literary lens on narratives of globalization and young women. More specifically, it examines recent works of fiction by Canadian women writers, which share a focus on young Canadian women, as they navigate the discourses and processes of globalization. It employs Gayatri Spivak’s notion of "unlearning one’s privilege as one’s loss" to interrogate narratives of globalization as crisis, for both young Canadian women in the global South. It attempts Sharene Razack’s "analysis of interlocking systems of oppression and a feminist political project that proceeds with a wary eye for complicity in these systems" (10). The analysis probes the commitment of the stories to tracing young Canadian women’s complicity in oppressive processes and discourses of globalization. Finally, it examines possibilities for political agency and feminist affinity politics, as fictional young Canadian women negotiate globalization, through relationships with women in the global South.

My journey has recently shifted directions. It began with Harriet the Spy under the covers, with George Bush Sr and Saddam Hussein looming in the distance. It continued in my exploration of young women and globalization in contemporary Canadian fiction. It now ventures into the field
of health care. As I embark upon my medical education, I look to women like Dr. Carolyn Bennett, M.P., Dr. Samantha Nutt of War Child Canada, and Dr. Joanna Santa Barbara, former president of Physicians for Global Survival. They give me hope for my ability to incorporate work for peace and social justice as the journey continues.

WHY WOULD A CULTURE OF PEACE BE LIKE?

JODY
My first thought is that it would be hard. We live here in Toronto in a diverse society, a truly global village. But we have so little in common with each other, and so many differences. It will be hard work to create a culture of peace. A culture where people work at negotiating, respecting differences while maintaining their own beliefs, where people challenge authorities who are not peaceful/just and situations that are not just. There can be no peace without justice and as human beings we don't really know what a just society looks like. And then I begin to wonder if it is really possible. Do human beings really long for peace, or do they secretly love to fight/dominat/overpower others? Do most people only care about their own loved ones, or are a majority of people able to consider the "other"?

ANNE
Anne: I have points of agreement with you, Jody, as well as points of departure. A culture of peace will not be easy to achieve, partly since it involves so many diverse aspects, including different institutions, values and ways of organizing ourselves, and partly because it represents moving beyond where we are now in terms if our human capacities. On the other hand, there is a widespread sense that the current system is not working and not ultimately viable, and people all over the world are working toward the culture of peace in a variety of different ways. Up to a few years ago, the issues of the culture of peace were marginalized and discounted by the majority of people, and while the ideas are still not central ideas, they are becoming legitimized and accepted into mainstream thinking. As well, there is an integration of the issues. People have been working on different aspects of the culture of peace in a variety of disciplines, in the social movements and in the faith traditions, and there's been a growing awareness of how these issues interact and inform each other. In a sense, then, we are further along than it may seem.

There's another point, too. I see a culture of peace as more than a "thing" to be achieved; I also see it as a way of being and of doing things. I also do not see it as a yes/no binary thing-something we have or don't have. When the question is framed "what will a culture of peace be like?" it implies that we don't yet have a culture of peace-and in some respects, we already do! We have cultures of peace around us, in different societies in history and currently, and in many of our practices. Elise Boulding's work is particularly important in this respect. In relatively peaceful places like Canada, we have more instances and aspects of a culture of peace, whereas in situations of violence or grave injustice, there are fewer. However, my research into conflict zones has made me aware of the elements and islands of peace culture that exist even in the most unlikely and difficult of circumstances, what Carolyn Nordstrom refers to as "counter lifeworld constructs" (1992: 270).
Peace is often portrayed as something that is very difficult to achieve, and this could be an obstacle. I prefer to look at it as simple, but not easy. It's simple because increasingly, we know what it is we have to do, and in a way it is an extension of what we already do. Jody- you spoke about caring for our loved ones and not caring for the "other" as a dichotomy, but I believe that caring for the other is in many ways an extension of caring for our own. Furthermore, even if our only motivation is caring for our own group, it is becoming increasingly obvious that a culture of peace is the only real way to do this—the culture of violence simply does not work! This does not mean it will be easy to achieve since so much has to change and much unlearning has to happen. It's important not to minimize the complexity and the enormity of our task, either.

VICKI
I agree that although the task of achieving a culture of peace seems overwhelming and complex, the notion of peace itself is simple. As I already said, peace is a basic need. Humans need peace to feel safe. In fact, safety is one of the lowest or most basic needs listed on Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, listed just above the physiological needs such as food and water, and sleep. To me, a culture of peace is a matter of people or governing bodies making sacrifices to serve the greater good. This does not only apply to nations at war with one another but even to people on the street turning to violence due to road rage and other seemingly inane episodes which ultimately contribute to the deterioration of the reality of peace and peaceful behaviour in our society. In a culture of peace, I think there needs to be peace on all levels, including in families and personal relationships.

Following more on Anne's thoughts, I think it is important to try to visualize a culture of peace. Although it is difficult to try to come up with one actualization for this considering all the different cultures and ways of life on Earth, it is important to think of a culture of peace as a basis of life, almost like a human universal which would allow for the immense and colourful differences which already exist around the world. Rather than causing cultures to conform, a culture of peace would hopefully provide a basis for all cultures to thrive without feelings of threat.

LIANE
I think that a culture of peace would weave webs of empathy between individuals, communities and nations. These webs of empathy would prevent us from dehumanizing the Other, so that we could no more inflict violence on our neighbours than on our own children. These webs of empathy would not only connect us intimately to other humans, but to the ecosystems we inhabit. They would help us to learn from and respect the aboriginal first nations of our lands. A culture of peace would demilitarize all nations, and invest those billions in subsidized health care, education and social programs for all to enjoy. A culture of peace would be full of bicycles and solar power, and whole grains and organically-farmed fruit—with nary a McDonald’s in sight. A culture of peace would tear down the walls of gated communities and build more playgrounds and community centres. A culture of peace would speak in tongues—each wonderfully unique, yet understood by all. A culture of peace would share resources and govern through collaborative, cooperative, caring networks of global citizens. Transnational corporations would become transnational peace-builders. A culture of peace would celebrate differences (not disparities!): of gender, culture, race, religion, language, sexuality, geography