

**EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES  
AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS**

**PROBLEMS, RESPONSES, AND POSSIBILITIES**

**Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Situations:  
Problems, Responses, and Possibilities**

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## Foreword

Dr. Dana Burde

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Education systems are inextricably linked to the states and societies they serve. When states fail, or are defeated, or when ethnic, religious, or ideological cleavages erupt into violence, schooling functions erratically, if at all.[1] The sources of these disruptions do not end at the edge of state territory. States and their national education systems are increasingly subjected to the transnational (global and regional) reach of information, finance, and military networks based beyond their borders. In addition, the explosion of civil conflicts in the latter half of the twentieth century, coupled with the rise of “asymmetrical warfare” and networks of “sub-state actors,” has created an unparalleled exodus among populations caught in these crises. In the post-Cold War, post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world, even communities that had been relatively insulated from violence have become familiar with the lingering fear that is engendered by trauma.

These various conflict and post-conflict environments present enormous challenges to educators. Such issues emerge in the relationship between education and societies, and appear within the school environment itself. In the former, during severe social breakdown, state institutions collapse and are no longer able to manage social services. Education systems subsequently dissolve and are unavailable to children and young adults. Violent political movements often target children with recruiting tactics, actively disrupting students’ access to education and forcing many into child warfare. Civilians living in the midst of conflict zones struggle to maintain a routine that includes schooling. Meanwhile, their refugee and displaced counterparts live in a camp-shelter-limbo that may or may not allow access to education for the children growing up there. Finally, borders in post-conflict regions are notoriously porous, allowing a continuation of the organized crime that accompanies conflict. This, in turn, continues to destabilize fledgling states, hampering the efforts of national and foreign administrators alike to reconstruct and revitalize education systems. Large-scale international intervention and administration of state services by international actors in partnership with new domestic institutions may pave the way for recovery and stability, but they also bring a host of new challenges.

Either simultaneous to or independent of the phenomena listed above, conflict and violence also affect the internal workings of schools. Pedagogy, curricula, and textbooks can be used either to promote peace and stability, or to inculcate nationalism and perpetuate ethnic or religious hatred. The problems are dramatized by the large number of children affected by social disorder worldwide. The US Refugee Committee (USRC) estimates that of the nearly 37 million people who are displaced by conflict, roughly 12 million are children with little or no access to education (USRC, as cited in Academy for Educational

Development, 2003). Negative teaching tools can have a profound impact among these displaced groups, while make-shift schools created in temporary environments often provide only improvised lessons.

Given the severity and duration of these social upheavals, and the current state of human security around the globe, international and local actors have argued persuasively for turning attention to education. Education, they assert, can be a way to mediate conflict, and education services should be included in humanitarian aid packages, together with water and food, shelter, and medical treatment (Aguilar & Retamal, 1998; Johannessen, 2001; Machel, 2001; Save the Children Alliance, 1996; Sinclair, 2002). Backing this policy change, several international organizations have designed a number of education "tool kits" and other materials to assist humanitarian workers, educators, teachers, parents, and community members in providing education services during a complex emergency (Nicolai, 2003; Pigozzi, 1999; Triplehorn, 2001). To further this process, international organizations and their local counterparts are currently surveying these various education interventions in order to compile resource databases and establish guidelines for delivering these services. The guidelines are meant to help humanitarian aid organizations select useful education techniques and critical resources that will help to maintain "minimum standards" of education during an emergency (Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies, 2004). Despite the current level of international intervention in conflict and post-conflict regions, efforts to provide "emergency education"[2] and education for social reconstruction, as well as the implications and consequences of these efforts, remain under-researched.

That said, what is education in emergencies? The responses of practitioners and academics to this question differ in the point of departure. For many practitioners, emergency education is an urgent policy response to violence and social disruption. It is an integral component of humanitarian aid, meant to bridge the gap between the present conflict and future peace. To summarize briefly here, at its most instrumental, emergency education "increasingly serves as shorthand for schooling and other organized studies, together with 'normalizing' structured activities, arranged for and with children, young people and adults whose lives have been disrupted by conflict and major natural disasters" (Sinclair, 2001, p. 4). Some of the multiple and shifting factors that determine the type of education provided by international agencies during or immediately following an emergency may include: 1) the status of the population to whom the service is provided (refugee, internally displaced, or "stayee"--civilian caught in a conflict); 2) the status of the state in the region before the conflict began (functioning, weak, failed) and its ability to provide public services; and 3) the status of the crisis (high/low intensity conflict, and duration) (Burde, 2004).

Concentrating on how to fix a problem, while critical and necessary, can siphon attention from imperative and simultaneous inquiries into how the problem is defined, how it arose in the first place, and what confounding socio-political and economic factors perpetuate it. For academics, education in emergencies is a sub-field in Comparative and International Education that examines the reciprocal relationships among education, violence, and war,

giving special attention to the role of education as a politically destructive or constructive force. As comparative educators, we bring various disciplines and sub-disciplines to bear on educational studies--political science, sociology, philosophy, psychology, economics, anthropology, and critical pedagogy[3]--exploring the multiple meanings and implications of education in emergencies, beyond its humanitarian context. Given the intensity of globalization processes and the interconnections among multinational corporations, international organizations, governments, and legal institutions, we can neither implement educational programs nor analyze them without taking into consideration the tremendous international forces that affect our work.

This volume represents a collective effort by master's and doctoral students at Columbia University to analyze, understand, and write about the diverse phenomena that both affect, and can be affected by, education systems during complex emergencies. The majority of research studies presented here address education in the context of humanitarian intervention, war, and post-conflict reconstruction. The authors of these articles explore questions such as: How are schooling and education systems used to promote conflict? How can education mitigate conflict and its political, social-psychological effects? What is the relationship between education for social reconstruction and education for nation-building? How do transnational political interests affect education systems? This volume does not provide answers. Rather it aims to provide insights into the array of issues that confront educators (academics and practitioners alike) interested in the relationships described above.

To that end, the articles published in this volume provide a wide range of small-scale, short term case studies that rely on qualitative data collection techniques (primary and secondary sources: interviews and document review) and various theoretical frameworks to explore multiple aspects of education in emergencies. Taken together, they fall into the two broad categories that Noah and Eckstein (1969) note in their discussion of comparative education methods: school-society studies or intra-school studies.

The first set of articles in the volume falls within the school-society category and focuses largely on relationships between education systems and state interests. The studies in this section begin with Christine Pagen's examinations of the often problematic transnational relationship between humanitarian assistance and military intervention, and move to Kara VanderKamp's discussion of the impact of funding on refugee education provided by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. Exploring the transnational reach of domestic institutions, Brandon Hall presents a broad discussion of "embedded reporting" and the U.S. media's influence on public education during the on-going war in Iraq. Included in this section as well are James Lenton's analysis of the regional political and economic dynamics that restrict the post-secondary educational opportunities of displaced Burmese youth living in Thailand, and Martha Crowley's description and analysis of the efforts of international NGOs to provide education in Haiti in the absence of a functioning state. Finally, Tonya Muro Homan's article addresses the "silent emergency" of HIV/AIDS, describing local interpretations of government policies and the

potential for innovative approaches to HIV/AIDS education in the nongovernmental sector.

The second set of studies provides compelling analyses of intra-school issues before or during a conflict, focusing on education as a tool either for psychological protection and social change, or for national-ethnic indoctrination and exclusion. The first three articles in this section link school access and lessons, pedagogy, and textbooks to the project of nation-building and national identity. Jill Salmon describes the dramatic ways in which colonial administrators in Rwanda restricted Hutus' access to education, and the ways in which schools cultivated ethnic hatred. In her article on Serbian education, Colette Mazzucelli compares the ways schools were used to build a nationalistic state in Germany under Hitler and in Serbia under Milosevic, but also highlights the potential of critical pedagogy to combat these trends today. Peter Cronin explores the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ways in which the history textbooks of each create respective national unity by using stories that delegitimize the other. The final two articles present studies of the ways that schools, students, and teachers cope with war. Zeena Zakharia presents an unparalleled perspective of Lebanese students and teachers, their schools, their remembered reactions to the conflict, and its impact on their education. Finally, the volume closes with Maria Hantzopoulos' comprehensive case study of a school in Lower Manhattan, its responses to September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the potential impact restrictive policies may have on schools' abilities to provide critical elements of education services after a traumatic event.

This foreword would not be complete without a tribute to the graduate students who have worked so hard to make this project happen. The students who planned, organized, and edited this volume won a grant from the Columbia University President's and Provost's Student Initiative Fund to do so. They solicited papers relating to the field of education in emergencies from across Columbia University; most of the articles were researched and written during the spring semester 2004, and submitted, reviewed, and published within a matter of weeks. This rapid turn around reflects not only the urgency with which we view this subject, but also the necessity, particularly for educators, of bridging the gap between theory and practice. Continuing in this spirit, the publication will be available on the Internet for educators from around the world to read and download.

With this volume, we hope and anticipate that some of the issues the authors raise and the analysis they provide will help us move collectively toward understanding and ameliorating these seemingly intractable problems.

## Notes

- 1) For an interesting discussion of definitions and causes of failed states, see Robert Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*; on ethnic conflict and intercommunal violence, see Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*; on causes of internal conflict, see Michael Brown, et al. ed., *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*.



- 2) Although some make a distinction between “emergency education” and “education in emergencies,” they are used here interchangeably.
- 3) For interesting articles that explore some of these relationships from the perspective of critical pedagogy and comparative education, see *Comparative Education, Terrorism and Human Security: From Critical Pedagogy to Peacebuilding?*, edited by Wayne Nelles.

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## Editors' Note

The dramatic rise in the visibility of complex emergencies over the past decade has generated a debate over the value of incorporating educational services into larger relief and development aid initiatives. Humanitarian agencies, in conjunction with local and international educators, have been working to establish recommendations for educational intervention, based on the premises that education provides valuable tools and skills, and that education is the right of all children. As such, education in emergencies as an academic field has become critical to comparative education, humanitarian response, and international development.

Within the past decade, researchers have produced valuable information on and insight into the long-term effects of war and violence on children. This volume broadens understandings of the role of education in emergencies and post-conflict situations by adding the work of Columbia University graduate students to the current body of interdisciplinary literature. It presents fresh and compelling insights into salient issues for education in emergencies through case studies and exploratory pieces. Our hope is that the research presented in this collection will galvanize further debate and research in this evolving field.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following graduate students, without whom this volume would have been impossible.

Peter M. Cronin  
Brian Gonzales  
Tonya Muro Homan  
Maria Hantzopoulos  
Kara VanderKamp  
Moirra Wilkinson  
Andria Wisler

We also extend our thanks to all of the master's and doctoral students who responded to the Call for Papers. The articles received reflect both a broad and interdisciplinary interest in this compelling topic and the high academic caliber of Columbia University students. We commend all of the authors for producing such impressive work under very tight time constraints. While we tried to be as inclusive as possible, our biggest regret is not being able to include more articles.

We are grateful to Dr. Dana Burde from Teachers College, Dr. Neil Boothby from the Mailman School of Public Health, and Mr. Zachary Metz from the Center for International Conflict Resolution for sharing their insights as panel members at the publication launch event.

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Finally, we extend our special thanks to Dr. Dana Burde, whose course, "Politics and Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Regions," inspired us to undertake this project. Dr. Burde not only contributed the foreword to the volume, but also provided guidance to us along the way and enthusiastically supported our initiative.

Tammy Arnstein  
Christine Pagen  
Zeena Zakharia

Co-Editors



## **Education and Society**



# **Arm of the Government? Security of Civilian Staff in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations**

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## **Introduction**

Shortly after the 2003 bombing of the United Nations (UN) headquarters in Baghdad, Oxfam withdrew its staff from Iraq, stating the following:

Rather than a response to any one incident, this was a response to the general climate, which had been deteriorating for some time...Since the end of the war we'd had security problems, and our most recent assessment has suggested that our international staff are at risk...Our national staff are still in place and will continue working as soon as security permits. (AlertNet, September 4, 2003)

Oxfam is one of many international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) forced to confront the growing threat faced by their civilian staff members in the field.

A parallel phenomenon to the increasing numbers of civilian staff being abducted or killed is the global movement obscuring the distinction between military and humanitarian initiatives. In order to explore the possibility that these trends are related, this paper poses the following inquiries:

- 1) Has the security of civilian staff been affected by the increasingly blurred distinction between military action and nongovernmental assistance?
- 2) How does the education sector specifically reflect this development?
- 3) How have organizations reacted to these trends through policy change?

By capturing the voices of nongovernmental personnel as they consider these questions, their experiences are framed within the greater international political theater.

The potentially variant positions identified through this research are delineated on a spectrum spanning from collaboration between the military and humanitarian agencies to an absolute separation of operations. As the line becomes vague between the two groups of actors, debate continues over the consequences of this tension. However, the research presented in this paper

demonstrably indicates that this trend affects civilian security in the field. In order to illustrate the risks in this progressively more dangerous global environment, specific challenges faced by teachers “on the front line” are highlighted. Additionally, organizations and agencies are found to have begun implementing policies in response to the security issues faced by their civilian staff. Such findings have important implications to future policy development on both transnational and organizational levels, and set the stage for further investigation into these critical issues.

## **Theoretical Positions and Relevance**

As the number of tragic civilian staff kidnappings and deaths in conflict and post-conflict situations rises, underlying political trends must be explored to determine why these workers are increasingly perceived as targets. This paper investigates whether the global movement that confounds military action and nongovernmental assistance has, in fact, contextualized aid workers as part of a greater political structure, rather than as neutral providers. The arguments surrounding this issue are critically important in Iraq and other regions that currently receive military and humanitarian attention.

Policymakers are of differing opinions on the nature of the relationship between military action and humanitarian assistance. To illustrate the two ends of the policy spectrum spanning from collaboration to separatism, one can compare the May 2003 statements of Andrew Natsios, Administrator for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and George C. Biddle, Senior Vice President of the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

According to Andrew Natsios, USAID supports a high degree of collaboration between military and humanitarian actors. Interaction reported that, on May 21, 2003, Natsios uncompromisingly declared that “aid agencies and for-profit contractors in the field should identify themselves as recipients of U.S. funding to show a stronger link to American foreign policy...NGOs and contractors ‘are an arm of the U.S. government’” (2003). This view clearly associates humanitarian actors and the military as part of the same political enterprise.

In contrast, some organizations posit that humanitarian and military initiatives must remain distinct. George Biddle of the IRC illustrated this perspective in testimony before the House Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations on May 13, 2003. In his statement, Biddle advocated that military action and humanitarian assistance must be absolutely separate to ensure the security of civilian staff, citing community relations and neutrality as two key issues. According to Biddle’s testimony, a senior IRC staff member indicated that several local nongovernmental organizations, including education and health groups, were “intentionally staying away from relief and reconstruction efforts perceived to be military led.” Biddle expanded on this concept further by declaring that:



Confusing humanitarian and military activities carries great security risks for those delivering assistance. Our safety often depends on local perceptions. Aid workers are obviously not armed, cannot defend themselves and must never be mistaken for members of the military. Their lives depend on it. (IRC, May 13, 2004)

As such, Biddle presented a perspective opposite of that expressed by Andrew Natsios: that confounding humanitarian and military affairs makes aid efforts ineffective and potentially endangers the lives of civilian staff.

Given the potential for opposing views on this issue, it is useful to see how the tension unfolds in a specific sector such as education, especially as education is assuming a more significant role in humanitarian response (Aguilar & Retamal, 1998). During the writing of this paper, Fadi Fadel, a child protection specialist working for the IRC, was abducted in Iraq. Thankfully, Fadel was released after 10 long days in captivity. However, this incident demonstrates that education personnel engaged in conflict or post-conflict situations can just as easily be targeted in this global environment of blurred alliances.

To help prevent future incidents like the abduction of Fadi Fadel, staff security must be a primary consideration of humanitarian response. This paper situates the risks faced by field staff within the global framework that overlaps military and humanitarian work. Whether organizations promote or rebuke this trend, they must develop a strong comprehension of the situations in which they work, and their policy must respond to the increasing security dangers faced in the field.

## **Context and Approach**

In the past two years, the work of all of the major humanitarian organizations and agencies has been disrupted in increasingly inhospitable conflict and post-conflict regions. Humanitarian workers have been murdered in Sudan, Angola, and Jenin. The Israeli army prevented aid workers of CARE International from entering Ramallah (Coker, 2002) and later began firing at staff (Silver, 2003). Suicide bombings in the West Bank and military campaigns in Afghanistan have hindered the effectiveness of Save the Children (Carpenter, 2002). Humanitarian agencies in Iraq have faced similar obstacles.

As in other parts of the world, civilian staff, including educators, have been targeted in Iraq. The BBC reported on April 13, 2004, that "foreign nationals are being urged to flee Iraq" and that currently 40 hostages from 12 countries were being held. This has affected both the United Nations and humanitarian aid organizations. After 22 people were killed in Baghdad in the UN headquarters bombing on August 19, 2003, the UN and others cut back operations (Borger, 2003; Lynch, 2003). As mentioned above, on April 6, 2004, Fadi Fadel, a Canadian working for the IRC, was abducted in Naful (IRC, April 8, 2004). An April 15, 2004, report from AlertNet documents that several aid organizations pulled out of Iraq because of the recent wave of kidnappings and

murders of international civilians working in the regions (Gidley, 2004). Unfortunately, however, the threat affects both international and national staff.

Nationals also face serious risks when engaged in conflict and post-conflict work. Barzan Omar Ahmad, a 34 year old father of four children, worked with internationals as the director of the Erbil office of the Iraq Red Crescent Society (IRCS) for the past year. One perk of this otherwise unpaid position was a white IRCS sport-utility vehicle. Ahmad, an Iraqi Kurd, insisted that this car was the safest way to travel in the area. On April 9, 2004, Ahmad and his wife, Sazane, were ambushed in this vehicle. They were shot and killed, and the car was set afire. (T. Hill, personal communication, April 16, 2004). This is one tragic example of the increasingly dangerous environment in which civilians--both international and national--operate.

Several NGOs in Iraq express fear that the danger to staff has deteriorated because "[the humanitarian community] is failing to get across the message that it is independent from occupying forces" (AlertNet, August 25, 2003). As such, organizations are taking different approaches to their relationship with the military. Some feel that alignment with the military will provide more security, while others believe that neutrality is the key to protecting field staff.

The research methodology used in this report to explore these issues faced by civilian staff involved interviews and document analysis. Policy research was focused primarily on organizations working in Iraq because its current environment urgently requires attention be paid to security issues. However, to provide a greater global context for the inquiries, interviewees drew on expansive field experiences in Iraq, Eritrea, the former Yugoslavia, and elsewhere.

### **Trends in the Field**

Through this research, several significant findings regarding security in conflict and post-conflict situations were identified:

- 1) While the blurred distinction between humanitarian assistance and military forces is not necessarily a negative phenomenon, it can lead to dangerous circumstances for civilian staff.
- 2) Educators face unique challenges to their security because of their role in the community and their potential association with either their own government or intervening states.

In general, research found that the confounded boundary between military and humanitarian communities increases the threat to civilian staff. Yet, a crucial contention remains in that this overlap is not necessarily or entirely a negative phenomenon in terms of initial intervention. Jeffrey Buenger of the International Commission on Missing Persons pointed out that:

Arguably the shift towards a willingness of the international community (when acting multi-laterally) to intervene in internal

affairs of a sovereign state which inflicts grave human rights violations upon its citizenry is not, in and of itself, disturbing, especially when compared to complete lack of intervention in the face of such activities (personal communication, April 21, 2004. See also Terry, 2002; De Waal and Omaar, 1994).

However, Buenger asserted that civilian field initiatives in conflict and post-conflict situations are certainly affected by this trend when on-going military action is confused with humanitarian aid.

According to Thomas Hill of the Center for International Conflict Resolution (CICR) at Columbia University in New York, the blurred line between military and humanitarian work has caused the norms of interaction to be broken. Now, most actors in conflict no longer play by the old rules. Political entities have undertaken actions violating human rights and endangering civilians. Terrorism has become an effective means to transmit a message, and attacking non-military workers is "an accepted form of expression" (personal communication, April 16, 2004. See also Valasek, 2003). Without laying blame on who first acted against the rules, Hill suggested that norms need to be reestablished so that humanitarian work can be done safely.

Hill also posited that the lack of distinction between military action and humanitarian assistance helps mark civilians working in conflict zones as targets. In a complementary remark, Jeffrey Buenger proposed that UN bombing in Baghdad "may be seen as a reaction by some segments against a non-military support mission from the UN and its agencies because of the UN's *perceived* support for the Coalition Provisional Authority" (emphasis in original, personal communication, April 21, 2004). Therefore, the overarching trend that obscures military and humanitarian work potentially creates a threat to both international and national civilian staff.

In tragic complement to the abduction of internationals like Fadi Fadel, interviews with educators highlighted the specific security issues encountered by national civilian staff: 1) serving as proponents of change, and 2) and being associated with governments in conflict and post-conflict situations.

First, local educators who support new ideologies in their communities can be attacked in volatile situations where change is considered a threat. Teachers who are outspoken often serve as role models in their communities. An unfortunate consequence of being a prominent figure is the possibility of being targeted because of expressed political or social views. For example, an international field staff member of a large humanitarian agency cited the challenges of promoting girls' education in Afghanistan and Iraq where some social or religious groups may consider this an attack on their way of life. In this way, teachers can be threatened as an agent of change.

A second aspect that potentially creates a dangerous situation for education personnel is the community perception of teachers as employees of the government. Being a civil servant can often make them vulnerable to extreme risks. A senior education staff member of another large international

organization reported "In Iraq, no one could hold a civil service job unless he/she was a signed up Ba'ath party member...When the occupying forces first came in last April, many teachers were driven out of their communities by parents and students because they were accused of being repressive Ba'ath Party members who had terrorized children and had bullied parents into paying bribes, or had encouraged other corrupt practices." Because of these circumstances in Iraq, many teachers fled to other countries or cities where they would not be found by the communities that had turned on them.

Generally, this research found that the blurred boundaries between the military and humanitarian organizations can lead to dangerous circumstances for civilian staff. This is specifically indicated by the risks identified by education personnel. Such findings have important implications for policy. Agencies and organizations working in conflict and post-conflict situations have a responsibility to act preventatively with regard to staff security. In fact, several organizations have begun to implement policies that speak to this issue. They fall along the spectrum set by the statements of Andrew Natsios and George Biddle described earlier in this paper.

### **Trends in Policy**

Organizations coping with these alarming security issues have considered several courses of policy change, depending on whether they are a multinational agency of the United Nations or an international NGO.

On a transnational level, the UN has added policy in response to the increased threat to civilian staff. In August 2003, a resolution was passed issuing its "strong condemnation of all forms of violence...to which those participating in humanitarian operations are increasingly exposed... [and expressing] its determination to take appropriate steps in order to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel..." (United Nations, 2003). On an operational level, the United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq (UNOCHI) has recently circulated the UN Minimum Operating Security Standard Guidelines and the UN-NGO Security Collaboration Recommendations to the Inter-Agency Steering Committee created in early 2003. UNOCHI expressed that these documents are being disseminated:

In the hope that they will (1) serve as an instructive reminder on security to all agencies operational in Iraq; (2) set an example for NGOs to develop or (re)familiarise themselves with their own guidelines; and (3) institute a level of complementarity between UN and NGO security measures. (UNOCHI, 2004)

NGOs are encouraged by the UN to share this information widely throughout the humanitarian community.

International NGOs have security policies that may have declared or unspoken guidelines with regard to collaboration with or strict separation from military forces. Some NGOs have aligned themselves closely with the occupying authority and the military on the assumption of protection inherent in that

affiliation. Sources indicate that at least one large organization in Iraq (T. Hill, personal communication, April 6, 2004) has not explicitly separated itself from the military. Rather, its staff has facilitated access to military bases, freely using the post office, gym, and other services. Additionally, this organization takes security from the military and often travels in military-style convoys.

Hill states that this is not a secure way to operate. CICR has worked in Iraq since 1998, initially providing conflict resolution training through an Iraqi higher education network. He suggests that organizations accepting protection and perks related to the military should realize potential consequences to these actions. The relationship obscures the fact that international NGOs have different purposes in Iraq than do the armed forces.

According to Hill, CICR does not have an organization-wide policy with regard to military relations because of the vastly different contexts in which it works. However, in Iraq, CICR has been developing protocols on the issues, preferring to “keep a respectful distance” (personal communication, April 16, 2004). Hill emphasizes that maintaining open communication with all actors is important to neutrality, but that such interactions should be treated with caution because of potential security issues that may arise.

As previously indicated, the IRC does not support collaboration with the military. The organization has an overarching stance on the issue and has implemented measures accordingly:

Because of our commitment to impartiality and independence, and the critical need to develop a trusting relationship with the communities we serve, we cannot accept military supervision. This is a challenge we are facing in Iraq. As a result, we have had to add conditional language to our grant agreements with USAID to ensure civilian reporting structures. (IRC, May 13, 2003)

George Biddle’s remarks underline the importance that the IRC puts on separation from the military in order to maintain security for civilian staff.

Research has shown that these organizations’ reactions to the escalation of threats and attacks on civilian staff can be seen in policy, ranging from overlap to independence. However, what remains to be seen is which approach will be more effective in protecting field workers across sectors, including education.

## **Conclusion**

This paper illuminates the tensions between the humanitarian community and military actors, examining how the nature of their relationship can threaten the lives of civilian staff in conflict and post-conflict regions. Specifically, we see how international and national workers are separately affected as educators and relief staff. As the humanitarian community scrambles to incorporate operational and institutional policies reacting to the growing security threats, numerous approaches come to light. Organizational reactions to this

increasingly dangerous global climate fall on a continuum from collaboration to separatism. However, the most crucial question can only be answered with time: what policy tactics will be successful in protecting the lives of civilian staff in emergencies and post-conflict situations? Longitudinal studies of policy and implementation need to be conducted to assess the effectiveness of different approaches to this security problem. The findings in this paper have laid a foundation for future explorations into these fundamental issues.

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# High Quality Refugee Education: The Impact of Funding

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## Introduction

In the past two decades, the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has changed dramatically due to the increasing complexity of the refugee situation. UNHCR is now working with a population of over twenty million people, an estimated third of which are children and youth. As laid out at the *Addis Ababa Conference* in 1961, a basic education is seen as the right of every child. This concept was reinforced at the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1989, and again at the *World Education Forum* held in Dakar in 2000 (Sinclair, 2001). However, despite the growing emphasis placed on ensuring a basic education for all children, it is estimated that less than half of all refugee children are attending school. The reason behind this low rate of attendance is multi-faceted. In general, it has much to do with how education is perceived, and, as a result, the priority that schooling is given. In particular, much of the problem lies in funding, including the process for both acquiring and distributing the resources. I argue in this paper that although "education is increasingly viewed as the 'fourth pillar', or a 'central pillar,' of humanitarian response," (Sinclair, 2001, p. 3), the UNHCR funding policy negatively impacts its ability to provide a quality education to refugee children. The first section of this paper will establish the importance of high quality education in refugee camps by revealing the contributing components and examining the benefits. Upon that foundation, the second section analyzes the current method for acquiring and distributing resources utilized by UNHCR. This analysis will shed light on the inherent weaknesses of the funding process and the impact it has on refugee education.

## The Benefits of a Quality Education

The UNHCR was formed as an *ad hoc* organization in 1951 as a result of the refugee crisis created by World War II (Chaulia, 2002). Its purpose was to protect the numerous refugees and assist them in finding permanent places to settle. The overwhelming focus during the creation of the 1951 Commission was on the individual well-being of refugees. This responsibility has changed due to the large masses of refugees deriving from each conflict. Almost without exception, refugee camps are forced to cope with considerably greater numbers than in the past.

While these changes were taking place, education's role and perceived value were also evolving. The benefits of education are now being recognized as

equal to that of nourishment, shelter and health services in emergency situations (Sinclair, 2001). "Education provides opportunities for students, their families and communities to begin the trauma healing process, and to learn the skills and values needed for a more peaceful future and better governance at local and national levels" (p. 2). In particular, education in a refugee situation provides psychological benefits to children traumatized by violence and/or change, the provision of skills and knowledge that assist in developing children into productive and peaceful citizens, and, in many cases, protection.

Before analyzing these benefits in greater detail, it is advantageous to first examine the components that help produce quality education--for only education of the highest quality is able to fully realize the benefits. In his study "Improving quality and attainment in refugee schools: The case of the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal", Timothy Brown (2001) combines two definitions of school quality in order to provide a framework for analysis. The resulting structure is particular enough to permit him to evaluate definite factors that engender higher quality refugee education, yet the broad categories provide a sufficient amount of space for practical recommendations that transcend specific contextual and historical factors unique to other refugee camps. Thus, by combining the five main elements of quality education defined by UNICEF with Heneveld and Craigs' (1995) desired student outcomes, Brown derives his own four categories to assess refugee education (Brown, 2001):

- *Actors*: The people who have an opportunity to bring about change in the quality of education at refugee camps, including the refugee community, school managers, teachers, learners, and program managers.
- *Tools*: The various mechanisms utilized by the actors that affect the quality of refugee education, including curriculum and curriculum development, teaching methods and assessment, training of teachers and managers, and monitoring and evaluation.
- *Environment*: Those elements related to the circumstances surrounding the refugee camp that have the potential to foster a positive learning environment, including the refugee context, available funding from international community, the host country, camp background and resources and facilities.
- *Outcomes*: The results of the combination of the other three categories, which provides an index for measuring the quality achieved.

While Brown (2001) provides very specific measures for the outcomes, this paper focuses on categories comprised of the three benefits of education already mentioned: 1) psychological benefits to children traumatized by violence and/or change; 2) the provision of skills and knowledge that assist in developing children into productive and peaceful citizens; and 3) protection and deterrence from deviant behavior. In the following paragraphs, the impact of each category, as well as the elements within, will be made apparent as the benefits of education are described in detail.

It has been recognized that children's psychological welfare is as important as their physical health. This is particularly true in refugee camps where the environment can often be precarious. There are a plethora of examples from refugee camps that clearly express the need for making psychological care a top priority. For instance, in the former Yugoslavia, psychologists (*actors*) observed that a large number of the children were unable to participate in playing with their peers. Similar observations were made in regards to the "Lost Boys," children from southern Sudan, who had escaped the annihilation of their villages. Not only were they unable to "play," but it was also noted that they experienced feelings of sadness, guilt, aggression, difficulty sleeping, nightmares and bedwetting (Sinclair, 2001, p. 4). In Rwanda, a study conducted by UNICEF revealed that over two-thirds of the children surveyed had witnessed a homicide or assault during the 1994 genocide (Sinclair, 2001). These examples demonstrate that children are particularly vulnerable and in danger of being stunted or hurt in terms of their psychological and emotional growth. In this light, formal education has the means (*tools*) not only to assist and guide children through a process of healing, but also to provide familiarity and stability in an otherwise precarious situation (Pigozzi, 1999). Thus, in this context, education serves to help children cope with those things have hurt them psychologically.

The second benefit of education, which is perhaps the one that most people think of first, relates to the skills and knowledge that children acquire at school. From a social and economic standpoint, it is important that children continue to learn and avoid long periods of absence from school. The continuation of learning will help ensure a smoother transition back into society upon their resettlement or repatriation. Furthermore, when the time comes to leave the refugee camps, children will be more prepared to contribute positively to their communities (Sinclair, 2001).

Besides academics, there are other skills and knowledge that are equally beneficial, such as those that fall into the categories of survival and peace-building (Sinclair, 2001). When refugee camps are initially established, they are almost without exception unsafe in a multitude of ways. Schools establish a means (*tools*) for teaching children (*actors*) about issues like health, environment, sexual activities, land mines (if they are returning to war-torn areas) and so on. Moreover, with regards to peace-building, education can serve as a platform for discussing constructive ways to help bring peace to areas plagued by conflict and violence.

As such, education also benefits children in refugee camps by providing for their physical protection. "Education is likewise a forward-looking activity that can lessen the incidence of alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, prostitution and so on" (Sinclair, 2001, p. 9). Moreover, children who have experienced trauma and live under immense stress will not always behave in ways or participate in activities that are socially acceptable (Berman, 2000). For example, the refugee camps in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) became an ideal place for militants to recruit and conscript refugees (Chaulia, 2002). As in many other cases, they were not opposed to using children to

assist in their cause. Thus, schools (*tools*) provide an incentive for youth to avoid making choices that will ultimately hurt them.

## The Impact of Funding

As demonstrated, there is a definite need for education in refugee camps. The mental development and protection of children is just as important as providing for their physical needs. Children who are given the opportunity to go to school are afforded a stable and consistent place to learn and heal, and education often deters children from participating in deviant behavior. Furthermore, the actors, tools, and environment all play an important role in ensuring that the benefits of education are realized.

However, the recognition of education as a vital part of humanitarian assistance in words alone is not enough. In order for education to truly become the “fourth pillar,” it must be backed up with the necessary financial assistance. Unless this is done, it will be very difficult to provide a “quality” education to all children. In 2000, a camp in Northern Uganda had its budget cut back due to lack of funding. The Sudanese refugee teachers asked the following questions in a memorandum to UNHCR:

Does UNHCR expect quality education if the staff reduction, scholastic materials and co-curricular activities are reduced from the budget? Is the teacher the least important person in the list of UNHCR supported staff? Without quality education, what does UNHCR think shall be the side effects on the refugee communities and the host country? (Brown, 2001, p. 113)

This memorandum raises very important issues in regard to funding. First, is education really a top priority, and if so, why is its budget one of the first to be cut back when funding is low? Second, why is UNHCR unable to meet all of its funding needs?

While in general education is gaining in importance in refugee situations, there are still those people who do not recognize its full significance. In fact, there are many people who criticize the establishment of schools in refugee camps. One of the main arguments against the provision of education is that it will deter refugees from making the decision to repatriate quickly (Sinclair, 2001). Those people who support this argument believe that school structures will generate a sense of stability and longevity, and the refugees will, therefore, be more inclined to stay longer than absolutely necessary.

This argument engenders a serious philosophical question: Why should education, or any other program that benefits refugees, be excluded at the expense of the *possibility* of repatriation? In ideal circumstances, rapid voluntary repatriation is certainly the desired outcome. However, repatriation should not be viewed as so important that the immediate needs of the refugees are ignored or thought of as less significant. Nor should refugees' safety ever be compromised for the sake of a policy. As Johan Pottier (1996) writes, “Partly as a result of this knowledge gap, but partly also because of donor pressure, the

field-level approach of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) sometimes bears little relation to realities on the ground. In some cases, policy decisions have even jeopardized the safety of refugees" (p. 403). In other words, at times the safety of refugees is compromised because of the influence donors have on UNHCR policies.

This then leads the discussion back to the issue of funding. In her article, "Repatriation: Under what conditions is it the most desirable solution for refugees?", Barbara Harrell-Bond (1989) argues that repatriation is the option utilized in many cases simply because it is the most cost-effective. In most instances, the returnee programs require fewer funds and resources than the assistance provided at the camps. Furthermore, because of its funding, UNHCR is in a position where it must satisfy the desires of the donor countries, and so repatriation is encouraged because of the donor's desire to keep the costs down. "Understandably, dependent as it is on the states which fund it, UNHCR cannot act as a neutral body with the necessary freedom of action to represent single-mindedly the interests of refugees when these interests do not conform with those of the states supporting it" (p. 45). Thus, because of the way it is funded, UNHCR must make compromises in policy and program decisions based on the priorities of its donors.

The funding for UNHCR comes from both the public and private sectors. While it is provided with a small number of subsidies from the UN's regular budget to cover administrative costs, the majority of the UNHCR's budget derives from donor governments and private organizations and individuals (Chaulia, 2002). Moreover, a large majority of the money donated is earmarked for a particular region or activity and, therefore, severely limits UNHCR in the programming choices it makes. In other words, in many ways it is the donors who are setting UNHCR policy. Thus, when donors favor repatriation as the top priority, it is then likely that education will be less so because many people perceive it as an impediment to repatriation.

However, there is another side to the funding issue that must be examined. The amount of media exposure that a refugee crisis receives is correlated to the amount of donations provided. To illustrate this point, it is helpful to utilize the Rwandan refugee crisis as an example. When the genocide began in Rwanda, UNHCR was not prepared for the sheer number of people who fled to the refugee camps. Thus, the large quantity of refugees (over two million total, and, in one camp alone, over eight hundred thousand) made normally challenging functions, such as material assistance (provisions for food, medicines, shelter, water, hygiene and sanitation), impossible to provide to everyone. The situation was further compounded by the nature of the Rwandan emergency. This was one of the first genocide crises dealt with by UNHCR; initially, there was a great deal of violence in the camp. At one point, nearly 3000 refugees were being killed daily. It was not until the media highlighted the atrocities that the United Nations, as well as government and private donors, provided the support that was desperately needed. For the next five or six months, UNHCR had close to one million dollars a day at their disposal. As a result, there was vast improvement in the amount of materials and services provided, yet only in the short-term. After the situation had settled down, the

media turned its attention elsewhere, and the refugees were quickly forgotten by most of the world. As with most crisis situations, when this occurs, it becomes difficult to continue raising money and funds quickly begin to dry up (Chaulia, 2002). This example from the Rwanda crisis casts light on the power that the media has to critically impact the funding in emergency situations. Unfortunately, it is clear that the media cannot be counted on to highlight each refugee situation and, therefore, ensure adequate funds.

UNHCR is also unable to rely on its traditional method of securing government and private donations to meet its yearly budget. For the past few years, UNHCR has been dealing with a serious funding crisis and has been forced to drastically cut back in most programming areas, including education. In December 2000, a UNHCR official in Democratic Republic of Congo described the financial situation in this way:

Assistance provided to education is very much lower than the minimum standards recommended by UNHCR, due to limited funding. From the funding available, we hardly succeed to supply the program with teaching and learning materials, uniforms and furniture. Nobody will believe that refugee children in Aru have never seen a globe of the earth. It seems that the funding crisis that has affected and is actually affecting UNHCR and its partners is getting worse ... It seems that in most optimistic way there will not be enough money to pay the teachers for the months of November and December. (Brown, 2001, p. 111)

In fact, in 2002, UNHCR was unable to meet its budget and was again forced to find ways to reduce its spending.

Additionally, there is another perspective to the funding situation that affects the quality of education in refugee camps. This relates to the internal resource allocation procedure. In 2000, UNHCR moved to a "Unified Budget Structure" with the intention of providing "more transparency and predictability in budget and resource allocation" as well as "permitting a more equitable distribution of resources, especially for special program operations that were often under funded" (UNHCR, 2004). This means each country of operation creates a yearly budget, which is then agreed upon with UNHCR Headquarters. The country representative is expected to remain strictly within the ceiling of its budget for that year. The drawback to this type of resource allocation is that it is extremely difficult for country programs to utilize additional earmarked funds. For example, UNHCR Uganda was unable to assume an additional \$1.8 million from the US government earmarked for the education program. Accepting the funds would have meant that money allocated to a different sector, such as safety or health, would have to be scaled back to counterbalance this new income (Brown, 2001). This illustrates how UNHCR resource allocations can negatively impact education programs in refugee camps.

## Conclusion

This analysis has demonstrated the importance of education in refugee camps. Each of the actors and tools, as well as the surrounding environment, affect whether or not children will receive the psychological care, skills, knowledge, and protection to which they are entitled. Furthermore, by highlighting each of the components that impact refugee education, it is easy to see how vital funding is for fully realizing its benefits.

The second part of this paper has demonstrated that aspects of the UNHCR funding policy negatively affect refugee education. The fundraising process leads the organization to prioritize programs based on the priorities of the donors. Often this means cutting back on education because of its perceived impediment to repatriation. Additionally, relying on donations has not been sufficient for meeting the overall UNHCR budget. While it has been shown that the media holds a great deal of power in helping to draw in resources, it is not consistent and cannot be relied upon. Furthermore, the unified budget structure within UNHCR limits country programs from fully utilizing resources earmarked for education programs. While it is outside of the scope of this paper to suggest solutions, it is recommended that more research be conducted on funding policies, with the intention of revealing possible alternatives for UNHCR which would specifically benefit education programs and refugee assistance in general.

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# The Iraq War and Conflict Distance Learning: The Effects of Embedded Media on Public Education

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## Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> century, giddy in its technological splendor, has borne witness to the startling immediacy with which information can be trafficked and exchanged from within conflict zones. Emblematic of this pattern, the advent of crisp digital technology, pinpoint satellite precision, and fiber-optic conduits has signaled the entrance of a new actor in wartime: the embedded media. Reporting in “real-time” from atop the turrets of armored vehicles, journalists and cameramen relay live-action facts and footage once inaccessible to a civilian audience. Never before have average citizens been so comfortably close to the action, able to engage in the armchair punditry previously consigned to retired generals. Judging most recently from the 2003 War in Iraq--the alpha-case in what could well be a deeply problematic trend--little doubt remains: the innovative age of piped-in conflict has arrived.

The profound educative impact of the media has been widely acknowledged and theorized (see Buckingham, 2003; Taylor, 2002; Johnson, 2001; Swoch, White, & Reilly, 1992; Richards, 1968). Its mechanisms for insinuating within and affecting even the remotest of societies serve to apotheosize the media; it thrives upon this ubiquitous influence (Boeren & Epskamp, 1992). All the same, debate swirls as to whether these purveyors of the true global currency manipulate more than edify. Though the media may be perceived as a uniting force for disparate peoples in a society, this force may also manifest itself in negative ways--as propaganda, for instance. In societies such as the United States that acknowledge its citizens' vital reliance upon the necessary perspectives and linkages provided by the news media, instant access to war has critical implications for “Conflict Distance Learning.” The expression, Conflict Distance Learning, signifies those channels of knowledge-exchange that a wartime society's citizens traverse, to compensate for geo-spatial remoteness from the theater of war (see Vrasidas & Glass, 2002; Clark, 2001). In the case of the Iraq War, these channels, engorged with the intensified flow of embedded reporting, were informational arteries for the American public.

In light of this, the inevitable politicization of American corporate media and the extent to which it is manipulated by the wartime State is troubling. When government-aligned conglomerates exert powerful forces upon networks, publications and websites, societies must question how special interests and spin-control influence objectivity and the vantage points which its citizens encounter. While education--public, academic or otherwise--may never be truly

unbiased, it should nonetheless approach an issue from a multitude of angles so that one might formulate an independent impression. Bearing that in mind, the news media, by virtue of its omnipotent educational influence, must be held accountable for its level of fairness in reporting a conflict. Brought to the forefront by the Iraq War, embedding and the newfound instantaneity of wartime reportage, renders this argument ever more urgent in the safeguarding of civil liberties. At an important juncture that beholds the dangerous evolution of both media and war, Conflict Distance Learning may well emerge as a vital element in the ongoing discussion about mass media and public education.

### **The “Embedded” Problem**

National news media--including television, print, and hypermedia sources--exerts a phenomenally influential force upon the education of its citizens (Buckingham, 2003 & 1999a; Taylor, 2002; Johnson, 2001). This influence is further heightened in wartime, especially in a country whose war is being waged abroad. During periods of conflict, a society understandably seeks insight into the strategy and efficacy with which its nation's war is being executed. To further illustrate, a noticeable spike was found in the United States when 86 percent of the audience was measured to access their conflict updates from television. Thus, television journalists in the war theater were the prime agents of information (Ewers, 2003).

However, these embedded journalists are subject to the limits, filters and whims enforced by the media corporations for which they operate. In turn, these corporations, driven by capitalistic interests, fully understand the positive financial implications “favorable” reporting of the conflict naturally carries. For the major networks, increasing viewership equals the enhanced potential to secure lucrative advertising deals. Schechter (2003) pursues this concept further: “In 2003, pleasing the Bush Administration also promised an economic benefit, since while war was being waged, media companies were lobbying for regulatory changes that would benefit their bottom lines” (p. 18). These highly sought “regulatory changes” were aimed at garnering a greater share of the advertising for large corporations. Add to this, the final *coup de grace*: embedding was itself the brainchild of the Pentagon, summarily orchestrated and controlled under its watchful eye. Envisioning this disarmingly simple cycle of collaboration among three principal wartime actors--embedded reporters, media corporations, and the State--suggests a mass of conflicting interests which inherently corrupt the quality of information presented to the commonweal. If information is the currency of the global market, then such a media/State affiliation represents a locomotive of devaluation.

Imagining, momentarily, a giant mechanism that incorporates the State, media corporations, and journalists, we may perceive the techno-savvy duplicity of embedded reporting as the public relations arm. In the same way that firms contract out for public relations, so too does the State direct its own spin control through manipulative ties to the media. The unfortunate subversion is inherent in the con that embedded reporting actually brings the public closer to the war, and, thus, closer to fact--to a deeper, more textured understanding. Certainly, “Embeds” offer a unique, unprecedented proximity to conflict; all the same,

proximity is not necessarily truth. When that proximity is micro-managed by a hierarchy of limitations instilled initially by media corporations and then redundantly by the State, knowledge of conflict, forever distilled, arrives watered-down and sugar-coated to a society's citizens. To be sure, healthy skepticism remains a powerful shield against the insidious nature of wartime spin control. That notwithstanding, for a knowledge-hungry citizenry bombarded with images and text from the agencies upon which it is so daily reliant, to capitulate is not weak; it is merely natural.

True, many have heralded the embedded reporting of the 2003 Iraq War as a brilliant manifestation of information-age globalization and have asserted that what television coverage misses is picked up by the print media. While these claims have merit, the repercussions of such a suspiciously interwoven fabric cannot be underestimated. I suggest that embedded media, when run as a subtly propagandistic tool of the State, is detrimental to public education during wartime--that is, Conflict Distance Learning--and ultimately an affront to specific democratic ideals: freedom of the press and informational exchange. In contrast to the reporting of the Vietnam or 1991 Gulf War (Bushnell & Cunningham, 2003), embedding represents perhaps an even more severe deception of wartime factuality. For those previous conflicts, the State actively discouraged overt media coverage. In the Iraq War, the Pentagon hawked live action coverage that, by virtue of its limited purview, may more directly subvert truth. In this renascent partnership between State and media, embedding is pitched as gritty news-reporting, leading Americans to believe that they are learning the "truth" when, in fact, they merely have access to an extremely narrow and packaged viewpoint.

An irrevocable tension manifests itself between the democratic wartime State whose priority is an unopposed, concerted onslaught of its foe, and the citizens of the democratic State who prize avenues of dissent that could potentially undercut military strategy (Held, 1997). The United States, and in a broader context all technological, media-driven societies, must institute systems of accountability if the civil liberties afforded by a constitutional democracy are to be upheld. Checks must be in place to limit the collusion of the corporate world and politics especially when the media represent such a massively influential force in educating the public in wartime.

This paper serves to offer analysis of some troubling educational issues raised by the embedded reporting of the Iraq War. As such, it will critique each principal actor involved in the Iraq War: the State, corporate media, Embeds, and the public. While there is no clear prescription provided here for possible resolution, this analysis is meant to offer a model for future discussion of this problematic trend in Conflict Distance Learning.

## **War in Iraq**

Waged between the months of March and May 2003, the War in Iraq represents the ideal staging point for analyzing the new media's educative role in conflict, for it is the alpha-case in the utilization of embedded reporting. The idea of embedding was initiated by the Pentagon in early 2003 as a means of

positive public relations (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003) for a war over which Americans--and the international community--were divided (*The Polling Report*, 2003). The government believed that by allowing journalists, reporters, and cameramen to embed with an active troop division, they would win the American public over with an innovative glimpse into soldiers' lives during conflict--not to mention instantaneous action footage (Ewers, 2003). This PR campaign represented a gamble for the US government: on one hand, a brief, unimpeded victory of "shock and awe" with limited casualties would most likely be perceived as justifiable by the American public. On the other hand, a protracted slog marked by heavy casualties could backfire devastatingly. The actuality was somewhere in between those extremes though a recent poll has demonstrated a marked decline in American support of the war (New York Times/CBS News, April 29, 2004). True, in the embedding experiment, Americans were dealt a reality of war not previously envisioned. More importantly though, was this reality objective or subjective?

The war began auspiciously in March with a massive bombing campaign and a pledge by President George W. Bush in a March 19 national address to "free [Iraq's] people and to defend the world from grave danger." What followed over the subsequent weeks was a headlong dash of tank units towards Baghdad documented in real-time. Several setbacks occurred including a costly convoy hijacking and a notorious "fragging" incident, both of which were caught on camera (Schechter, 2003). These unexpected American casualties swung public emotions as the American public was simultaneously engrossed and gut-wrenched by the war. Nonetheless, the government chose to let the reporting continue, confident that patriotism would outshine humanitarianism. In the end, the Iraqi regime fell, and the cameras were there to catch it, yet in this zero-sum game of war, depictions of Iraqi suffering were surprisingly limited (Schechter, 2003). Now, more than a year removed from the onset of war, that suffering continues.

Wartime propaganda, though more often identified with fascist regimes, is not a novelty to the United States (Audin, 2003). Many scholars trace propagandistic links between media and the State back to William Hearst and his "yellow journalism" machine which openly claimed, "You furnish the papers, and I'll furnish the war." While quaint, this troubling notion coursed through the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, known for their "camouflaged" media in World War II and the Korean War, respectively (Parry-Giles, 1996). The Vietnam War demonstrated a severing of those ties between the State and the media as frustrated journalists revealed civilian casualties that helped to sway the American public against the conflict (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003). This "media blackout," as the government strategy has been dubbed, followed through to the 1991 Gulf War in which the vast majority of information was inaccessible to the public (MacArthur, 1993).

The year 2003 represents a sea change in this State/media relationship: on the eve of war, the Pentagon and its chief, Donald Rumsfeld asserted, "We need to tell the factual story--good and bad--before others seed the media with disinformation and distortions, as they most certainly will continue to do" (CNN, March 26, 2003; Katovsky & Carlson, 2003). Thus the risky embedding

experiment commenced, a strategy intended to drum up support for a war that many opposed.

## **The State**

As mentioned above, the democratic State must wrangle with distinctly countervailing forces in periods of conflict: 1) uniting aims in the name of self-defense; and 2) maintaining open avenues of dissent as a means of preserving civil liberties. A common method for staving off the latter force is found in propaganda or "spin control"--positive public relations that attempts to highlight, if not exaggerate, the successes of war while simultaneously squelching news of failure--particularly civilian casualties. For a society removed from the war theater and seeking to educate itself in greater depth about its role in conflict, propaganda can have a deleterious effect, especially if alternative methods of information exchange (independent media, access to foreign outlets) are not explored. Through propaganda, Conflict Distance Learning is subverted. Societies which rely heavily upon techno-savvy, instantaneous media-bytes are perhaps most at risk simply due to the principle that immediacy can substitute for authenticity.

An evocative example is seen in the present U.S. administration, which often finds itself likened to a corporate firm heavily reliant upon strict business principles to achieve its aims. As such, President George W. Bush--occasionally dubbed the "CEO President" (personal communication, March 2004)--was able to invoke his "PR department" on the verge of war. In this case, spin control was actualized through a novel strategy developed between the Pentagon and the corporate media: embedding. A conciliatory deal was proffered to the media that, if journalists were to follow the strict, though valid, rules of the Pentagon, they would be allowed to embed with troop divisions on the drive to Baghdad. Eager to rejoin forces with the wartime State, corporate media jumped at the opportunity, offering slight opposition to the enforced restrictions of embedding (Schechter, 2003). One selection from the Embed Media Manual highlights these limitations: "Media coverage of any future operation will, to a large extent, shape public perception of the national security environment now and in the years ahead. This holds true for the U.S. public" (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003, p.402). As demonstrated in the Manual, it seems the U.S. public had little say in "shaping" personal "perception".

While a government must protect its interests in the name of self-defense, such collusion with corporate media to "sell" the war proves duplicitous and subversive. Furthermore, when government transparency is compromised, one can only surmise the financial brokering carried on behind closed doors, the deals potentially cut for the sake of mutual gain. One notable conflicting interest resides in the Federal Communications Commission whose chairman, Michael Powell is son of Colin Powell, the U.S. Secretary of State. The younger Powell affirmed an economic incentive for media corporations to embed when he defended media consolidation by admitting that only the richest media firms would be able to cover future wars (Schechter, 2003).

Additionally, the deceptive power of language plays a prominent role in the State's ability to tighten the media leash and shape public opinion of the war. Most prominently, the term, "embedded media," coined by the Pentagon, has its own dangerous implications. One journalist asserted, "'Embedded' should not mean 'in bed with'" (Page, 2003, p. 1). Decidedly, embedded is a loaded and problematic term; it implies not only an embedding within the war, but also within the corporate, capitalistic culture of U.S. media. The term, as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary, connotes a "firm enclosing," implying that, once embedded, one's disengagement is fraught with difficulties. As a second point of language manipulation, one might also examine the term affixed to those members of the independent media who chose not to embed, the "unilaterals" (Schechter, 2003). The irony here is that, while inherently negative and suggestive of a "go-it-alone," uncooperative approach, this term was often used to characterize the U.S. decision to invade Iraq.

## **Corporate Media**

Leaving off from the State, the role of corporate media in embedded reporting deserves exploring for its share of responsibility in consciously molding public ideology concerning war. To begin, corporate media may be defined as any among a number of major conglomerates which house network television studios, national radio stations or large publication houses. Some American examples include Time Warner (parent of CNN and Time Magazine), Viacom (CBS television and radio) and News Corporation (Fox News and New York Post), as published on the website for the Columbia Journalism Review.

These vast capitalistic entities, though often providing indispensable services, suffer an inextricable tie to the economy and a pointed attunement to financial gain. Embedding offered a clear incentive for these corporations to act avariciously. Television, determined to be the most influential of media entities by far in commanding wartime audience (Ewers, 2003), was given the greatest shrift by corporate media, as higher viewership meant higher Nielsen ratings, and thus, the promise of lucrative advertising contracts (Schechter, 2003). To suggest that corporate media was not subject to the whim of the Pentagon's embedding demands, in light of this simple economic formula, is farcical.

Taking this model one step further, such purely capitalistic logic also influenced the tone and style with which corporate media ran their programming. As many within and outside the media can attest, the televised coverage of the Iraq War was pitched as sport (personal communication, April 9, 2004; Schechter, 2003). In the current age of reality television series, here was a blood-contest telecast on the geo-political stage. As much as television is to Americans a cultural institution, the Iraq War became virtual reality sold through a manic digital fusion of graphic displays, "live" field updates and enemy kill-counts. Preferring this superficial, highlight-driven approach to war, it seemed that the public, contented itself with a nightly dose, assured that the United States was dominating its outmatched foe (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003). The average citizen, anesthetized to violence and perhaps eschewing contextual depth, played predictably into the hands of corporate media's digital creation and were seemingly transfixed by the proximity it afforded (Ewers, 2003).

And yet this proximity, while exhilarating and glitzy, provided little in the way of critical understanding facilitated through dissenting views or objectivity, particularly in the reporting of civilian casualties. Held (1997) offers this: "Political violence is newsworthy and should not be ignored, though it should be covered truthfully rather than as a drama that can be exploited to increase ratings, as some producers advocate" (p. 193). The Vietnam conflict represents a case in which media representations became, against the will of the government, increasingly revelatory and grim, especially of civilian casualties. It was to this gradual accretion of accurate reportage which widespread American dissent and ultimately, the Vietnam *détente* is largely attributed (Hess & Kalb, 2003). The troubling difference with embedded reporting is that the State holds the final say. Knowing this, and not wishing to disturb its tenuous partnership, corporate media engaged in self-censorship, decrying reports of Iraqi civilian casualties as "tasteless" (Goodman, February 24, 2004) and overly negative. One wonders: would Americans have ever witnessed journalists embedded with an Iraqi family?

Furthermore, at the onset of war, most images of mass protest were suddenly suppressed. There were certainly no "real-time" updates from the offices of anti-war organizations (Goodman, February 24, 2004; Schechter, 2003). The corporate media is the key actor that possessed the power to initiate this discussion of objectivity. Instead, the joint venture between the Pentagon and American media corrupted the information exchange. With embedded journalists answering to a bicephalous master, a crucial balancing force formerly in place was now gone.

## **Embeds**

Having discussed those actors involved behind the scenes in conflict reporting, it is necessary to analyze those agents on the ground, the visible manifestations of the Iraq War public relations strategy: the Embeds. Again, important to note is that embedded journalists were not the only media units in the war theater. In fact, independent media operatives played a significant role in reporting the Iraq War for their respective syndicates (Page, 2003). Unfortunately, without the blessings of Pentagon, these "unilaterals" were allowed decided less access and--more critically--less protection in their wartime fact-finding (Schechter, 2003, Hess & Kalb, 2003).

For the nearly 3,000 reporters, photographers and cameramen who were granted embedding privileges, their position, unique to military history, came fraught with tensions (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003). On one hand, the Pentagon ran the Embeds through extensive situational training, advised them openly of their limitations and restrictions, and dangled an opportunity for conflict proximity previously unattainable. Many reporters felt that such proximity would allow the truth of war to reach American eyes and ears. In addition, a large part of this reportage bounced back in live action footage, while depicting Embeds as warrior-poets, deeply entrenched desert scribes.

On the other hand, despite any romantic notions of heroism, the Pentagon remained entirely in control, knowing full well the effect that American troop divisions would have on American reporters. As was later repeatedly shown, the relationship between hardships mutually suffered and objectivity maintained was inversely proportional. Upon return, many reporters openly admitted to the natural bias of month-long cohabitation with American soldiers (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003; National Public Radio, 2003). One embedded photojournalist, Lori Grinker, has even asserted that closely-developed relationships were a natural byproduct of the work, a necessity in developing the subject's comfort and trust (personal communication, April 7, 2004). Perhaps most fundamentally problematic is the notion that while embedding may give the reporter insight into the "war on the ground," the public's perception is limited to an extremely narrow purview that forsakes, albeit unintentionally, a holistic impression of war (Moretti, personal communication, April 21, 2004).

## **The Public**

Thus, the final actor in this analysis is the common citizen, the receptors, willing or not, of the mechanism that is embedded media. Inevitably, a tension exists between the elements of the wartime society galvanized around the war effort and those who prize their constitutional avenues of dissent. The public stands to lose most, for it arguably represents the greatest stakeholder in this information market. Yet, paradoxically, in this case they were the least influential.

The onus is, to a large extent, on the people to interpret and evaluate the meanings derived from media sources. Traditionally, it has been believed that the public is a passive receptor of media, but this notion is rendered moot by the myriad options that are offered including television, print and hypermedia (Hannabuss, 1995). Studies do show, however, that television plays an integral role in the political education of young adults, even if they may not remember or understand it completely (Buckingham, 1999b).

During the Iraq War, 86% of Americans were said to have gained their information from television. The question is then: how much of that 86% could extend beyond that limited purview and comprehend the true nature of war, civilian casualties included? For Americans to support a war, they must be able to support the accompanying civilian losses, the "collateral damage." In this way, embedded media represents what educator and media expert, Dr. Frank Moretti, describes as a hermetic entity (personal communication, April 21, 2004), for in its inadequate depiction of over four thousand Iraqi civilian losses--not to mention a jingoistic impression of war--it swayed a plurality of the American public towards continued support throughout the conflict's duration (*The Polling Report*, 2004).

## **Avenues for Future Discussion**

What then is a democratic society at large to do? Do societal checks already exist to limit the subversion of educational ideals? Or, more troubling,



are citizens in part responsible for their own educational deficiencies, especially in Conflict Distance Learning? Reveling in strategic bursts of sight and sound, does the common citizen voluntarily encourage a shallow geo-political dialogue, forsaking any multi-faceted depth that might enliven personal ideology and character? Jameson (2000) describes this antipathy to internal development as the "waning of affect in postmodern culture" (p. 9). That is, creatures of a late-capitalistic democracy become blinded to their own fading pursuit of interiority. As Moretti notes, the media capitalizes by creating equalities where they should not exist, rendering multi-dimensional issues and events planar (personal communication, April 21, 2004). Citizens of the State are thus contented with a superficial gloss for those complex moments in time which deserve deeper substantiation. If media subversion of fact, heightened by the advent of embedding is to be assuaged, it is perhaps a society's responsibility to reassess this media byproduct which now threatens its capacity to maintain democratic ideals (Moretti, personal communication, April 21, 2004; Jameson, 2000).

As McChesney and Foster (2003) assert, "If we learn nothing else from the war on Iraq and its subsequent occupation, it is that the U.S. ruling class has learned to make ideological warfare as important to its operations as military and economic warfare" (p.1). In defense of embedded media, it might be suggested that objectivity does not exist in this world, that the biases of a reporter protected by a troop division are natural and thus, harmless ("Embedding Reporters," 2003). Such capitulation is folly. Even the briefest study of Iraq War reporting demonstrates the mixed blessing of embedded media: instant access with questionable educational outcomes for the public. True, several mitigating factors exist--"unilateral" reporting and the comparatively fairer print media, for instance--but these are overshadowed by the influence of a corporate media inextricably bound to the State. Conclusions which should be arrived at through personal introspection are predetermined, packaged and delivered. Stunningly, the public feels validated in this knowledge-exchange. This false comfort is subversive and deeply troubling in Conflict Distance Learning.

Ideally, the news media would promote the pursuit of democratic ideals by encouraging citizens to stay informed (Buckingham, 1999b); however, when that promotion is corrupted by special interests, the burden falls upon the shoulders of a society's citizens to re-envision public education in light of this crisis. This might manifest itself in the form of advocacy through the conduits of independent grass-roots organizations. More urgently, further emphasis must be placed on generating skepticism of journalistic tactics and fostering an appreciation for the inner-workings of the propaganda machine (Powers, 2003). Thus, it might be agreed in the future that studied interpretation is prized over face-value acceptance of sound and image bytes, such that information manifests itself as an instructive rather than destructive force.

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# **The Effects of the Current Thai Administration Policy on Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities for Burmese Refugees in Thailand**

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## **Introduction**

Decades of internal conflict and human rights abuses committed under successive military regimes in Burma have caused hundreds of thousands of Burmese to flee to Thailand, most of them arriving since the mid 1980s.[1] While there are primary and secondary education programs for the Burmese refugees living in camps along the Thai-Burma border, there are limited educational opportunities for these students and for unregistered Burmese political exiles and migrants to continue their studies or find employment upon completion of these programs.

Under the current Thai administration, new political and economic relations with Burma's military regime have resulted in harsher policies towards Burmese refugees, migrants and political exiles in Thailand. This research paper will examine post-secondary education programs for Burmese refugees and political activists in Thailand and the challenges such programs face. It will seek to present the new Thai policies towards Burmese in Thailand and argue that such policies not only make it harder for these education programs to operate, but are ultimately short-sighted and likely to have negative long-term effects on Thailand and Burma stemming from a generation of uneducated, unskilled Burmese students.

## **Problem and Relevance--Exporting Burma's Conflict**

Over forty years of military rule have taken Burma from one of the most prosperous countries in the region as of its independence in 1948 to one of the poorest countries in the world today. Under the current regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), the Burmese economy is on the brink of collapse and the health and education sectors are in complete disarray. Since the pro-democracy uprisings in the late 1980s, universities have been closed more than they have been open, and the quality of Burma's schools has declined consistently. Lack of health and education facilities and resources are particularly acute for ethnic minorities in the remote border regions where civil war has continued unabated since independence (Fink, 2001). There are over 140,000 Burmese refugees living in camps in Thailand along the Thai-Burma border, and another estimated one million Burmese migrants living illegally within Thailand (Beyrer, 2001). There are a number of schools in the camps that provide

education up to the equivalent of "10th standard" in Burma, or American 10th grade. These schools are mainly taught in ethnic minority languages such as Karen and Karenni, spoken by ethnic groups that comprise the majority of refugees within the camps. There are also English-language programs that are often taught by foreign teachers in residence in the camps. While the English level of students studying in the camps may be far above that of their peers in Burmese government schools, many of them can speak little Burmese and even less Thai. Therefore, many students graduating from the education system within the camps are ill-equipped to join either the Burmese or Thai education systems. More importantly, their status as refugees denies them any access to the Thai education system, and they risk political persecution or worse upon return to the current situation in Burma.

Given their legal status, the only post-secondary education options available in Thailand to Burmese refugees are the non-formal programs run by local and international NGOs. There are a number of such organizations providing a variety of programs, such as United States (US) General Education Development accreditation courses and capacity development training programs in human rights advocacy, foreign affairs skills, community development management, and journalism techniques. These programs must operate without official license within Thailand, yet usually require some form of informal, temporary agreement with local authorities. Thus, the security of the participants of these programs is always an issue. Due to their illegal status in Thailand, they live under constant threat of being arrested and possibly deported back to Burma. This is of particular concern because most programs are based in urban centers such as Bangkok and Chiang Mai, whereas most of the students are based in towns closer to the border or within the refugee camps and must travel to the cities to participate.

This difficult situation faced by Burmese in Thailand has only been exacerbated in recent years as a result of the current Thai administration's new economic and political relations with the Burmese regime. According to a recent Human Rights Watch report:

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's forging of closer economic and political ties with the Burmese government has resulted in an increasingly hard-line stance by Thailand towards Burmese exiles, refugees, and migrants--especially those who are visibly and vocally opposed to the military government in Rangoon. (Human Rights Watch, 2004, p. 1)

The Thai government claims its policy of constructive engagement is a step towards fostering national reconciliation in Burma, as evident in Rangoon's recent announcement of their seven-step "road map to democracy" in August of last year (Human Rights Watch, 2004). In fact, the current Thai administration is so confident in these plans that it is planning to repatriate Burmese refugees and migrants. Yet, many Burma observers are skeptical that Burmese refugees will be able to return home anytime soon. Furthermore, in specific relation to education issues, the current status of the Burmese education system is in no way able to accommodate the education needs of the current population of

Burmese students residing in Thailand. Indeed, without addressing the educational needs of the Burmese refugees, migrants, and exiles in Thailand, a generation of students will continue to sit idle, wasting precious resources for Burma, no doubt creating future problems not only for Burma but for Thailand as well.

### **Background: Children of Conflict--Burma's Human Exports to Thailand**

Mirroring the multi-ethnic, linguistic and religious composition of its people, the conflict in Burma is complex and multilayered. Successive military governments that have ruled the country for over forty years continue to fight various ethnic insurgent groups in a civil war which at times has caused up to 10,000 fatalities a year (Smith, 1994, p. 96). Meanwhile, a political opposition movement based in the major urban areas of central Burma, led by the National League for Democracy (NLD) and which rose to fruition in the student-led uprisings in 1988, continues to call for democratic reform and a transition to civilian rule. Spearheaded by Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Prize winner and daughter of one of Burma's most famous independence heroes, the NLD won a landslide victory in general elections held in 1990, elections which were never honored by the military government. Currently, Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest while there are still over one thousand political prisoners currently imprisoned.

The conflict in Burma has had an impact on all of its neighbors through the consequent Burmese exportation of refugees, migrants, and burgeoning illegal trade in humans, natural resources, and narcotics. Thailand has borne a significant share of this burden, particularly regarding the number of refugees and migrant workers fleeing Burma. While Thailand is not party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1969 Protocol (Human Rights Watch, 2004), Thailand has pursued a humanitarian policy in which refugees fleeing conflict zones have been provided temporary asylum in camps along the border. The UNHCR has been given limited access to such camps, which are managed by local refugee committees and under the control of the Ministry of the Interior and Royal Thai Military (*Burma Education Office Annual Report*, 2001). There are also approximately 4,000 registered refugees residing in major urban centers in Thailand such as Bangkok and Chiang Mai (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Traditionally, Thailand has allowed admittance into the refugee camps only to "persons fleeing fighting" (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Many other people fleeing Burma are not deemed to be fleeing fighting and have been held back at the border. This includes approximately 200,000 refugees of the ethnic minority Shan group now residing in the border areas who are given no protection or allowed entry into the camps (Beyrer, 2001). The Shan have traditionally been discriminated against as they are seen as part of drug smuggling groups. In addition to the registered refugees, all other Burmese living within Thailand are considered illegal migrants, given no rights under Thai law, and are subject to arrest and deportation.

Since the 1988 uprisings in Burma, Thailand has been sympathetic to the Burmese democracy movement and its leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and has no doubt heeded international pressure on this issue as well. Thus, members of the Burmese democracy movement residing in Thailand have been allowed to operate relatively freely. Nevertheless, the relationship between the current Thai administration and Rangoon has produced an increasingly hostile environment for Burmese within Thailand, especially towards refugees who are political activists and exiled members of the pro-democracy opposition movement. As such, this paper looks at the situation faced by three main populations: refugees, migrant workers, and Burmese political activists.

## **Methodology**

This case study incorporates a variety of methods in order to understand what these new policies towards Burmese refugees, migrants and political exiles entail and how they affect the post-secondary education programs available to Burmese in Thailand. Research of secondary sources has been done to determine the background of the conflict in Burma, the history of Burmese refugees in Thailand, Thai-Burmese political and economic relations, and new Thai policies towards Burmese refugees. Interviews with local and international NGO staff and with Burmese political activists in exile in Thailand and in the U.S. were conducted in order to gain an understanding of the extent and importance of post-secondary education opportunities available to Burmese in Thailand and the effects of the new Thai policies on these opportunities.

## **Findings**

The results of this research can be divided into the following categories: the education needs of Burmese in Thailand; post-secondary education programs available for Burmese in Thailand and the challenges such programs face; and the new Thai Policies towards Burmese refugees, migrants and political exiles based in Thailand.

### *Educational needs of Burmese in Thailand*

In 1984, Thailand invited international NGOs to provide support for Burmese refugees; this was subsequently coordinated through the Coordinating Committee for Services to Displaced People in Thailand (CCSDPT) (*Burma Education Office Annual Report, 2001*). Such assistance included basic education programs within the camps up to the 10th standard. In 1996, a needs assessment by the CCSDPT found a demand for education and training beyond the 10th standard, particularly because very few people were qualified to assist in the administration of the camps, particularly in the health and education services. In turn, many students were illegally leaving the camps after completing school in order to find work in Thai cities.

Since the 1988 uprisings a number of student democracy activists were able to locate opportunities for training and continuing education abroad (*Burma Education Office Annual Report, 2001*). Yet there was a lack of qualified candidates, as few of these students had the English language skills necessary to



attend. Most were unable to meet the tertiary programs' admission requirements. Some had lost their transcripts fleeing Burma. Others were applying to education systems in countries requiring the completion of 12<sup>th</sup> grade whereas the Burmese system in which they were educated only went up to the 10th grade level. Thus, alternatives were needed in order to continue to develop the capacities and skills of these students.

The Burmese migrant population in Thailand also has educational needs. However, while responding to the needs of refugees residing within the camps as well as the demands of activists within the democracy movement is quite difficult, it has proven to be virtually impossible to meet the demands of the one million illegal Burmese migrant workers in Thailand. To date, there is still no systematic effort to do so (*Burma Education Office Annual Report, 2001*).

#### *Education programs: A focus on the Burma Education Office*

Without a doubt, the greatest challenge to the work of the education office stems from the fact that we are operating without official permission from the Thai authorities and with a population that is considered illegal and is therefore subject to arrest. (*Burma Education Office Annual Report, 2001, p. 8*)

In 1996, the Burma Education Office (BEO) was established in order to meet the educational demands of Burmese living in Thailand. Despite serious challenges, the BEO provided 31,200 hours of classroom instruction to Burmese refugees through eleven different programs in 2001 (*Burma Education Office Annual Report, 2001*). These included "post-ten" schools in the refugee camps, programs preparing students for tertiary study, and academic counseling to help students apply to university programs in Thailand, India and the Philippines.

The Thai Ministry of Interior announced in 1997 that no education programs beyond the 9th standard would be permitted. Thus, the BEO was informed by its donor organization that it would not be able to apply for NGO status in Thailand. Since then, its various programs have run without official permission.

This situation permeates every aspect of its programs. Local staff and students live under constant threat of arrest, particularly when traveling to and from the program sites. Programs have had to be temporarily closed numerous times due to security concerns. Communication between the head office and field programs, particularly those within the refugee camps, can be impossible without actual visits as the camps have no phone and internet access. Foreign staff is often denied access to the camps, and, without official NGO status, they must also apply for tourist visas on a monthly basis.

While the BEO has expanded its operations consistently since its inception despite such challenges, its programs and other similar education projects are only able to meet a small portion of the educational needs of Burmese refugees in Thailand. This leaves the majority of Burmese refugees, migrants and political exiles with little opportunity for post-secondary education and/or employment.

The situation is worst for those Burmese not considered by Thailand to be persons fleeing fighting, such as the Shan minority group. This is reflected in programs such as the Burma Project's Education Office, where Shan students are in the minority because they simply cannot compete with the academic level, particularly the English-language level, of those Karen and Karenni students who have had access to education within the refugee camps (*Burma Education Office Annual Report, 2002*). In order to gain an understanding of how these challenges to programs providing post-secondary education for Burmese in Thailand have only recently increased, we must explore the changes in Thai policy towards Burmese refugees, migrants and political activists.

### *New Thai Policies towards Burmese in Thailand*

In recent years, government policy towards Burmese in Thailand has changed considerably under the administration of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Such policies can be divided into the following categories: policy towards refugees, policy towards migrants, and policy affecting Burmese political activists.

#### Refugees

On Jan. 1 2004, the UNHCR suspended its screening of new asylum seekers in Thailand (formally known as Refugee Status Determination) under intense pressure from the Thai government. Persons recognized as refugees by the UNHCR were given "refugee certificates" stating they were under the protection of the UNHCR. This suspension of screening effectively leaves tens of thousands of people legally and physically vulnerable. Until the end of 2003, the Thai government was also pushing forward plans to forcibly relocate all Burmese urban refugees to border camps as part of a "harmonization process" in which all Burmese asylum seekers in Thailand would supposedly be treated equally (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

#### Migrants

The Thai government has regularly deported migrant workers, but has launched fresh campaigns since high-level discussions in 2002. This occurred after pressure from populist campaigns that depicted migrants as sources of social ills in the country. In August 2003, the government restricted the renewal of permits for some 12,000 registered migrant workers. Since then, as many as 10,000 migrants have been deported each month in "informal deportations" and 400 a month in "formal deportations," which means they go directly into a holding center in Burma operated by Burmese military intelligence (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

#### Political Activists

In the last few years, the work of Burmese advocacy in Thailand has been increasingly restricted. Many offices of political and humanitarian organizations have been forcibly closed under threat of arrest, and police raids on offices, where various groups within the Thai security services question staff and

confiscate or photocopy confidential material are becoming more common. Such restrictions have significant impact on post-secondary education programs, particularly short-term skills building trainings, as many of them are held at such offices.

New restrictions have made it extremely difficult for Burmese people, especially activists, to obtain Thai visas, curtailing necessary travel abroad to go on speaking tours or attend conferences out of fear that they will not be able to return to Thailand. Some activists have even been stranded overseas after their visa applications were rejected (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

### **Old Hostilities, New Friendships: Thai-Burmese Relations and the Effects on Education for Burmese Refugees, Migrants and Political Activists**

They must stay in their places. They must be controlled...They live here and give birth to a lot of children....They bring diseases long gone from our country back to us. Prime Minister Thaksin to the Thai Media. (Human Rights Watch, 2004)

Although the Prime Minister's thoughts on migrants and urban refugees may reflect long-held Thai prejudices towards their Burmese neighbors, his statement also represents the increasingly hostile position of the current Thai government. In stark contrast is the warming relationship between the Thaksin administration and the generals in Rangoon. The Thai government claims its efforts to promote reconciliation in Burma is a genuine attempt towards regional stability with the benefits of reducing social problems that spill over the border such as migrants and drugs. However, many regional observers dismiss the ability of Thailand to be a neutral arbiter based on the economic benefits, received by both the country and Thaksin personally, of forging closer relations with the SPDC.

In November of last year, Thaksin went to Burma offering a \$45 million loan package to buy Thai products. His own telecommunications company, Shin Corp., signed a deal with a Burmese internet service provider run by the son of the Burmese Prime Minister Khin Nyunt. Thaksin even allegedly has plans to build a ski resort in northern Burma (Zaw, 2003).

Such political and economic developments, say observers, have led to the crackdown on Burmese pro-democracy activists in Thailand. "I think it is the Thai government policy to restrict Burmese activists, as well as refugees and migrants, in order to have better relations and please the SPDC," says Somchai Homlaor, head of the Bangkok based rights group, Forum Asia (Zaw, 2003). These policies have had significant affects on Burmese education in Thailand, with potentially long-term damaging ramifications.

Meanwhile, post-secondary education programs for Burmese in Thailand continue to operate amidst increasing fear of arrest, police raids and intimidations. One prominent Burmese activist based in Thailand explained that, just as the SPDC-sponsored National Convention was about to convene in Burma

for the first time, the Thai Office of the Prime Minister closed down several meetings of activist organizations, including the 4th Annual Conference held by the Student Youth Congress of Burma (personal communication, April 24, 2004). Visa restrictions have also taken their toll on the pro-democracy movement, particularly as students cannot study abroad without the fear of not being able to return. One student activist still remains in Poland after attending an international youth conference in September of 2003 as her application for a Thai visa was rejected (personal communication, January 2004).

However, a senior administrator of the BEO explained that the situation is not that drastically different than under previous administrations; rather, it can be categorized as a continuous decline with security consistently becoming more tenuous (personal communication, April 27, 2004). She recommended that the Thai government allow college preparation programs and permit refugees to further advance their studies. However, she understood that Thailand has genuine security concerns regarding these programs in that they encourage more asylum seekers from Burma. Thus, while demand for and the importance of such education programs remains great, the ability to provide such services has been increasingly hampered by the harsh Thai policies.

Post-secondary education programs for Burmese in Thailand are particularly crucial for the capacity development of the pro-democracy opposition movement. They remain one of the few ways by which Burmese students have access to knowledge and skills that will one day contribute to the political development of their country. Gabrielle Galanek, Program Associate for the Burma Project of the Open Society Institute, warns that "Thailand should think of the long-term ramifications of their policy towards Burma--specifically the education needs of refugees and political exiles. Supporting such programs is essentially an investment in the future leadership of Burma, and thus regional stability" (personal communication, April 15, 2004).

## **Conclusion**

The increasingly close political and economic ties between the Thaksin administration and the military regime in Burma have resulted in harsh Thai policies towards Burmese refugees, migrants, and, in particular, Burmese political activists. This situation has had an increasingly negative effect on the already limited post-secondary education programs for Burmese in Thailand, increasing the risk of arrest and deportation of the students and local staff, and hampering the ability of students to travel and study abroad. While it seems unlikely that Thai policy will change in the near future, if Thailand is serious about promoting national reconciliation and democratization in Burma it should take into consideration the long-term benefits of education programs that increase the skills and knowledge of Burmese students, as so often in the past it is the students who have initiated political reform and progress.

## **Notes**

- 1) Although the current military regime changed the country name to Myanmar, many people continue to refer to it as Burma, including the opposition party led by Aung San Su Kyi, the National League for Democracy.

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# Groundwork for Development in Education: Emergency Assistance in Haiti

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This paper addresses humanitarian responses to educational needs first initiated as relief efforts in the 1991-1994 emergency situation during military rule in Haiti and continuing in the current crisis. How do initiatives that have been undertaken in response to emergencies in basic educational needs provide ongoing stability to a region? And how do these initiatives meet the specific needs of different segments of the affected population that have been deprived of basic educational resources? With an adult literacy rate of 52% and primary school enrollment rate of 65%, education remains a key obstacle to economic and social progress in Haiti (USAID, 2002). While a lack of consensus regarding Haiti's commitment to democratic governance has resulted in the suspension of hundreds of million of dollars in international aid to the government, it is unrealistic to expect the state to assume responsibility for educating the population in the foreseeable future (Erikson, 2002). Thus, the continuing efforts of NGOs and PVOs, which have heretofore filled the institutional void, are critically important to the social and economic future of the country. In the midst of ongoing crisis situations in field operations, analysis and planning of longer-term development for education is a low priority. This research looks at specific programs that currently provide onsite education and distance learning in Haiti to consider how they may provide vital links to stabilization and longer-term educational initiatives.

## **The Matter at Stake**

Prior to the early 1990s, education had no separate and distinct status in humanitarian programs; only with initiatives such as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) campaign to include education as a "fourth pillar" of humanitarian response in addition to food, shelter, and health care did education gain recognition in humanitarian terms (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). Traditionally, education had been considered development rather than humanitarian relief. But, as Nicolai and Triplehorn report, with a recognition that terror and violence cause psychological damage and that the cognitive development of children is harmed in war and conflict situations, a child's right to education has been upheld in numerous declarations and conventions including most recently the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand, at which goals to universalize education and reduce illiteracy were agreed upon (2003; CCNGO, 2001). But as the educational mandate is relatively new in relief initiatives, there are few models and even more limited experience to draw upon.

In Haiti, implementing basic education programs is made even more difficult due to its historical lack of educational capacity combined with the perennial social and economic problems that promote continuous conflict among fractious segments of its population. Longstanding resistance by the rural peasant population to intervention by local elite and by foreigners exacerbates the difficulties that already characterize efforts to deliver international aid in the region. The success of educational initiatives is also inhibited by illicit activities in the parallel economy that can provide more tangible returns in the current economy (Miller, 1992). Thus, the work of humanitarian relief to establish basic education in this state requires support on a variety of levels for grassroots approaches and trust-building community initiatives if there is any chance of making a lasting difference for the future of the oppressed poor population in Haiti.

Haiti has failed to deliver basic political goods including education to its people. As we learn from Rotberg (2002), nation-states that can no longer deliver these political goods increasingly forfeit that function to other non-state actors. Until a consensus can be reached that unravels past politics of abuse and resolves the political stalemate, and international support is restored to this state, the examples of aid initiatives studied in this case represent some of the few tenuous lifelines on which the oppressed in Haiti must depend. And while fragile but critical structural links between education and social progress are subject to continual internal and external challenges, it is vital that education initiatives in Haiti anticipate ongoing programming beyond what is able to be implemented under current conditions. Sustainable programs in basic education hold the keys to a functional civil society for Haiti that is based on universal education and the eradication of illiteracy (Levinger, 2004).

While the UN General Assembly adopted goals for universal primary education and gender parity in September 2001 as "Millennium Development Goals," the challenges to meet them are significant in all the areas where humanitarian efforts are underway; Haiti is no exception. The 2003 study by The Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) of the Overseas Development Institute concludes that a generic approach to education in emergencies is impossible because of the diversity of crisis, agency mandates, and funding. However, it also notes that general frameworks have begun to emerge (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003; Aguilar & Retamal, 1998).

Significant among these developments is a phased approach to providing educational resources that may range from initial recreational programs and non-formal education to formal education. In this way, the approach forms a flexible continuum that starts by maintaining a security net for the protection of the most vulnerable, evolves to produce basic educational skills, and anticipates self-sustaining institutional capacity (Aguilar & Retamal, 1998). Importantly, this approach acknowledges that emergency education does not negate states' responsibility to educate their people (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003).

A counterpart to the phased model, which follows a project-centered process, is the "Circle of Learning," which instead responds to specific needs of students and their communities and thus can be considered beneficiary-



centered. When the strategic aims of humanitarian response are centered on all segments of the population who have been deprived of basic education, innovative and flexible initiatives can provide out-of-school alternatives and non-school-age programs (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). The HPN study also emphasizes the importance of the participation and resourcefulness of local communities in providing education programming in areas of conflict.

This case study reviews reports of specific NGOs that have demonstrated commitment to education in Haiti. This analysis strives to determine how these organizations may provide programming that offers a continuum for stabilization through a phased approach, and also meets identified needs of the program beneficiaries, as delineated in the "Circle of Learning" approach. It offers examples of programs that demonstrate progress towards the establishment of civic society and democratic self-governance.

At an important conference ("Haiti: Challenges in Development Assistance," sponsored by the Inter-American Dialogue) that convened after international aid was suspended from Haiti, officials from bilateral and multilateral development agencies, representatives of donor governments, officials from U.S. organizations, and people from Haiti's private sector and civil sector considered the central challenge of healing Haiti's social fracture (Erikson, 2002). The report suggests, "Assistance resources can be more effectively applied both by increasing and improving support to health and other development programs, and by establishing training programs for civil society" (Erikson, 2002). Given the international community's disillusionment regarding Haiti and skepticism about its commitment to building a democratic state, the ability of NGOs to demonstrate credible continuums, particularly in these areas—health, agricultural production, micro-enterprise development, basic education, and governance--mentioned in the conference report may play a vital role in future considerations for renewed international support (Erikson, 2002).

## **Background**

Haiti's cultural legacy derives from 17<sup>th</sup> century West African and 18<sup>th</sup> century French social and cultural characteristics, beliefs, and institutions. It is historically significant among Western cultures as the first black sovereignty and the first independent nation in Latin America, having won its independence from France following a decade long revolution that ended in 1803. Since then, the history of the Haitian people can be characterized by internal and external exploitation, gunboat diplomacy, political instability, and widespread poverty. Weak institutional capacity, including a radically underdeveloped educational system, can be seen as both symptom and cause of Haiti's social, economic, and political stagnation. A long history of predator governments and exploitative international commercial interests has bred a peasant population that bears the strains of chronic poverty and distrust.

But, within this general outline of Haitian history, it is necessary to acknowledge multiple perspectives of events that derive internally from a variety of the very disparate groups that comprise the population of the island. These include commercial and military elites, a largely illiterate peasant class, and

church hierarchy. As Farmer (2003) points out, external perspectives of Haiti's affairs develop largely from government and media reports, which can be argued to be self-serving and at least mutually reinforcing. In addition to its weak political and social structure, the state's economic conditions are equally bleak.

The United Nations Development Program *2003 Human Development Report* ranks Haiti 150<sup>th</sup> out of 173 countries and recognizes it as the poorest country and the only "Least Developed Country" in the Western Hemisphere (USAID). Arthur and Dash (1999) report that in the 30 years preceding the early 1990s, Haiti had gone from near self-sufficiency in food sources to depending on imports for nearly half its consumption. Investment in basic infrastructure has been negligible. 70% of the population lives in abject poverty; nearly half of the population has no access to health services. More than a quarter of the children suffer malnutrition, and one in ten people depend on international relief agencies for daily food rations (p. 111). In the period from 1991-1996, an unsuccessful U.S.-led economic embargo risked the very survival of Haiti's most vulnerable poor (McClelland, 1999). The large quantities of food injected into the system from aid agencies as a result of the complex humanitarian emergency during the period were conspicuous, both for direct consumption, and as a political tool for those who controlled its consumption (McClelland, 1999). By 1997, Arthur and Dash report unemployment rates nationally were estimated to be 70%, an increase of 20% over 1991 rates (1999, p. 113). Amidst chronic, destabilizing influences in the social sector, education in Haiti has been a low priority. Given this parlous background, humanitarian assistance, which served initially as a safety valve in the 1991-96 crisis, may be the only current hope to providing longer-term solutions.

### **Findings on NGO Relief Initiatives Providing Basic Education in Haiti**

There is scant literature available that reports on the experience of specific NGO and PVO educational initiatives in Haiti. Nearly 90% of Haiti's schools operate outside the Ministry of Education (MoE) and are run by private or religious organizations. These groups provide primary education to approximately 65% of school age children (Carneal & Pozniak, 2004). Five specific examples of educational programming described here represent the kinds of initiatives that can provide links to longer-term stability as models of phased operational responses and "Circle of Learning" approaches.

#### *School feeding programs*

A review of the Food Assisted Education model (FAE) by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for the period 1995-1999 provides examples of links to long-term educational objectives that are being implemented with food among other resources (Janke, 2000). Committees of local parents and teachers, which are trained and organized specifically for this purpose, manage mid-morning meals. These committees receive training in hygiene and nutrition, food storage and food management. FAE schools ask the local communities to contribute nominal fees and to help supplement ingredients and cooking equipment. Enrollments in

schools with school feeding programs exceed those in other schools by a margin of 63% in rural schools and 37% for urban schools (Locher, 2004).

### *Infrastructure improvement*

Janke (2000) reports that CRS/Haiti supports “small project” school infrastructure improvements. CRS provides skill training in small project management to community Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). The PTA submits project proposals to receive modest funding from CRS. The proposals are accepted based on demonstrated broad participation in the selection and implementation of the project and local commitment of at least 20% of the total resources necessary. Examples of the kinds of projects that CRS supported in 1999 are latrines, water cisterns, school bookstores, and building repairs and improvements. The communities also undertook additional small projects with no outside assistance from CRS. In 1999 approximately 35 such infrastructure improvements were completed under the agency’s auspices (Janke, 2000).

### *Parent-teacher associations*

PTAs are a relatively new concept in Haiti, and, in some ways, they are inconsistent with local concepts of hierarchy (Locher, 2004). Despite this, in the 1990s, CRS made the PTA a central component of its program for education, and it now provides not only community information sessions regarding PTA purpose and activities but also ongoing support for its development including officer election activities and support of the infrastructure improvement projects discussed above (Janke, 2000). First Aid training is also provided through the PTAs as part of a broader Health, Hygiene and Nutrition (HHN) program that includes PTA training as well as PTA-sponsored School Health Days (Janke, 2000). A promising new development is the formation of a broader network of PTAs and other education NGOs within a federation of associations that have common needs and issues. CRS invested its private funding in ten regional forums so that PTAs from the same commune could share lessons and exchange experiences. The value of the lessons learned and the connections formed at these forums led some PTA members to establish a formal federation in order to maintain contact. Now a federation committee composed of three people from each PTA (one parent, one teacher, and one school director) decides how it may provide support to federation schools.

So far, CRS has helped three separate federations develop statutes that stipulate how federations will be governed and has guided them through the process of being formally recognized by the Ministry of Social Affairs as legitimate organizations. Additionally CRS is providing civic education to the PTA federations through a partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI). NDI developed a curriculum in Creole and trained facilitators to lead civic education in a series of 16 weekly sessions on wide variety of topics relating to members’ rights and responsibilities as democratic citizens (Carneal & Pozniak, 2004, pp. 31-34).

### *Radio-based distance education*

The USAID-funded Education 2004 Project was designed to deliver radio-based distance education in Creole and teacher training. Its project goals are to improve access to quality primary education in Creole through teacher training and Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI). IRI targets at-risk youth, adults, the elderly, and underserved populations (Dot-Com Alliance, 2004). Since the mid-1990s, USAID has supported distance education initiatives in Haiti designed to improve the quality of teacher training and support. Both "Education 2004" and an earlier distance education project provided training for local Haitian educators, primarily working with the Haitian Foundation for Private Education (FONHEP), in the art of pedagogical scriptwriting for interactive radio. IRI allows teachers and students to engage via radio in games, songs, dramas, and activities to assist teachers in the instruction of curriculum objectives. Targeted additional IRI subjects include democracy building, health education, and environmental education (Dot-Com Alliance, 2003).

### *Teacher development*

Janke (2000) reports that CRS programs also support teacher development activities as part of a broader "quality of education" package, which includes distribution of teacher/student attendance registers and training in their use and distribution of primary school curriculum in all non-public priority schools in collaboration with the MoE. By 1999, CRS was distributing the attendance registers to all nonpublic schools and also to public schools in its priority zone that did not have MoE registers. They reported in 1999 that 97% of all priority schools used the registers regularly.

## **Implications for Longer-Term Stability**

As a mainstay of relief efforts in initial phases of response to educational needs, school feeding programs in Haiti transition to a broader educational focus. While it is difficult to trace school feeding programs directly to longer-term stabilization objectives, the wide margin of improvement in enrollments between schools with feeding programs and those without lends credibility to program theory suggesting that food and education should ultimately lead to food security within the target population (Locher, 2004). It is a primary example of a phased model of education that attends first to the children's basic welfare through nutrition and anticipates rehabilitation beyond relief. It provides the stability of dependable food access upon which longer-term objectives may be based.

Community involvement in the management of the CRS feeding programs can be seen as partnership building with the Haitian people who ultimately will need to take ownership of their own education. Partnering is also an avenue of trust building. Training in HHN and food storage and management improves not only the quality of the educational experience but also extends beyond the school to domestic management. Programs that support infrastructure improvements provide another opportunity for partnerships between the NGOs and the local community they serve. As part of a broader educational focus, the

small project program identified in the findings can be argued to have transferred skills, ownership, and responsibility to the local communities involved. While many infrastructure projects that are typically undertaken to meet immediate emergency needs are decided upon by emergency aid providers and do not anticipate sustained usage and maintenance, these projects that derive from local proposals become part of a forward-looking community undertaking.

The formation of PTAs and federations of PTAs is an interesting example of the phased approach to education. It evidences the seeds of progress that could yield a functional civil society. From their introduction to the community through information sessions, through HHN and infrastructure project support, to efforts to be recognized formally by the state ministry, the CRS program example demonstrates a movement from grassroots aid to sustainable civic progress where citizens develop a legitimate voice to protect their own best interests. Additionally, the important civic education developed with the NDI and delivered through these federations can serve as a model for similar organizations and as proof to the international community of progress towards democratic self-governance. As Carneal and Pozniak point out, woven together in federations, the PTAs are more likely to maintain contact with each other long after CRS leaves (2004).

“Education 2004” radio-based distance education again demonstrates innovative and flexible programming that initially served an immediate need to reach its target audience with Creole-language basic educational programs and teacher training and now expects to expand into civic, health, and environmental education. By training Haitian educators in curriculum development for radio, future development promises to be distinctly Haitian. The longer-term implications for the teacher development aspect of the IRI are self-evident. The CRS efforts that provide teacher development through training in the use of enrollment registers and distribution of the registers is another example of linking relief to longer-term objectives. By working with the MoE to train teachers to report enrollment data, CRS and the schools they serve will provide important, measurable information to justify proposals for government and donor funding, which has been unavailable until now in Haiti.

With the exception of the CRS teacher development program, which develops from the NGO operations and is not directly beneficiary-led, all of the other initiatives reviewed are significant examples of the “Circle of Learning” approach to education, which reach beyond the primary schools with literacy and teacher training and instructional programs in self governance. The IRI target audience of out-of-school population provides structured learning that offers hope of filling the education void for Haitians who are beyond the age of primary school. As noted already, member-centered PTA developments have witnessed member self-agency in the formation of the federations, which empowerment can ultimately be expected to strengthen civil society. While the school feeding programs and the small project infrastructure improvement program are both more typical agency-driven models of educational programming, the CRS examples also suggest a flexibility that is child-centered and community-led because of the continual efforts for collaboration with the parents and other

adults in the communities. These examples seem to evidence ideally how phased approaches to educational initiatives can form a program continuum and at the same time directly respond to the particular needs of the beneficiary community.

## Conclusion

The lack of a shared vision by Haiti's government, its civil society, and international donors is a critical impediment to social progress and development in Haiti. As long as assistance continues to be channeled through NGOs to circumvent direct aid to the government, NGO programming takes on heightened significance to the population it serves not only for emergency relief but also and moreover as a vital link to sustainable longer-term stability and social progress. By relying on a framework of phased operations together with the "Circle of Learning" approach, NGOs operating in Haiti currently can not only make decisions regarding the future direction of current activities with a broader understanding of objectives, but they can also identify and support vital linkage to effective applications of assistance resources and training. As Rotberg (2002) reminds us, until Haiti can help itself, sustained interest and sustained assistance are the critical ingredients in the strengthening process of the state. Until a political resolution can deliver much needed resources to expedite welfare reforms in Haiti, even a slow but steady pace of humanitarian response can mean progress.

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# **Analysis of the National Tanzanian Policy on HIV/AIDS from a Sociocultural Perspective: Reading Policy as a "Cultural Text" in Light of the AIDS Crisis**

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## **Introduction**

HIV/AIDS is a major development crisis that affects all sectors. During the last two decades the HIV/AIDS epidemic has spread relentlessly affecting people in all walks of life and decimating the most productive segments of the population particularly women and men between the ages of 20 and 49 years [sic].

Every one of us has a role to play and must be fully involved in the struggle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic....We must break the silence on HIV/AIDS....We must seriously and openly discuss the social, cultural and economic environments that fuel the spread of HIV infection...We must also discuss ways to support those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS, as well as orphans in our communities. Together we must fight the scourge of stigma. (Mkapa, 2001, in the National Policy on HIV/AIDS, 2001)

These powerful words from the President of Tanzania in the National Policy on HIV/AIDS highlight the complex issues that surround the AIDS pandemic. To echo these sentiments, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell declared AIDS "a national security problem....It is a devastating problem especially in Africa" (Reuters News Media, February 4, 2001).

At first glance, President Mkapa's aforementioned statements seem to allude to a new way of looking at policy as a response to a crisis--from a holistic, *sociocultural* perspective--instead of the detached, top-down and routine laundry-list of policy recommendations that tend to permeate current approaches to developing national policy documents. However, as one takes a closer look at the HIV/AIDS policy, one sees the traditional and general way that the policy is laid out. As an example, the policy lists the *social, cultural and economic* phenomena that currently influence the spread of HIV/AIDS in Tanzania, but they are never expanded upon or explained. These fundamental issues that are essential to understanding the local life of a Tanzanian living in the Kilimanjaro region in the midst of this emergency situation are thrown out on the printed page with lists of policies, leaving the reader to decide for themselves what these sociocultural elements might mean.

What does it mean to reconceptualize educational policy through a sociocultural perspective, utilizing the Tanzanian HIV/AIDS policy as a point of reference? Why is it important to engage in policy analyses of complex emergency situations, such as the AIDS epidemic? According to scholars Levinson and Sutton (2001), in order to reexamine policy from its most basic level, policy should be seen as "a complex social practice, an ongoing process of normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse social and institutional contexts...[and] to explicate policy as a practice of power" (p. 1). Or, as social scientists Shore and Wright (1997) have posited, government agencies should move towards an *anthropology of policy*, a qualitative, multifaceted inquiry where all sectors of society are taken into account in developing laws and ordinances that treat all constituencies equitably and fairly. In this paradigm, "policy communities' are not just rhetorical, but contested political spaces" (Shore & Wright, 1997, p. 15) and policy documents are analyzed as "cultural texts" (Shore & Wright, 1997).

Stephen Ball (1994) complements the work of the above authors by describing the critical and post-structural notion of "policy-sociology" (Ozga, 1987, 1990; Ball, 1990, as cited in Ball, 1994). Policy-sociology "suggests that it is important to 'bring together a structural, macro level analysis of education systems and education policies and micro level investigation, especially that which takes account of people's perception and experiences'" (Ozga, 1990, p. 359, in Ball, 1994, p. 14). Additionally, Ball highlights the importance of a comparative approach to sociocultural policy analysis by stating that, "Sometimes when we focus analytically on one policy or one text we forget that other policies and texts are in circulation, and the enactment of one may inhibit or contradict or influence the possibility of the enactment of others" (Ball, 1994, p. 19). Using Ball's discourse on "policy as text" as a point of reference, "multisited ethnographies" that study the "interconnected cultures of policy" (Sutton & Levinson, 2001) are critical to understanding how policies are put into practice across geographic localities.

Throughout the course of this paper, I will examine sections of the national Tanzanian HIV/AIDS policy from a sociocultural and anthropological lens, incorporating personal ethnographic data gleaned from visits to local community-based organizations in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania during a Teachers College course taken in the summer of 2003, as well as works of Africanist scholars who currently conduct research in northern Tanzania. These examples will illustrate how this national policy--as a response to an ongoing social, cultural and economic crisis--has been translated by various levels of society, namely the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre, KIWAAKUKI (a local NGO whose acronym means "Kilimanjaro Women's Group Against AIDS" in Swahili), the Mkombozi ("liberation" in Swahili) Regional Training Centre, and the primary school setting in the town of Old Moshi.

Furthermore, I will discuss the ways in which the current HIV/AIDS policies are put into practice in local communities and organizations in Kilimanjaro, and how such actors might adapt these current policies to better address their local needs in light of the development crisis that threatens to

"decimate the most productive segments of the population" (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001, Ch. 1). I will end this paper with recommendations for how the national HIV/AIDS policy could be adapted or modified based on the way it is experienced at the local level in the Kilimanjaro region today.

Now we turn to how the National Policy on HIV/AIDS was developed in Tanzania.

### **Justification for the National Policy on HIV/AIDS**

At the outset of the AIDS epidemic in Tanzania in the early 1980s, it was initially treated as purely a health issue, and the health sector was brought on board to combat the disease through the national AIDS Control Programme (National Policy on HIV/AIDS, 2001, p. 3). Until the year 2000, the national response to HIV/AIDS centered on "developing programs to prevent, control, and mitigate the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, through health education, decentralization, multi-sectoral response and community participation" (p. 3). However, the Tanzanian government, despite their best efforts, did not see a decline in the rate of HIV transmission, and realized that it was not a disease that could be treated in isolation. All sectors of society have to be involved to tackle this nefarious illness. It has now been declared a national crisis and complex emergency (as of 2001), and is now one of the top priority items on the socioeconomic development agenda for the Tanzanian government. Moreover, HIV/AIDS has become the leading cause of death among adults in many parts of Tanzania (Setel, 1999, p. 1). How does the health sector, such as the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre, translate HIV/AIDS policy into practice in Kilimanjaro?

### **Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre and Local HIV/AIDS Policy**

Health care providers of all cadres shall be trained in order to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for prevention, early diagnosis and case management of STIs. (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001, p. 17)

A visit to the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) in June of 2003 helped to illustrate how HIV/AIDS is currently being researched, treated and taught about in the region by health care providers from a sociomedical perspective. According to the top hospital administrator of KCMC, there are 10 main sociocultural factors why HIV/AIDS policy has largely been unaddressed across the nation, and why the rapid rate of HIV continues unabated in sub-Saharan Africa and Tanzania in particular (personal communication, June 4, 2003):

- 1) *Food taboos*--people believe that certain foods can cause HIV (i.e., the Maasai do not believe in eating fish or eating little during pregnancy), so individuals may not have a balanced diet and therefore a weakened immune system
- 2) *Poor latrines*--leads to unsanitary conditions

- 3) *Poverty*--leads women to engage as sexual workers, men to travel far in place of work
- 4) *Polygamy*--multiple spouses resulting in multiple sex partners
- 5) *Ignorance and high illiteracy*--men and women do not know enough about HIV/AIDS
- 6) *Gender inequalities*--girls and women do not feel empowered to say 'no' to sex
- 7) *Witchcraft*--belief that witchdoctor can prevent HIV--so people neglect seeing a doctor
- 8) *Inheritance rights*--widows often do not have any rights and have multiple sex partners
- 9) *Low acceptance of family planning and high fertility*--can lead to HIV and mother-to-child transmission (MTCT)
- 10) *Local herbs*--similar to witchcraft--people neglect seeing the doctor because they believe these herbs can cure HIV/AIDS

In a subsequent meeting with the community health nurses at KCMC about HIV/AIDS, various local approaches were outlined with regard to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV prevention education that appear to have a direct correlation to the aforementioned pre-2001 national health sector policy. For example, the nurses spoke extensively about prevention of MTCT of HIV, which is highlighted in a few different sections in the policy document. The community health nurses described their concern of the local, sociocultural community tradition of employing midwives over going to the hospital during pregnancy. This tradition has led to higher rates of MTCT of HIV and even death during childbirth, and the nurses are slowly trying to change this widespread practice (personal communication, June 4, 2003). Furthermore, the nurses relayed some of the challenges to their work such as lack of transportation and local healthcare facilities in the villages, and cultural taboos (some of which are mentioned above) that have been reiterated as "inadequate human and financial resources" (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001, p. 3) in the National Policy on HIV/AIDS. The nurses declared that the best way to curb the rate of STIs and HIV was through *behavior changes* in individual and collective sociocultural practices, which is one of the guiding principles of the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (2001):

Transmission of infection is preventable through changes in individual behaviour, hence education and information on HIV/AIDS, behavioral change communication as well as prevention strategies are necessary for people and communities to have the necessary awareness and courage to bring about changes in behaviour at the community and individual levels. (p. 5)

It is interesting to note that there was little to no mention of condom distribution and usage in this individual behavior change in KCMC's approach to treating HIV/AIDS (though their approach otherwise is quite comprehensive), even though the national policy clearly states that "there is overwhelming evidence about the efficacy and effectiveness of condoms when used correctly and consistently in the prevention of HIV transmission (National Policy on HIV/AIDS, 2001, p. 17). This seems to be a case where the local faith

community has decided to not employ a national policy due to deeply ingrained religious beliefs, which has its own set of policy-related challenges. This ethical dilemma--the way local faith groups respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic--although fundamental to the way local life is practiced in the Kilimanjaro region, is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it is important to include that Vavrus (2003) sheds light on the condom/church dialectic in her research in Kilimanjaro by pointing out that many ministers believe that "condoms are the devil" and that "AIDS is a big problem and that it is God's punishment for immoral behavior" (p. 65).

Some of the most innovative attempts at fostering individual change in behavior have been through local Tanzanian community-based (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as KIWAAKUKI, an NGO created by women in the Kilimanjaro region that provides a range of AIDS-related services, including education, care for AIDS orphans, and hospice care for individuals that are living with AIDS.

### **KIWAAKUKI and Local HIV/AIDS Policy**

Being a social, cultural and economic problem, prevention and control of [sic] HIV/AIDS epidemic will very much depend on effective community based prevention, care and support interventions. The local government councils will be the focal points for involving and coordinating public and private sectors, NGOs and faith groups in planning and implementing of HIV/AIDS interventions, particularly community-based interventions. (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001, p. 9)

Since its inception more than a decade ago, KIWAAKUKI is one of the leading grassroots HIV/AIDS organizations in Moshi and arguably the entire Kilimanjaro region. Setel (1999) states that "KIWAAKUKI has been unique in Tanzania as a democratic form where women of diverse economic, educational, and social backgrounds have joined together to set an agenda for local AIDS activism" (p. 86). Their numerous community-based outreach services such as AIDS education, voluntary pre-and-post HIV testing and counseling, free condom distribution, life skills training, support to local villages through the formation of KIWAAKUKI chapters, etc. have assisted thousands of men, women, youth and children who have been "infected and affected by the epidemic including widows and orphans" (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001, p. 9).

To illustrate, "Mama Orphan," the coordinator for AIDS orphans, explained to us that out of approximately 50,000 AIDS orphans in the region, KIWAAKUKI has serviced about 2,130 to date (personal communication, June 6, 2003). Through local, national and international fundraising efforts, income-generating activities, and partnering with organizations in other countries, this NGO has been able to pay school fees and provide uniforms for these orphans who attend primary and secondary schools, many of whom would be out of school otherwise. The issue of AIDS orphans as an emerging emergency situation has extensive and far-reaching policy implications, but it is only treated

peripherally in a few sections in the policy document. In fact, to date, there is no comprehensive policy on the AIDS orphans crisis.

In response to a discussion of national HIV/AIDS policies and how they are implemented at the local level, one of the KIWAAKUKI directors stated that "policy is a high sounding nothing" (personal communication, June 6, 2003). In conversations with many CBOs and NGOs, the common sentiment was reiterated time and again that the national government was not doing enough in the area of HIV/AIDS and that the local community would have to find their own creative and innovative solutions in combating the deadly disease. Another local CBO that was formed by a powerful and inspiring individual to work with youth in several areas of their lives, including HIV/AIDS prevention, is the Mkombozi Vocational Training Centre.

### **Mkombozi Vocational Training Centre and Local HIV/AIDS Policy**

The ministries responsible for youth development affairs, in collaboration with Local Government Councils, NGOs and Faith Groups shall develop participatory HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health education programmes for the out of school youth. The youth should be given correct information including prevention strategies and promotion of correct and consistent use of condoms, abstinence and fidelity, and voluntary counseling and testing...Having been empowered with information, the youth should be encouraged and supported in developing their own strategies. (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001, p. 16)

The motto of the Mkombozi Vocational Training Centre (MVTC) is "Quality Education for Self-Reliance" (personal communication, June 6, 2003). Mrs. Mshana, the founder and director of the Center, saw a great need to provide a local vocational center for out-of-school youth because, in her opinion, young people have been largely ignored and even forgotten by local and national Tanzanian government policies. She believes that this education for self-reliance through small income-generating activities and job skills will help to liberate youth from a life of poverty and idleness. As affirmed in the MVTC brochure, "members work together to cultivate skills toward liberation from all kinds of oppression, social, economic or political towards the creation of positive social change" (Vavrus, 2003, p. 140). The MVTC also has a HIV/AIDS education unit. The youth facilitator explained the three main components of the AIDS education program (personal communication, June 6, 2003):

- 1) Poverty largely contributes to the spread of HIV because young people cannot work--Mkombozi gets the youth off of the streets and into a place where they can learn job skills, which will most likely reduce the spread of HIV through casual sex;
- 2) Young people still do not know much about how HIV is spread; the AIDS education program discusses HIV transmission in great detail;
- 3) The youth in turn educate the community and their peers through approaches such as drama, music, and videos.

In accordance with the national HIV/AIDS policies, the youth at MVTC are seemingly empowered to develop their own strategies in combating the AIDS epidemic. They work with local youth groups, such as the Kilimanjaro Arts Group, to travel and disseminate information about HIV/AIDS prevention.

Another area of analysis for local HIV/AIDS policy is in the primary school setting.

### **Primary Schools and Local HIV/AIDS Policy**

The education sector is among the sectors that have been seriously affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Ministries responsible for education...in collaboration with TACAIDS and NGOs shall develop appropriate intervention strategies to accelerate AIDS information in schools. These include provision of non examinable HIV/AIDS information in primary and secondary schools...Reproductive and sexual health should be incorporated in the school curricula. (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001, p. 15)

From our visits with various primary schools in the Kilimanjaro region, it became apparent that the local villages are hesitant to incorporate HIV/AIDS curricula into the lower primary grades. At almost every school we visited, the common answer to when HIV/AIDS is introduced is at 12 years of age (personal communication, June 3, 2003). Could this be because of strong evangelical religious beliefs, the stigma surrounding AIDS, or a combination of both? This dilemma of when to introduce HIV/AIDS into the curricula at the primary level appeared to be common issue for the primary school administrators in the Old Moshi district of the Kilimanjaro region. Additionally, Vavrus (2003) points out various cultural, economic and linguistic challenges that arise when young people are introduced to sex or family life education in primary school, such as the lack of textbooks and curriculum only taught in English, when the overwhelming majority of students speak, read and write in Swahili.

Furthermore, the increasing numbers of AIDS orphans that attend these primary schools was another area of local HIV/AIDS policy that the local communities were struggling to implement, most likely because there are limited services for the orphans and families that care for them. For example, in the primary school of Kisaseni on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, there are approximately 59 AIDS orphans in a school of 430 (personal communication, June 3, 2003). When asked how these orphans are cared for, the response from the village chairman was that the orphans are taken care of by the local clans of the families or by the churches. An AIDS committee was started at Kisaseni to help provide services such as food and materials for these children, but it had only begun to function as of June 2003.

Since there is no formal national policy on how to care for AIDS orphans over the long-term, the local community has to find innovative, sociocultural solutions to care for the increasing numbers of children and young people who are living without one or both of their parents. One of the obvious challenges for

these primary schools and the local villages that house them is how to fund the services of these orphans. With the drop in the price of coffee in Tanzania, the majority of the families that live in the villages of Old Moshi can barely afford to send their children to school, even though school fees have been almost entirely abolished at the primary level (personal communication, June 3, 2003). The problem is compounded when another child, such as an AIDS orphan, moves in with relatives in their clan, most often with their grandmother or an uncle and his family. The family cannot adequately afford to care for an extra child, so these children often are left at home, or take to the streets in search of work, food and shelter. The issue of the number of street children is increasing in the Kilimanjaro region, but the majority of them appear to be out-of-school males from impoverished families with relatively few AIDS orphans in that particular demographic mix (personal communication, June 5, 2003). Dr. Joseph Lugalla, a Tanzanian sociologist who has done extensive research on street children in this Eastern African nation, has remarked that the street children phenomenon has increased at an alarming rate--during the last decade in Tanzania due to an ongoing social and economic crisis (Lugalla, 1999, p. 1).

At the international level, the World Bank (Deininger, Garcia & Subbarao, 2003) gives further credence to the urgent and pressing necessity to pursue research about AIDS orphans and other vulnerable young people. These authors state that the dramatic increase in the number of AIDS orphans in sub-Saharan Africa is a critical issue for policymakers for two main reasons:

- 1) Many countries in Africa have not yet reached the peak of the AIDS epidemic. As a result, the number of AIDS orphans will increase significantly for a long time even after rates of new AIDS infections have been brought under control in some countries.
- 2) According to USAID, by 2010, there will be 35 million AIDS orphans in Africa. Failure to provide adequate education and health care for this large segment of the population is likely to have long-term impacts on social and economic infrastructures as well as on productive capacity (human capital) for the foreseeable future. (p. 1202)

These authors point out areas for further research in the arena of AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children. They declare that the AIDS orphan phenomenon will have long-term policy implications and pose formidable challenges for these government actors. According to the World Bank, the dramatic rise of African AIDS orphans that are being fostered by extended-family households "may adversely affect broader social systems and human development in African countries" (p. 1217).

After the brief above examination of how national HIV/AIDS policy has been experienced at the local level in Kilimanjaro on a daily basis, I would like to now offer some recommendations for how this policy could be adapted and modified to better reflect the way of life in this northern Tanzanian region on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, using the aforementioned organizations as a point of reference.



## **Recommendations for Adapting and Modifying the National Policy on HIV/AIDS in Kilimanjaro from a Sociocultural Perspective**

At the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre, I would recommend that the community health division be further trained by local CBOs and NGOs to be more open about condom usage and distribution, as well as to discussions about the on-going stigma surrounding AIDS, the issue of homosexuality, etc. KCMC, as essential and valuable as it is to the Kilimanjaro region, is still seemingly operating under pre-2001 national health policy by not being more holistic in its approach to HIV/AIDS education. The national policy does not go into detail about how the health sector could be more well-rounded, so KCMC might still be reliant on a more traditional and conservative religious approach based on abstinence and monogamy. The issue of faith groups and HIV/AIDS was only mentioned once or twice in the national policy document, so it is not surprising that many faith groups are doing what they have always done--based on the church doctrine.

From a personal perspective, KIWAAKUKI is doing some of the best HIV/AIDS prevention education and care for people living with AIDS in the region. However, they could still do more, if they had more funding and staff. For example, they seem to be at the forefront of assisting AIDS orphans, but reaching 2,130 out of 50,000 is only a proverbial drop in the bucket. Since the national HIV/AIDS policy does not adequately address the issue of orphans--it is not given its own section, but is instead lumped together with AIDS widows--KIWAAKUKI could request to meet with their regional government to re-write this particular policy so that more money goes towards the services and care of AIDS orphans.

The Mkombozi Vocational Training Centre does valuable work with young people with very few financial resources. I would recommend that they meet with the Regional Health Officer for Kilimanjaro to discuss how CBOs and NGOs could become a bigger part of the national HIV/AIDS policy mandate since they are essential to the success of community-based efforts for out-of-school youth. I would also take a Freirian approach, and recommend that MVTC work with the youth to empower them to write their own curriculum, thereby creating more services for the youth of the local community.

The primary school setting is challenging, because it is a multifaceted organization and directly under the auspices and control of the local government. The primary schools are in dire need of financial assistance, which is most likely an on-going policy issue. However, the issue of primary schools and AIDS orphans appears nowhere in the national HIV/AIDS document, so a lot of work could be done in this area. For example, the primary school headmasters could meet with the Regional Education Officer for Kilimanjaro to discuss the issue of AIDS orphans and support for these children. Also, the primary schools should be encouraged to begin teaching HIV/AIDS education when children are around nine years of age, which is when these young pupils are becoming fully aware of their bodies.

Finally, on a general level, I would recommend that all of these organizations request a bi-annual regional meeting or conference with their representatives from the Ministries of Education and Health to discuss all of these issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. Together, everyone could draft new and updated local HIV/AIDS sociocultural policies that better meet the needs of all constituencies in Kilimanjaro. These policies could include real-life examples of policy in practice, and they would have different sections for the health sector, AIDS orphans, faith groups, out-of-school youth, CBOs and NGOs, etc., instead of lumping them all together, as they currently exist in the 2001 edition of the National Policy on HIV/AIDS.

## Conclusion

Democratization of policy processes calls for a retreat from purely technocratic, top-down approaches. In some cases, the best thing a researcher may contribute to democratizing policymaking is to advocate consultative alternatives to research. Such alternatives may in the end be more cumbersome or time consuming, but they can always be more effective in yielding beneficial and broadly endorsed outcomes. (Levinson & Sutton, 2001, p. 16)

As a policy researcher, I realize that the Tanzanian government is not yet at a point where the local community is able to move towards an anthropology of policy, where it can assist in re-writing national policy, although it surely can influence what is included in current policy. As an educational researcher interested in pursuing a dissertation on HIV/AIDS policies surrounding AIDS orphans, I might be able to assist local Tanzanians in finding the sociocultural language to modify these current HIV/AIDS policies through longitudinal, multi-site ethnographies (Shore & Wright, 1997, p. 14). Since Tanzania and many other developing nations are still under the strong influence of multinational lenders and donors such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, it is going to take some time to infuse a truly sociocultural or democratic approach to policymaking, as Levinson and Sutton have described. Reading policy as a sociocultural text may be a good place to begin, especially in light of the on-going AIDS crisis in Tanzania and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa that has already claimed millions of victims.

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## **Education and Schools**



# Education and its Contribution to Structural Violence in Rwanda

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Prior to 1994, education in Rwanda contributed to the social exclusion of the majority of Rwandans by benefiting the ruling elite and by propagating ethnic divisions. Education was not a means of advancement, a symbol of peace, or a repository of truth for most Rwandans. Instead, it was a political mechanism for propping up the status quo, which was characterized by injustice and inequality. It supported the elite by perpetuating the ethnic divide that repressed a section of society. In fact, the political agenda of education matched the political agenda of the elites in Rwanda by supporting the structural violence--characterized by exclusion, deprivation, and repression--of the state. These conditions of structural violence and social exclusion eventually led to genocide in 1994 in which 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred. While structural violence can be defined in various ways, it is generally characterized as a situation in which unequal, repressive, and racist forces are present in the structures of society (Uvin, 1998). It is not direct, physical violence but one that denies people basic as well as higher human needs. Education contributed to structural violence not through any direct form of violence, but through forces of exclusion and division for the majority of poverty-stricken Rwandans.

Although education alone did not create the conflict, the international community must be more aware that education is not a neutral force that is inherently good. Unless the structures and funding behind education are equal and inclusive, education will continue to contribute to structural violence in Rwanda. Structural violence will lead to a more exclusionary society, which could lead to more violence. There is hope that the face of education is changing; however, it is still unclear in which direction Rwanda will decide to proceed. Though there is progress at present, the system is still structurally unequal.

## Theoretical Framework

Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli (2000) comment in "The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict" that "formal education is often viewed as a neutral or technical process of information dissemination" (p. ix), implicitly without a political agenda. However, Bush and Saltarelli recognize that education can have either a socially destructive *or* constructive impact because it is not a neutral force. Education is inherently political and, as Anna Obura (2003) notes in her report on Rwanda, the "educational system has become a prime target in many civil wars since schools are seen as representing political systems and regimes, and as symbols of peace" (p. 29).

Even though education is not a neutral force, it certainly did not single-handedly cause the genocide. So what were the factors that caused the genocide? Explanations vary, but this paper will use Peter Uvin's (1998) argument in *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*, in which he states that "[t]o understand the genocide, then, three elements are necessary: the anomie and frustration caused by the long-standing condition of structural violence; the strategies of manipulation by elites...and the existence of a sociopsychological, widespread attachment to racist values in society" (p. 228). According to Uvin, foreign aid and the development process contributed to the structural violence that laid the groundwork for the genocide. Thus, in the future, the international community must be aware of the politics behind what it is funding, and not allow funds to go to education projects that uphold the conditions of structural violence.

## Background

Rwanda was considered a well-developing country in economic terms before 1994 (Uvin, 1998). Rwanda received substantial amounts of development aid and "successfully" implemented the structural adjustment program introduced by the World Bank and IMF. Even though GDP rose gradually, poverty in Rwanda greatly increased from 40% in 1985 to 52% of the population in 1992 (Uvin, 1998). Therefore, despite praise from the World Bank and IMF on Rwanda's economic progress, most average Rwandans remained poor or became poorer.

In any explanation of the history of the Rwandan genocide, one must begin with the ethnic divide. It is important, however, to be aware that specialists disagree on the distinctions to be made between the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa (Uvin, 1998). These three groups are linguistically and culturally homogenous and have lived side by side for hundreds of years; therefore, they cannot be characterized as separate tribes. Yet the three groups are not completely similar and certainly not treated equally. The Twa, who compose about 1% or less than the population, are pygmies who live as hunter-gatherers. The Hutu, who make up 85% of the population, are peasant farmers, whose features and body shape resemble neighboring Ugandans. The Tutsi are cattle herders of most likely Southern Ethiopian origin who settled in the region in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The nineteenth-century race-conscious Europeans were impressed with the tall, thin physical features of the Tutsis and ascribed qualities such as intelligence, leadership, and self-control to them (Prunier, 1995). This benefited the Tutsi by giving them a sense of superiority and control over the positions of power under the colonial regime.

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the northwest was controlled by the Hutu, and the few Tutsis that lived there were politically powerless. For a long time, this area resisted invasions by the Tutsi-controlled central Rwanda, but the Hutu-controlled areas were eventually incorporated with the help of the German military. The area is important because the violence against the Tutsi in 1959-1963 and 1990-1993 in this region was particularly widespread. The colonizers gave the Tutsi all the power and codified ethnicity in 1931 by



introducing obligatory identification papers stating one's ethnicity (Uvin, 1998). At the top of the social hierarchy were the whites, and then the Tutsi, Hutu, and finally, the Twa.

In 1962, independence was achieved from the Belgians; however, the years before independence were marked by violent Tutsi massacres as they lost their power to the Hutus. This occurred in part because the departing colonial authorities had reversed their position and started empowering the Hutus. They left a country in upheaval with an inverted power structure of a small group of Catholic-educated Hutu elite. Two thousand Tutsis were killed in 1962 and 10,000 more were massacred in 1963; between 1963-1964, about 15,000-20,000 Tutsis were killed (Prunier, 1995). The 1994 genocide should therefore not be viewed as an isolated incident.

One oft repeated and striking observation about Rwanda is its high population density. Prunier (1995) even goes so far as to say that "the genocidal violence of the spring of 1994 can be partly attributed to the population density" (p. 4). Rwanda's climate is particularly well-suited for human habitation--with an average temperature of 68°F and an average rainfall of between 39 and 49 inches. Its average population density rose from 106 per square kilometer in 1960, to 280 by 1992 (World Bank, 2003); this is one of the highest population densities in Africa. However, with this density and ever-increasing population, the size of family farms decreased from 3 hectares per family in 1949 to 0.7 hectares by the early 1990s. Smaller farms plots make it increasingly difficult to feed one's family, and in fact, GDP per capita decreased from \$355 in 1983 to \$260 in 1990 (Uvin, 1998). As a result, poverty was more widespread than it had been in the past.

All of these factors explain contributions to the genocidal violence, but the catalyst occurred in April 1994, when the plane carrying President Habyarimana from a peace negotiation in Arusha was shot down. The violence started the same night in Kigali. Within a few hours of the plane crash, thousands of people were killed, including the Prime Minister as well as the ten Belgian soldiers guarding her. The following 100 days were marked by the brutal killing of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus (Power, 2001). It is important that genocide not be seen as incomprehensible and then forgotten. Instead, the structures present in society, and in the international community that contributed to the violence, must be understood and changed so that the events of 1994 are not repeated.

## **Analysis**

Education was considered something of a success story in Rwanda. For the last two decades, gross enrollment rate (GER) levels have been relatively high for East Africa:

1973 GER: 46%  
1990 GER: 65%

Rwanda also successfully achieved gender parity in access to schools in 1990 (Obura, 2003, p. 40).

However, as with the rest of the development enterprise in Rwanda, the data did not reveal the underlying inequality present in schools. Education was very tied to the colonial powers--the first school was established in 1900 by the Catholic White Fathers. At independence in 1962, almost all schools were owned by the church, and even today, 70% of primary schools are owned by churches (Obura, 2003). The colonialist government and the church schools gave preference to the Tutsis since they were considered to be the natural born leaders. Astrida (now Butare) College was the most prestigious educational institution in the country:

*Astrida College Enrollment by Socio-Identity Group*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tutsi Pupils</b>	<b>Hutu Pupils</b>
1932	45	9
1945	46	3
1954	63	19
1959	279	143

*Source: Prunier, 1995, p. 33.*

One government-funded school had a minimum height requirement for admission, which, of course, disadvantaged the Hutu, who tended to be shorter (Bush, 2000). By the 1970s, ethnic and regional quotas determined entry into all government-assisted schools as well as to tertiary institutions. The results of primary examinations were not published; therefore, entrance to secondary school was based on criteria not available for scrutiny (Obura, 2003). By classifying ethnic groups and by giving preference to a certain group, education became a method to ensure the development of the future elite. After the colonial period, when the Hutu were in power, they controlled the education system; however, Tutsis were still over-represented in higher education.

During the colonial period, the Tutsi gained a monopoly of power over the Hutu who were educated only to be able to carry out menial jobs. Stereotyping in textbooks also occurred:

Textbooks during the German and Belgian colonial periods emphasized the physical differences between the Hutu and Tutsis, linking physical appearance and intellectual capacity according to prevailing racist doctrines. Such books praised the intellectual capacities of the Tutsi and classified the Hutu as unintelligent, meek and suitable for manual work. (Bush, 2000, p. 10)

Conversely, there have also been numerous accusations that children were indoctrinated with hate messages against the Tutsis, who believed themselves to be superior and who had been in power long before the Hutus gained power. According to Bird, "A senior Ministry of Education official in Rwanda stated that in a mathematics lesson it would be common for a teacher to say, 'You have five Tutsis, you kill three, how many are left?'" (Bird, 2003, p. 36).

In April 1994, with the onset of the genocide, schools were destroyed--of 1,836 schools, 65% were damaged (Obura, 2003). Teachers symbolized the elite, so they were a particular target during the genocide. Many Rwandans fled their homes and ended up in refugee camps in Tanzania and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In the DRC, the Ministry of Education issued instructions to stop all educational activities with the belief that education was delaying repatriation of the refugees. Even UNHCR discouraged educational activities in the camps and did not fund such activities for at least the first six months of the refugees' arrival (Bird, 2003).

### **Education, Post-1994 Genocide**

Meanwhile in Rwanda, the RPF (Tutsi-led army) assumed power once again. The Ministry of Education re-opened in September 1994, just two months after the end of the genocide. The Ministry initiated efforts to draw children back to school through public speeches and radio, the latter of which had previously been used to incite people to violence. There is hope that education in Rwanda is becoming more inclusive. The biggest achievement of the new Ministry is that it has prohibited any regional or ethnic identification of students or teachers. Advancement will now be based solely on merit and it is illegal to discriminate (Obura, 2003).

There seems to be some divergence of opinion on the extent to which peace education was implemented in the Rwandan curriculum during the 1990s. According to Pilar Aguilar and Mark Richmond (1998), "special emphasis on the development of an education for peace and reconciliation curriculum has become a part of the core Rwandan curriculum and has been incorporated into the formal primary school" (p. 127), whereas Obura (2003) states that it was not part of the curriculum. UNICEF had dispatched instructions to the Kigali office to support the development of such a program, yet it never took off. A similar contradiction surrounds the history curriculum, which has been drafted but there is no evidence that it is being taught. Obura's informal observations indicate that history is not being taught. For obvious reasons, this subject is very contentious, and Rwandan history is still being debated but not taught eight years after the genocide (Obura, 2003). There have been no history textbooks written or published since 1994. A history syllabus was produced in 1997 but it has yet to be developed into lessons (Obura, 2003).

There is also evidence that the curriculum and teaching styles have not changed drastically. According to Sinclair (2001), emergencies create ideal times to implement changes into the system. Obura disagrees, arguing that:

Schools know formal schooling, they are familiar with their old curriculum and, whatever forward-thinking internationals think of the perhaps classical and maybe dull pre-war schools and curricula, teachers prefer to go into class and start teaching what they know best, especially after the unsettling experience of war. They do not want to be distracted or stressed with innovation. (Obura, 2003, p. 82)

There is an unequal distribution of funds to various levels of education. In 2000, higher education received over one-third of the education budget allocation (Obura, 2003, p. 115). According to a 2001 World Bank Report, primary education receives only about 45% of public spending on education whereas higher education receives nearly 40% of funds:

The strong focus on higher education, which currently serves only 2 percent of the population in the relevant age group, has predictably inequitable results. First, Rwanda's unit costs in higher education are among the highest in the world today and are about 75 times the unit costs in primary education. Second, the best-educated 10 percent in a cohort claims more than 70 percent of the cumulative public spending on education received by that cohort. It is thus no surprise that Rwanda's system is one of the least structurally equitable in Sub-Saharan Africa. (World Bank, 2003)

## **Analysis**

It was convenient for the colonial governments to employ a divide and rule tactic, and this divisiveness has extended into the present period. There are positive signs that the Rwandan government has implemented some changes, the most important being the end of classifications based on ethnicity. However, it seems that Obura's study displays a false optimism about the current state of education in Rwanda. There is no question that education can be a positive force in the lives of children if it is seen as just and equitable. Yet higher education is still privileged over primary school education. Universities serve only about 2% of the population, and they are the most well-financed educational institutions (Obura, 2003). Obura claims that this is a demonstration of Rwanda's desire to rebuild and its commitment to education, but it is a great cause for concern that the institutions of the elite are being supported before education for the masses.

It is also a concern that eight years after the genocide, peace education and history have yet to be incorporated into the curriculum. These are two of the starting points for better understanding and possible cooperation, but they have not played a part in reconciliation. According to Obura, any mention of peace education towards reconciliation is rejected on the basis that reconciliation is not possible. The history curriculum is also contentious because of the dangers of privileging the arrival of one ethnic group over another, thereby giving them some sort of superior status. However, by not teaching history at all, there is no means of dealing with the skeletons of the past. Also, there is new evidence that all three groups lived in the area since prehistoric times, but Obura argues that it is not relevant which group arrived first (Obura, 2003). However, this attitude could be used to cover up the actual facts of Rwandan history. On the one hand, Obura's argument that there is no need to teach these facts at the primary school level is potentially correct, but covering them up or distorting them is very dangerous because children will find out the information sooner or later from their parents or friends, and they won't be able to reference an official version for more information. The differences in ethnic

groups and who arrived where first will not matter when structural systems are set up in an equitable manner and everyone has a fair chance at a life free from poverty and despair.

## **Conclusion**

Education in pre-1994 Rwanda was marred by structural inequalities that reinforced the power of the ruling elites and contributed to the ethnic divide, and there is concern that inequalities are extending into the present. However, there is room for hope. The abolition of ethnic quotas is certainly positive. Also, spending on education has increased from 3.2% of GDP on average throughout the 1980s and 1990s to 5.5% of GDP in 2001 (World Bank, 2003). On the negative side, spending on primary school education has decreased from 62.7% in 1982 to 45.2% in 2001; whereas, tertiary school spending has increased from 3% in 1982 to 40% in 2001 (World Bank, 2003). This funding structure supports the elite to the detriment of the masses. In addition, a revised history curriculum and peace education programs are not a part of the curriculum, which is a concern for a country that has suffered so much violence.

Education can be a positive force. It must be supported by schools that are inclusive and based upon merit and based upon funding mechanisms that support all people rather than just the elite. This is the only way to ensure that education does not contribute to the kind of structural violence that led to genocide. The international community needs to recognize the politics behind education and ensure that aid given is not top down, but responsive to the needs of the people. Education is different from most forms of development aid because, if used wisely, it can fulfill people beyond their material needs. If people are allowed to be agents of their own development in a system that provides equally for everyone, education can be a powerful force for hope and empowerment.

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# Rewriting History: The Impact of Post-Conflict Education on Nationalist Ideology in Serbia

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## Introduction

How does post-conflict education address nationalist ideology in Serbia? After a decade of violence during which emergency situations disrupted education in Serbia, the nation-state must now rebuild its administrative, economic, legal, political and social systems. Education must be an integral part of the rebuilding process, particularly to give the children who are left traumatized by the ethnic conflicts of the last decade a voice in society. However, a tension exists in the relationship between post-conflict education in Serbia to the nation-state, on the one hand, and to civil society, on the other. The complexities of this relationship are brought into sharp relief during Serbia's reconstruction. Why?

Education remains subject to the influence of conservative politicians and administrative officials in Serbia. In the Milosevic era, education was used by those in power as an instrument of nationalism in a specific context: the Serbian nation-state. In the Balkans, a region overloaded with conflicting projects of state and nation-building, each national elite aims to establish a state for its own constituency. The priority is less on the state's democratic and economic functions and more on its independence and homogeneity. National elites have a particular understanding of state sovereignty as an inalienable right to the detriment of the obligations of the sovereign state towards its citizens (Meurs, 2005, forthcoming).

In Serbia, an enduring reliance on traditional methods of instruction and learning in school has, to date, only given children limited opportunities to express their emotions as a result of wartime experiences. Here education is not that which, in Dewey's (1916) philosophy, frees the person to be creative or, at least, liberates the person from fear (p. 95). There are participatory skills that can be experienced in the classroom if children are offered the chance to learn actively. These skills often expose children at an early age to the types of social interactions that foster independent thinking and a willingness to engage in critical inquiry and debate.

These are qualities that can allow children to experience the civic education that is essential to sustain popular engagement in a democracy. This is one reason why the tension in education between nationalist objectives, as defined by those in power in Serbia, and the psychological and social needs of its children in post-conflict reconstruction drives this research inquiry. The research

findings here support that it is in primary school instruction that the seeds of violence are sown. Much change over time in the popular consciousness depends on the extent to which educational reforms in key areas are implemented. These reforms are in active learning in two areas: for teachers and students in the classroom, and in the writing of history textbooks for the national curriculum.

As a scholar-practitioner, the opening question presented here concerns me in the comparative-historical inquiry research tradition. My knowledge of German history, language, and society leads me to ask this question in order to engage in "mindful inquiry," defined as "a synthesis of four intellectual traditions: phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical social science and Buddhism" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 6). Two of these traditions are integral to this inquiry: hermeneutics, which is "the analysis of texts in their contexts," and critical social science, defined as "the analysis of domination and oppression with a view to changing it" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 6). Why are these two intellectual traditions relevant? In order to understand the impact of history textbooks on the popular consciousness, hermeneutics gives us the opportunity to analyze texts in their contexts. In this tradition, it is essential to understand that Serbian texts reveal conflict among social groups as the norm. This is crucial in light of the role these textbooks can play to perpetuate exclusionary nationalist sentiment within a population. Critical social science makes us aware of domination and oppression. This awareness is a necessary precondition if *status quo* conditions in Serbia are to change.

Analyzing the relationship between education and political culture in modern Germany consistently helps develop a critical awareness of myths, oppressive practices, and values, as well as the extent of suffering perpetuated by existing institutional arrangements. The ways in which education perpetuated what historian Fritz Stern defines as "German illiberalism," reveal much about the oppression the country's elites and other classes bore (Stern, 1992, pp. xxvi-xxvii). This oppression, rooted in "the uneasy adulation of authority," also "embodied the new faith in nationalism" that characterized the era before World War I (p. xxviii). In the German case, this faith was blind.

As most German people looked to the state, there was an increasing reliance on bureaucratic rule and repression. In the absence of confidence in elites by the German population, those in power were prepared to rely on force. The admiration for military prowess and its use to sustain an authoritarian culture led to a lack of tolerance, unwillingness to compromise, and a loss of trust. In this atmosphere, myths were accepted as reality (Stern, 1992, p. xxx). The relationship of education to the national state marked education's relationship with, and influence on, German society. As the general populace increasingly saw life in categories of black and white, perceptions of allies and enemies emerged. Education contributed to human suffering in an oppressive political and socio-psychological environment as groups were marginalized and excluded in civil society.

For these reasons, the relationship between education and political culture in pre-war Germany is fundamental to this comparative-historical



research inquiry into how post-conflict education addresses nationalist ideology in Serbia. The present situation, marked by ethnic violence in Mitrovica[1], is one in which Kosovo/a[2] strives to define its relationship with Serbia (Wood, 2004, pp. 1, 8). Nationalist ideology is still prevalent. Here it is imperative to reflect on the gravity of the ethical concerns raised by human action at all levels, not just the elite one, as Serbia chooses its path to reconstruction.

In the German case, Stern defines illiberalism as “a state of mind,” or more specifically “...a commitment in mind and policy against any further concession to democracy, even at the price of one’s political independence. Any concession in any realm might undermine the authority, prestige, and status of the entire system” (1992, p. xxvi). A state of mind is influenced for better or for worse by education in multiple contexts: in the home; in school; and in vocational life. Stern’s research and life experiences teach about the “pervasiveness” of German illiberalism. The fact that schools and universities may have taught this state of mind, which was able to evolve into part of “a cultural style” in German society (p. xxvii), demonstrates the scope and the seriousness of the problem when analyzed in comparative, historical perspective. The potential impact of this inquiry into post-conflict education in Serbia is likely to be far-reaching given the impact of nationalism there, in Europe, and around the world.

In the 1990s, analysts, practitioners and researchers grappling with the Balkan tragedies put forth various explanations underlying regional conflict. Three explanations were widely argued: primordial or ancient hatreds among the peoples there; the tensions resulting from the economic triggers, or the “greed” dimension in the region; and the political entrepreneurship of leaders, primarily Milosevic and Tudjman, espousing nationalist ideology to achieve and consolidate power (Crocker, 1999, pp. 616-17). In Serbia, it is critical to assess these competing explanations in a specific context: the overall historical experience of its people. We must be aware that there is no understanding of the present without the recognition that the past weighs heavily, tilting the balance of the scale away from justice to oppression.

The explanations of conflict previously cited are significant in order to understand the plight of the Serbian people and, more fundamentally, the oppression that occurred both within the Serbian leadership and among members of the populace. Each of these explanations illustrates that there were groups within the Serbian society that were exploited either for ethnic, material or political reasons with the result that at different times in history one class or group was dominated by another. It is the third explanation, however, that is most relevant to the argument made in this paper. This is because political leaders in the Balkans were able to influence decisively the impact of education on society. In this context, the ways in which education contributed to oppression by perpetuating the systemic belief that certain groups should be marginalized for ethnic, material or political reasons is important to understand if we are to learn from history in the Serbian and comparative German cases. The ways post-conflict education address nationalist ideology in Serbia can draw on this learning experience, particularly the significance of myths in the popular consciousness, which is crucial to this analysis.

In the Serbian case, it may be appropriate to distinguish the influence of “popular” nationalism from that of aristocratic or bureaucratic types, characteristic of other Eastern European countries (Sugar, 1969, p. 52). Serbian history, as disputed as it is among the inhabitants of the region, demonstrates the extent to which leaders, intellectuals or other elites may play on ethnic grievances to gain influence or power. In order to succeed, their message has to find a friendly reception among the general population. There are biases and understandings among the Serbian populace that education may either analyze in the tradition of critical theory or perpetuate without argument or inquiry. These are prejudices that predate and transcend the nationalist rhetoric of any leader, including Milosevic (Sardamov, 1996, p. 31). The media continues to demonize Milosevic. Serbian history and its impact at present, understood in comparison to that of the German case, allow us to probe deeper in the critical social science tradition, into the underlying causes of conflict and the continuing sources of oppression.

## **Methodology**

Data collection for this inquiry involved Internet use to identify documentation that explains projects in Serbian history textbook writing supported by international organizations. Other documents that inform this research discuss the context of national projects for educational reform in Serbia. The study relies also on email exchanges and phone interviews in English with professors of education and psychology in Belgrade, who are knowledgeable about the Serbian school system and its present reforms. This data helps to ascertain why specific projects are identified over time, especially at present. This knowledge is important in light of recurrent violence. Given the researcher’s objective, “mindful inquiry,” a triangulated research design is effective (Bentz & Shapiro, pp. 88-90). Information sources about history textbook writing and national curriculum reform projects were identified in conjunction with professionals in Belgrade, in international organizations, and in countries outside the Balkans region.

Education in post-conflict emergency situations at times requires the reconstruction of entire educational systems. This scenario clearly has wide-ranging economic, legal, political, psychological, and social consequences for the daily lives of the peoples there. In the German case, there was inherent in reconstruction, a thorough emphasis on popular education to learn from the experience of National Socialism.

In the unified Federal Republic of Germany today, it is in those areas where unemployment is highest and where the youth feel a loss of hope in the future that extremist political groups with nationalist tendencies register the most voter support (personal communication, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin, 2001-03). This is significant to bear in mind in the Serbian context as the youth struggle to find alternatives to the nationalist sentiment that has driven the country repeatedly to war. As the country rebuilds, education, particularly peace education, has a key role to play to provide an articulation of alternatives (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 29). Serbia has a young population that wants to

experience integration with the European continent. This segment of the populace stands in contrast to those Serbians who have long been oppressed by the weight of history and an authoritarian political culture.

For this reason, in Serbia, the rewriting of history textbooks is an essential reform to rebuild education. This aspect of post-conflict education there relates to schooling as "a state-ruled institution" (Loisel, 2005, forthcoming). To what extent is the Serbian youth aware that education can be an instrument of popular oppression and of prejudice to advance the political agendas of those in power, particularly those with nationalist objectives in the country? The diary of one writer in Serbia gives those outside a glimpse into that world and the moral danger its people confront in their daily existence. The pain of everyday living there has rendered many indifferent (Tesanovic, 2000).

This question of the Serbian youth's awareness is essential given the ethnic mix in the country, 38 nationalities, and its tenuous relationship with Kosovo/a, which is presently an international protectorate where ethnic violence endures. The overwhelming Albanian majority in Kosovo/a calls for Serbia's approval of its independence. Serbia is unlikely to offer this approval in the near future given the historical belief, elevated to the status of myth in the Serb popular consciousness, that Kosovo is the cradle of the Serbian nation-state. Generations of parents and schoolteachers perpetuated this myth. Serbian history textbooks depict national heroism and victimization in the nation's struggle for statehood (Meurs, 2005, forthcoming).

## **Findings**

Initial research findings on post-conflict education in Serbia indicate that a group of Serbian psychologists and educators took a significant initiative to address the deprivation experienced by children in country as a result of the wars in the 1990s. In their experience, deprivation was widespread and assumed various forms and degrees according to the conditions of emergency. The social, emotional, moral, and intellectual deprivation that children experienced led this group of professionals to initiate peace education programs on a systematic and extensive basis (Rosandic, 2000, p. 5.).

In Serbia's post-conflict emergency situation, children are still influenced by textbook learning that emphasizes the weight of national history and the trauma of social conflict. Peace education programs aim to address the ways in which elementary school education in Serbia has traditionally socialized students (Rosandic, 2000, p. 32). Cooperation and civic values have not been the traditional focus of the socialization process through either of its main agents--teachers or textbooks. As a result, young children have been denied the chance to appreciate individual and cultural differences as the basis for human interpersonal and social relations. Traditionally, textbook learning sustains emotional attachments to national patriotism. This learning socializes children through its emphasis on the collective "we, the members of the Serbian nation" just as "traditional enemies" are depicted as "a constant threat" (p. 19).

A second finding highlights an educational reform after the Milosevic era. This was a scholarship program initiated as part of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. This program concentrates on the development and implementation of new textbooks and teaching materials in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. The field of history textbooks was acknowledged as a critical area in this program's objectives. This reform offered potential textbook authors and curriculum planners the opportunity to become acquainted with new approaches in the field of didactics and history over a longer period of time.

On the basis of insights acquired in learning new approaches, the program's initial goal was to encourage the development of new teaching materials for history instruction by educators in Serbia. These educators were supported in their work by the Georg-Eckert-Institute in Braunschweig, Germany, which received the initial project funding through the European Stability Pact in 2001.

Just prior to the start of the Eckert-Institute's program, the first history textbook developed in Serbia after Milosevic left power addressed the period 1990-2000 without reference to him as a political leader. This result was indicative of the government's monopoly on textbook creation. Only one book was produced for each grade. The textbook in question was for students in the final year of grade school. This finding points to the relevance of the educational reform that suppressed the government's textbook monopoly in 2003. The reform makes it possible to offer a choice of textbooks to the students. In this new context, even if one history text leaves out reference to Milosevic, another book that is written with reference to his reign could be available for student use, allowing for a more accurate and balanced presentation of historical events.

A third finding indicates that the work of the Stability Pact seminars extends to active learning methods and inquiry-based learning for history educators. Presentations in a 2001 seminar underlined the significance of self-awareness on the part of teachers and students in the development of critical historical consciousness. The potential of everyday life history, to learn from present experiences in the classroom between teachers and students, was also explored. Comparative classroom practices were used to illuminate the potential of everyday life history to help motivation, develop empathy and encourage critical thinking. Here the teacher-student relationship is identified as being as critical in the teaching of history as the choice of the textbook of instruction (Black, 2001).

## **Analysis and Discussion**

The challenge psychologists and educators face in peace education programs that develop active learning skills is rooted in history, in Serbia's political culture, and in the dynamics of personal relationships during the Milosevic era. According to Slobodanka Antic, an educational psychologist in Belgrade, "School texts have always been hijacked by those in power." As she explains, "The printing of our textbooks [is] political...and history is too sensitive for politics" (Poolos, 2002). Peace education programs for children left disoriented in Serbia's post-conflict emergency situation had to contend with the

state's "implicit argument": the predominant culture, one of violence, was both "natural" and "unavoidable" (Rosandic, 2000, pp. 5-6).

In this context, the role of history textbooks and the teaching of history are crucial to address the propagation of myth and its impact on relations among Serbians and Albanians. Here two of the intellectual traditions that define "mindful inquiry" are essential. In order to understand the impact of history books on the popular consciousness, hermeneutics gives us the opportunity to analyze texts in their contexts. In this tradition, it is key to understand that Serbian texts reveal conflict among social groups as the norm. Children learn that only narratives within family settings emphasize that mutual integrative solutions to conflict can be identified. Text narrative that depicts conflicts between individuals within the safe haven of the family are more likely to result in integrative conflict resolution than conflicts among countries, in which retreat is considered weak and conflicts are resolved by the use of force (Rosandic, 2000, pp. 18-20). This explanation contributes to an understanding of the Serbian drive to conflict in the 1990s, and the ways in which children were taught to internalize that conflict, as Serbia gradually lost territory to its neighbors.

Critical social science makes us aware of domination and oppression. This awareness is a necessary precondition if *status quo* conditions in Serbia are to change. Through their teachers' use of history textbooks, Serbian children have been consistently exposed at an early age to an education that is oppressive because of its authoritarian nature. Primary school learning traditionally did not encourage a child's active participation in the classroom or the expression of feelings regarding narratives learned in textbooks and experiences as a result of conflict. The personal autonomy and accountability that foster civic engagement, sustain democratic participation and contribute to children's development were traditionally discouraged in Serbia's civil society. Authoritarianism in schools was likely to be reproduced from the larger political culture. This fact was evidenced in Serbia (Plut et al., eds., 1994) and supported in substantial comparative research findings (Stern, 1992; Carnoy & Levin, 1985).

In the comparative-historical inquiry research tradition, educators in several European countries after World War II understood the role history textbooks played to strengthen exclusionary nationalism (Iriye, 2002, p. 87). French and German historians consulted with one another with the objective to write joint textbooks. Germans engaged in the rewriting of modern history as a way of repudiating the National Socialist interpretation of the nation's past (Iriye, 2002, p. 87). In this tradition, the Eckert-Institute scholarship program is a crucial part of textbook writing reforms. This Stability Pact initiative has as an objective to re-enforce democratization and transformation processes after Milosevic's nationalist regime as well as to address the legacies of the socialist era.

The promotion of national sentiments in Serbian textbooks relates to a core socialization pattern, to ensure the physical survival of the community. No price is too high, including loss of life, to defend the freedom and sovereignty of

Serbia's territory. The Serbian nation is defined as a community in these texts with a unique history, marked by suffering. In the national consciousness, Kosovo is still the heart of the community despite the fact that Serbs now constitute 10% of the population there.

The damage the war inflicted on the education system and the children in Serbia is so pervasive that the textbook approval committees and the ministry responsible to institute reforms must work in cooperation with the World Bank, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Stability Pact, and UNICEF to create new programs (personal communication, 2004, Professor, University of Belgrade). Although these changes require time to influence the minds of people, initiatives in history textbook writing can have a lasting impact on the educational reform process and the healing of the youth through conflict resolution, peace education and reconciliation. The new Serbian government, which is comprised of parties in coalition, is likely to try to reverse a significant reform by which the previous government lost the monopoly that existed in textbook publishing. This is a situation complicated by the power struggles inherent in coalition politics. The Ministry of Education is now led by a member of one of the more conservative parties within the ruling coalition government. This party is likely to support the reinstatement of the textbook monopoly by the government (personal communication, 2004, Professor, University of Belgrade).

The new Serbian government may not succeed to re-establish the monopoly, which leaves no room for choice of textbooks among different publishers as the national curriculum is defined. This is because of the new political reality: educational reform, particularly the writing of history textbooks, now takes place as part of a European process. This provides a different context for the evolution of the nation-state in Serbia than that which existed in either the Tito or Milosevic eras (personal communication, 2004, Professor, University of Belgrade).

## **Conclusion**

This research inquiry sheds light on the ways in which post-conflict education in Serbia addresses nationalist ideology. The German case teaches, in the comparative-historical tradition, that it is a human condition, inherent in the political culture, which is able to commit Serbian children to a loss of hope in the future. The initial answers to the paper's research question lead us to understand the ways post-conflict education in Serbia struggles to be less a part of the nationalist historical consciousness and increasingly part of a constructive, cooperative solution for a country undergoing a simultaneous process of nation-state reconstruction and integration into the European Union.

Research findings indicate that reforms initiated to date in the area of writing history textbooks demonstrate that the potential exists for change over a long period of time in the popular understanding of history in Serbia. The ways in which this understanding impacts peaceful conflict resolution among ethnic groups, the values of peace education, and reconciliation is also likely to change very slowly. The ability of Serbia's political leadership to sustain critical

educational reforms, like the repeal of the government monopoly on textbook creation in the country, is likely to be decisive.

The current political situation is fraught with uncertainty in Serbia. The necessity to maintain international support is an acknowledged reality in the country. The findings here support that primary school education sows the seeds of violence. Change in the popular consciousness is dependent on the degree to which educational reforms are implemented. Here pedagogy that encourages active learning is critical in two key areas: for teachers and students in the classroom, and in the writing of history textbooks for the national curriculum.

## Notes

- 1) Also Mitrovica/Mitrovica (Albanian and Serbian)
- 2) In this article, the term Kosovo/a is used to indicate respect for the linguistic differences in the Serbian (Kosovo) and Albanian (Kosova) spellings of the geographical area's name. Serbian officials use the name Kosovo and Metohija (or Kosmet for short); Albanians also use the Albanian-language name Kosovë. Source: Mertus, J. A. (1999). *Kosovo: How myths and truths started a war*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. xviii-xix.

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# **Developing National Unity by Educating Students About Their Enemies: The Case of Israel and Palestine**

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## **Problem**

How does formal education inspire ethnic hatred between two groups of people? Some scholars state that a nation's collective memory is often shaped by the content that is included and excluded in textbooks and curricula (Podeh, 2002). Thus, the educational framework and materials with which students are taught affects their world perceptions as well as how they define themselves and others. According to critics on both sides of the debate, the portrayal of the "other" in Israeli and Palestinian textbooks perpetuates hate, leads to increased violence, and hinders the overall peace process in the Middle East. Students from both Israel and Palestine are exposed to negative representations of their enemy.

However, opinions differ widely on the extent to which the different educational approaches, as manifested in curricula and textbooks, lead to hatred of the other. The divide that exists between the two peoples can pervade all aspects of their respective societies. This analysis will focus primarily on reviews of textbooks and curricula. Moreover, I hope to examine how Palestinian textbooks, as a product of the curriculum, portray Israel. I will also assess the representation of Palestinians in the texts used in Israeli schools. Israeli and Palestinian critiques about the educational products of the other country will also be presented. Finally, an understanding of how and why hatred for the other is perpetuated in the two cultures may help to more concretely explain the creation of a culture of intolerance.

## **Problem Statement and Relevance**

Research has shown that groups in conflict tend to portray negative stereotypes and develop disparaging attitudes toward each other (Maoz, 2000). Furthermore, Bar-Tal (1990, as cited in Maoz, 2000) discusses processes of mutual delegitimization that have led to acts of violence in the long-standing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. In this respect, the "other" is defined as anyone who belongs to a group of people outside the group in which one sees him or herself. This recognition of the other as a negative entity has led both sides to perceive each other as "inhuman, violent and threatening" (Maoz, 2000, p. 732).

Groups develop a sense of identity through socialization processes using state institutes, the media, educational systems and educational textbooks (Bar-Tal, 1998). The United Nations Development Programme's *Arab Human Development Report 2002* declares that "Education should help children and youth to understand themselves and their own culture, past and present, creatively and in the context of a world where cultures can flourish only through openness and dialogue" (p. 55). This report, authored in the Arab world, highlights the methods many nations in the region can develop in order to ensure effective changes to strengthen their educational systems. These approaches include how to instill a sense of Arab identity as well as how that identity fits into a greater global context (UNDP, 2002).

Identity is fostered in both Israeli and Palestinian schools. Many non-governmental, pro-Israeli organizations find this identity feeds the hatred, and ultimately, the violence directed toward Israel (CMIP, 2001). For example, the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP) contends that Palestinian textbooks display maps that do not label Israel, but only Palestine (2001). Thus Israel, as a political state, does not exist. Conversely, Jewish texts promote the elevation of the Jewish state and people at the expense of its Arab neighbors by delegitimizing Palestinians and Arabs through various negative connotations. Research on various textbooks expresses the view that Jews are fighting a justifiable war against an ignorant enemy (Meehan, 1999). This tit-for-tat argument remains in a cycle of accusation and denial of wrongdoing.

The debate rages about the true context of Palestinian curricula and textbook content. In his recent study of Palestinian textbooks, George Washington University professor Nathan Brown (2001) states that the Palestinian curriculum is not a war curriculum nor does it incite "hatred, violence [or] anti-Semitism," (p. 1). Thus, depending on viewpoints, the Palestinian curricula negatively or innocuously characterize Israel. An analysis of Palestinian textbooks by Firer and Adwan (2001) found that the books portray Jews throughout history in a positive manner and do not use negative stereotypes. However, the examination also points out that, in the day-to-day experiences of Palestinians, Israelis are encountered as an occupier--one who obliterates the Palestinian way of life through killings, land decimation and confiscation.

Critics debate whether the Israeli educational system reinforces negative stereotyping of Arabs. One analyzed text, for example, describes Arabs as "extremists" who "murder indiscriminately" while Israelis are "more moderate" and "defend [themselves]" (Surkes, 1997, p. 4 as cited in Bryan and Vavrus, 2002, p. 51). Yet, a comparison of Palestinian and Israeli texts by Firer and Adwan (2002) found that messages of peace with neighbors are integrated explicitly and implicitly into Israeli texts.

The notion of Jews in Israel as a victimized people who must counter any assault, both physical and ideological, fits into the Israeli ethos (Bar-Tal, 1998). The Jewish people have a long history of negative experiences that have left an indelible mark on the Jewish psyche. Bar-Tal (1998) describes this consciousness as a "siege mentality" (p. 34). The decades-long conflict that Israel has had with surrounding Arab states has helped foster this mindset. In

response, Israel has created a sense of unity and patriotism through mandatory military service, youth movements, and the country's educational system (Bar-Tal, 1998). Various analyses of school textbooks verify that the content of these books help solidify a loyalty to the State of Israel (Firer, 1985, Bezalel, 1989, Bar-Gal, 1993 as cited in Bar-Tal, 1998). The State garners students' allegiance by developing a faith in the people of Israel and also by defining their enemies--their Arab neighbors who threaten the state's existence.

The disparaging views of the other presented by the different sides create a problem for both sets of educational authorities. Essentially, one may argue that the use of curricula and texts that promote discriminatory messages help define a people by first defining their enemies. The Palestinians still live in or want to return to Palestine even though, as an autonomous nation-state, no such place exists, except in the schoolbooks used by Palestinians (CMIP, 2001). These teachings contradict the everyday existence of Palestinians who must deal with the workings of Israeli laws in order to function in society. Yet, the future that Palestinian children learn about, as represented in their textbooks, does not mention the State of Israel. Conversely, Israeli texts fortify the idea of a Jewish state by reiterating its existence amongst a sea of animosity that constantly laps at its shores. Such mentalities, especially when displayed blatantly in textbook examples, help to perpetuate violence and a breakdown of both societies. Analyzing how education creates ethnic hatred may help educational authorities take steps to create a building block in the peace process.

## **Methodology**

A brief history of the conflict is presented. After which, I examine how the educational systems of both states, Israel and Palestine, perpetuate hatred and how this attitude creates a culture of intolerance. Most of this research occurred through the analysis of existing documents. Various journals from sources in the Middle East and abroad have assessed different components of both systems of education. Additionally, many NGOs interpret the two systems and have published their respective criticisms.

Limitations exist in my research. Because of the sensitive nature of the topic, it is difficult to find unbiased research that does not favor the beliefs of the respective author. Many of the articles that exist are written from the view of one side or the other. In order to help balance any potential biases that exist in the literature, I try to present the two sides as equally as possible. I was unable to review textbooks personally as I do not speak either Hebrew or Arabic. Additionally, because of the circumstances of the Palestinian people, fewer scholarly materials are produced there, especially in comparison to those from Israel. From my preliminary research, more information about the Palestinian educational system exists, but this information is not authored by Palestinians and exists more in the form of critiques. I attempt to pull out the subtleties of the research and provide enough information to illuminate the problems that exist within both educational systems.

## Background

Historically, Israeli texts and curricula have focused on national goals at the expense of educational goals (Bar-Tal, 2003). Professor Ben-Zion Dinur elaborated on the objectives of Israeli education when he stated in 1953:

The position of our country must form the underlying premise of the civil education system. The State of Israel was born after a long and difficult struggle. It was established in the midst of a civil war. The struggle still continues... Officially, we are living in that vague shadowy situation which is neither war nor peace. We resemble a city under siege... We are surrounded [sic] by enemies whom we fought during the War of Independence and who have yet to reconcile themselves to our existence.... (quoted in Podeh, 2002, p. 38)

In the first 20 years of Israel's existence, the creation of a national identity was seen as paramount to the strength, unity and continuation of the Israeli state. As revisions of textbooks took place, so did the image of the Arab presented in the books. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, history books focused exclusively on the rights of the Jewish people while disregarding the rights of Arabs. After the actual creation of Israel and until the 1970s, the stereotype of the Arab as backward and primitive remained (Bar-Tal, 2003). Finally in the 1990s, educational authorities updated history texts to reflect a new perspective to the Arab-Jewish conflict that presented a more complex and multidimensional view of Arabs, and more specifically, Palestinians.

In the pre-State period, roughly 1900 to 1948, textbooks, especially history books, concentrated on validating the rights of the Jewish people to the establishment of a Jewish state at the expense of the Arabs that already lived there (Bar-Tal, 2003). Ruth Firer (1985, as cited in Bar-Tal, 2003) discovered that history textbooks scarcely made reference to Arab people. On the rare occasion that the Arabs were mentioned, they were seen as obstacles Jewish immigrants had to overcome in creating their new nation-state. Furthermore, geography textbooks often held a Euro-centric view as many of the authors were actually European Jews. Arabs were treated as invisible people (Bar-Gal, 1993, 1994, as cited in Bar-Tal). However, as Arab resistance to the influx of Jewish immigrants increased, geography textbooks began to portray Arabs as enemies of the Jews.

The increased resistance of the Arabs to the Jewish presence in the region created a need for the fledgling state to unify through a common ideology. The beliefs about the Jewish people, and their Arab neighbors, helped define the former in relation to the latter. Elie Podeh (2002) believes that the Israeli educational system and its textbooks function as "memory agents" (p. 68). In doing so, these agents shape the nation's collective memory. With this memory, Podeh (2002) argues that young Israelis learn how to perpetuate the hatred and animosity that exists between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and in particular Palestine. The collective memory helps reinforce concepts of "we"

versus “they.” These dichotomous ethnocentric views cause both sides to accept their respective history as accurate while the other’s history is flawed.

Unlike the educational system of Israel, which existed before the state did, Palestinians assumed control of their own educational system in 1994, after the Oslo Peace Accord gave them limited autonomy. Prior to this, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip relied on textbooks from Egypt, and those in the West Bank used Jordanian texts. The Israeli occupation authorities severely censored these books until 1994. Furthermore, Israel had allowed for the disrepair of the educational infrastructure in the occupied territories that resulted in a severe decline in both the quality of education and the access to educational resources for Palestinians (Moughrabi, 2001).

After gaining autonomy and acquiring the ability to develop its own educational curricula, the Palestinian Authority (PA) began a process of educational development. In 2000, the PA Ministry of Education initiated new textbook introductions in schools based on principles created by a team of experts. Many educational analysts attest that the texts avoid discussion of unresolved political issues. However, the books do reflect the Palestinian narrative--that of the native in conflict with a settler colonial movement (Moughrabi, 2001). Additionally, the texts present the establishment of the State of Israel as a disastrous event for Palestinians.

Many do not believe that the newly created educational curricula benignly express the plight of Palestinians. In fact, critics of the new curricula believe it paints a negative portrayal of Israel. The most vocal opponent to the representation of Israel in Palestinian textbooks stems from the non-governmental organization The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP). The organization claims, among other things, that reviewed textbooks demonstrate “hateful beliefs and opinions regarding Jews, the State of Israel and Zionism” and that the books systematically instill these ideals through various didactic methods (CMIP, 2002).

## **Findings**

From the several assessments of the different texts and curricula used in both Israeli and Palestinian schools, a clear picture of their content is hard to paint. Israeli organizations and researchers have analyzed both Palestinian and Israeli texts and curricula while Palestinians have only responded to criticism of their own educational system and have not performed heavy examinations of Israeli texts and curricula. Additionally, outside researchers have made assessments of the Palestinian education system. However, concrete conclusions remain elusive.

Bar-Tal (1998, 2003) and Podeh (2002) provide the most concrete analysis of Israeli texts. Their historical accounts trace the image of the Arabs from the beginning of the presence of Jewish settlers in the Middle East until the present day. The authors determine that historically Arabs have been portrayed negatively within texts, when they have been discussed at all. The current conflict between the two sides has received new attention in more recent texts

developed by the Israeli government. Podeh's (2002) study determines that the relationship between the two groups defines how the other is represented.

Podeh (2002) explains that the "phases"--"childhood," "adolescence," and "adulthood"--of textbook development mimic the growth of the nation of Israel. In the childhood phase (1948 – 1967) Zionist values were instilled in children (2002). A fear of undermining the legitimacy of the new nation led to an omission of information about Arabs in the region. Additionally, several military threats from the outside endangered the first 20 years of Israel's existence. The educational system was used to solidify Israel's right to exist. Israel dealt with the presence of its Arab neighbors by not focusing on them at all--textbooks focused only on issues related to the existence of Israel.

The adolescent phase (1967 – 1985) of the educational system reacted to the 1967 war which saw the conquest of Arab territories, and thus a physically closer relationship between the two peoples, an internal debate about the occupation of the Arab territories, and the influx of information in Hebrew about Israel's Arab neighbors. The prejudice toward the Arab people in this second generation of textbooks stemmed not only from the text, but also from diagrams, maps, and pictures (Podeh, 2002). The students that used the texts from this phase learned about Arabs only via the Arab-Israeli conflict and therefore learned about Arabs as aggressors and enemies of the state of Israel.

The final phase of the Israeli education system--adulthood (1985–present)--represents a more balanced view of the history of Israel and the relationship it has with its Arab neighbors. Podeh (2002) describes the books as flawed but a step in a positive direction. Arabs are no longer portrayed as enemies and the perspective of Arabs has been incorporated. Yet, the books have only been in circulation for a short time and a full analysis is premature.

While the introspective research of Bar-Tal (2003) and Podeh (2002) has traced the lineage of the representation of the Arab in Israeli texts, many Israeli sources have sought to assess how Palestinian texts characterize Israelis. CMIP reviewed several Palestinian Authority (PA) texts and discovered several anti-Semitic passages that the organization claims are filled with incitement. Among the organization's most common findings are that the PA texts ignore the existence of the sovereignty of the Israeli state as indicated by its absence on maps, Jerusalem is presented as an exclusively Arab city, Jews are mentioned negatively in historical contexts, Israelis are aggressors and occupiers, information exists about tolerance between Muslims and Christians, while little information about Muslims and Jews is present, and jihad and martyrdom are encouraged in the texts (CMIP, 2003). The CMIP reports these findings as not complying with guidelines set forth by UNESCO and also as lacking any commitment for peace and reconciliation with Israel.

In response to critiques of the PA's educational doctrine, independent analyses of the PA education curriculum have been conducted. Brown (2002) points out that when the PA finally took control of its own educational authority it began to remove older, more biased, texts imported from Egypt and Jordan. Furthermore, the PA texts "treat sensitive political questions as tangential"

(2002, p. 6). Brown does conclude that the PA's curriculum does not constitute a "peace curriculum," but does not "incite hatred, violence, and anti-Semitism" (p. 1), as indicated by the CMIP.

Further assessment of the PA's texts conclude that the information within the books expresses the Palestinian narrative--"that of a native in conflict with a settler colonial movement" (Moughrabi, 2001, p.2). The texts produced by the PA reflect the view of the people of Palestine. They also promote positive principles such as tolerance, openness and democratic values.

## **Analysis**

The representation of Arabs in the Israeli educational system stems from the historical narrative of the Jewish settlers and the development of the Israeli State. In order to ensure the coherence of the State, the Jewish settlers had to create a nation of immigrants. They defined themselves by defining those around them as "other." From an historical perspective, this makes perfect sense. The neighbors of the fledgling nation considered Israel a threat to their existence. A self-fulfilling prophecy ensued. Israel believed the Arab states were their enemy and taught this philosophy to its youth. Consequently, the Arab states treated Israel like an infection in the Middle East to which they needed to find a cure.

Assessments of the Arab image in the Israeli educational system take place with little moral judgment. Because of historical threats, it made sense for Israel to perpetuate negative stereotypes of its Arab neighbors. Yet, the PA textbooks that attempt to teach its citizens in a similar fashion--to help unify a people who see themselves constantly threatened--have been considered inflammatory by Israel. According to critics, the PA textbooks detract from the peace process and actually steer children toward taking violent action against the people of Israel.

Many Palestinians counter the Israeli critiques by arguing that the very nature of the Israeli occupation acts as an agent to teach children to dislike Israel, not the content found in PA textbooks (Amayreh, 2003; Abunimah, 2002; Moughrabi, 2001). Moreover, Palestinian students question disparities between their everyday reality of living under occupation and textbooks that more benignly discuss the issue (Moughrabi, 2001). Thus, many detractors of Palestinian texts fail to realize that the books most likely do little to develop negative attitudes about Israel when, for instance, Palestinian students encounter soldiers daily en route to school.

These daily interactions between students and soldiers expose the issue of the hidden curriculum. Living under occupation and having movements controlled by the Israeli military create a sense of animosity toward the occupying forces. These feelings undoubtedly creep into the classroom environment via both the students' and teachers' attitudes. One author of an education textbook for the PA stated:

I can't possibly erase more than 1,350 years of Arab-Islamic history in Palestine and pretend that the history of the region began with Israel's creation in 1948. If I did that, I would be betraying my conscience, disregarding truth and cheating my students. (Amayreh, 2003, p. 2)

When thoughts similar to this enter the classroom, the attitude of the teacher becomes an educational tool, along with the text.

Critics' condemnations of the PA texts fail to recognize that the history of Israel's educational system followed a similar path in developing a national psyche. Palestine sees itself as constantly under threat from the existence of Israel and thus teaches its youth to be Palestinian by teaching them that the State of Palestine (both physically and ideologically) still exists. The creation of Israel led to the Palestinians' status as stateless people. Because Palestinians exist as a population without a nation, education helps them achieve a state of unity. Just as Israel in its early years defined its enemies to promote its own self-awareness, Palestinian texts label Israelis as occupiers and oppressors. With Palestinians quarantined to refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan as well as separated into the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a common acceptance of their enemy provides a unifying element for the people.

## **Conclusion**

Similar to the challenges that stymie the overall peace process between Israel and Palestine, many people in both camps take issue with the representation of the other in textbooks and curricula. Many believe that these (mis)representations help perpetuate the enmity. Israel maintained dark portrayals of Arabs for political reasons--to aid in the creation of its state's identity. Israel acknowledges this and has worked toward rewriting the view of the Arab in its textbooks. These texts have not achieved an unbiased position as examples of negative attitudes still pervade many books.

Palestinian books, on the other hand, do not have the history of growth that Israeli texts have experienced. Additionally, because Palestine views itself as a people under siege, as Israel did in the first few decades of its existence, it uses its educational resources as a vehicle with which to solidify Palestinian unity. In so doing, the PA creates an "us" versus "them" template that elevates itself at the expense of Israel. Additionally, the negative depiction of the other illuminates the purpose of the hidden curriculum: to perpetuate one side's cause at the expense of the other. Education acts to mirror the occurrences in the society at large.

Similar to other ethnically based battles in the world, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will continue if children are indoctrinated with the idea that hatred is good and revenge is justified. However, schools can only do so much to reinforce negative stereotypes or to create a positive environment for understanding. What happens outside the classroom often has more of an impact on a person's attitude and behavior.



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# How Schools Cope with War: A Case Study of Lebanon

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During acute civil strife, public institutions collapse with the failure of governments, disrupting an array of social services including educational institutions. Prolonged crises can create whole generations of youth whose education has been arrested. The dramatic rise in the visibility of violent conflicts over the past decade has turned humanitarian attention toward the need for incorporating educational services into larger relief and development aid (Pigozzi, 1999).

Various humanitarian organizations have worked to establish guidelines or recommendations for educational intervention during complex emergencies, based on the premise that schools serve to create stability in children's lives and that education is a right of all children (see for e.g. Aguilar & Retamal, 1998; Pigozzi, 1999; Johannessen, 2001; Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). The literature has generally prioritized investment in primary education over the education of adolescents and has highlighted both the damaging impact of conflict on children and schooling and the potential for educational response to serve a normalizing role for children. Little attention, however, has been given to forms of institutional coping strategies and local agency in maintaining the operation of educational services. How have schools coped during acute complex emergencies? What actual strategies have been attempted by local educators to maintain "normalcy" for their students and to give meaning to schooling for adolescents during periods of conflict? What are student perceptions of these strategies?

This study attempts to gain insight into these questions and the potential for a normalizing impact on adolescents, by examining the case of secondary schooling in Lebanon during the fifteen-year civil war. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the growing literature on emergency education by inserting the role and agency of local actors into the current discourse and shedding light on issues pertaining to adolescent education. This, in turn, will have implications for educational investment and local participation in current strategy guidelines.

## **War, Adolescents, and the Challenge to Schooling**

The impact of war on young people's psychosocial well-being has been documented with varied findings (Flores, 1999; Oweini, 1998; International Save the Children Alliance, 1996; Assal & Farrell, 1992), particularly regarding post-traumatic stress disorder (for e.g. Saigh, 1985). It is generally agreed that

the familiar routine provided by education creates a sense of security and purpose for young people (International Save the Children Alliance, 1996) and mitigates the negative psychosocial effects of trauma. According to Johannessen (2001), "education is considered important to restore normal life routines and activities" (p. 5) and to provide opportunities for students and communities to begin to overcome trauma and learn skills and values for the future. In addition, schools can achieve protection-related objectives through "the sense of self-worth that comes from being identified as a student and learner; the growth and development of social networks; the provision of adult supervision and access to a structured, ordered schedule" (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003, p. 9).

Machel (2001) cautions that while education is a "life-affirming activity" (p. 92) that can provide a zone of security, fear and constant disruption challenge school morale, student and teacher concentration, and learning in general, with the added risk that schools and their communities often become targets during protracted conflicts. Because complex emergencies distort the situation of education, creating chaos in schools and uncertainty regarding the future, schooling becomes meaningless for adolescents (Assal & Farrell, 1992). Education, taken to be the transmission of culture and the normative values of a society (Machel, 2001), is severely challenged along with its ability to maintain the norms of security, authority, stability, and academic standards, reflecting a new reality beyond its scope.

Despite adolescent susceptibility to danger, including recruitment into armed forces or physical abuse, Machel (2001) points out that secondary schooling in complex emergencies has not received much attention. Furthermore, the role and agency of local educators has only been alluded to peripherally in the literature. This study aims to gain insight on the potential of secondary schools to have a normalizing impact on adolescents during periods of conflict. By examining the case of Lebanon (1975-1990), the study seeks (1) to gain an understanding of the impact of war on adolescent school experiences, and (2) to shed light on the coping strategies of secondary schools by exploring the role and agency of educators in trying to create a sense of "normalcy" and to give meaning to schooling for adolescents.

### **The Lebanese Context**

Much has been written on the complexity of the Lebanese civil war. The 15 years of conflict involved multiple internal factions each with its armed militia; foreign and multinational interventions and occupations--invited and uninvited, aggressors and peace-keepers; and Palestinians who took refuge in Beirut and their forces (for a detailed account of events, see Fisk, 2001; for an analysis, see for e.g. Khalidi, 1984). The war completely destroyed the economic system and exacerbated sectarian tensions. Public education all but collapsed and was taken over by a proliferation of private schools. These remained open to varying extents throughout the war despite being physically targeted, occupied by militias and displaced people, and used as centers for the proliferation of propaganda and the forced recruitment of young people, including minors, into the various armed militias (Brett & McCallin, 1996). Schools were also used as distribution centers for relief aid (Mikdadi, 1983).

Anecdotal material provided by memoirs from this period (Kerr, 1994; Makdisi, 1990; Mikdadi, 1983) and interviews with Lebanese adolescents and young adults (Oweini, 1998; Assal & Farrell, 1992; Saigh, 1985) make frequent mention of the disruption to schooling, with resumption signaling a degree of regained "normalcy." According to Oweini (1998), an average child living in Lebanon during this time was exposed to at least one of the following traumatic events: bombardment, displacement, witnessing violent acts, bereavement, and extreme poverty (p. 412). Teachers were threatened for grades at gunpoint and prominent educators were assassinated.

Assal and Farrell's (1992) study of civil war youth found that "as students got older, school became more meaningless" (p. 286) and adolescents felt that school could not protect them. Adolescents reported boredom, disillusionment, and a sense that their lives were being wasted when school was disrupted. They also questioned the purpose of education given the lack of employment opportunity and the perception that they had few, if any, future prospects. They reported joining militias mainly as a form of employment (Assal & Farrell, 1992; Brett & McCallin, 1996), which brought with it other social benefits, such as being able to avoid food lines. The economic lure of militias therefore superseded that of the school.

### **The Study and Educational Background of the Participants**

The principal component of this study involved a structured interview of 10 former secondary school students and two teachers who were engaged in a total of 19 different schools in the greater Beirut area during the period of civil strife (1975 to 1990). The former student informants consisted of six females and four males from various religious backgrounds (Protestant, Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Catholic, Shiite, and Sunni), and generally came from middle-income families prior to the outbreak of the war, with the exception of two who came from lower middle-income families. Their number of years of schooling (K-13) during the civil war ranged from three years to 13 years (the majority with over nine years school-war experience), with five of the informants completing secondary school during the war (1977 to 1983) and five of them just afterward (1992 to 1993). Six of the informants had attended only one school during this period; whereas, the other four had attended between two to five different schools each, changing schools one to three times during the final four secondary school years. Seven of the informants had experienced three to four of their final four secondary school years during the war period, and four of these students went on to complete their university studies in Lebanon during the span of the war as well. The three remaining informants experienced at least two of their final four secondary school years during the war period.

A variety of types of formal schooling were in operation in Greater Beirut by 1975; however, secondary education was almost entirely privately run (Smith et al., 1974). In this study, all of the former student informants attended private schools during their secondary years and two also attended a public school for one year. The private secondary schools attended were mostly secular tuition-based schools, but also included tuition-based and fee-subsidized

Evangelical and Catholic schools, and tuition-based secularized mission schools. Nine of the informants followed Baccalaureate programs, while one pursued a vocational program. Six were enrolled in Arabic-English bilingual programs, while four were enrolled in Arabic-French bilingual programs. Nine of the informants currently hold at least a Bachelors degree or the technical equivalent.

The former student interview questionnaire consisted of seven parts, comprising closed questions related to personal educational context and open-ended questions regarding the perceived impact of war on aspects of secondary school experience, school responses to these, and personal attitudes towards school. Questions raised issues concerning transmission of normative values and the maintenance of security, authority, stability, and academic standards.

Structured interviews were also conducted with two male teachers, both of whom taught at private secondary schools throughout the civil war period, mainly at secular and Christian private institutions. Both have committed their entire working lives to educating adolescents with 29 and 44 years of teaching experience respectively, the former having taught at six private and one public secondary school from 1975-1990, the latter having taught and served as an administrator entirely at one private school. Open-ended questions addressed the perceived impact of war on aspects of the teaching experience, attitudes towards school, and strategies employed to maintain normalcy for adolescent students.

The study was conducted over a two-month period from March to April 2004. Due to access limitations, interviews took place largely in writing via email with follow-up questions for clarification and extension. Informant responses were analyzed, coded, and related to other sources (web published school statements regarding the war period, informal interviews, memoirs, official/ research documentation) in order to construct an understanding of local agency and the potential impact of secondary schooling on adolescents.

### **The Impact of War on Secondary School Experiences: Insights from Students and Teachers**

This section summarizes student and teacher insights about the impact of war on their secondary school experiences through five main lines of commentary, weaving in direct quotations from the interviews to best reflect the participants' "voices."

#### *The learning and teaching process*

All of the informants talked about constant disruption to the learning process due to unexpected school closures, sometimes for months, and the subsequent periods of intensive study, including weekends and summers, in which teachers crammed several months of the curriculum into one or two summers, and school years extended from one to the next. Several students quantified these periods to explain why their graduations had not been ultimately delayed. They also cited cuts to the curriculum (whole subjects or portions of the syllabus) and heavy homework assignments, which had to be

completed by candlelight because of power outages. The teachers confirmed that they assigned top priority to getting students through the Baccalaureate curriculum for government examinations, by any means necessary. Several students mentioned feeling pleased when school was closed on a day scheduled for an exam. However, they also talked about the difficulties of making up the work during intensive school periods. Only one student, who had been raised within the American University of Beirut campus, felt that the war had not had any effect on his learning. He subsequently became a medical doctor.

Most of the informants mentioned gaps in their knowledge, particularly in the Sciences and Mathematics, and attributed these to the pressures of covering large amounts of material in short periods. "Moreover, the weather during the summer period was unbearable and not suitable at all for us to understand or to concentrate in class." Some students talked about being promoted to the next grade with a weak foundation that was compounded each time they "passed without knowing how." As a result of this and other factors, one student reported that her "learning went backwards. It went down the drain."

Students also talked about what they viewed as a decline in academic standards--the lowering of examination pass marks and promotion requirements, and the appointment of teachers with poor qualifications who "lacked the methods of teaching." Complaints regarding teaching related to issues of boredom, teachers shouting, and learning only from books. "Lessons were lecture type. We sit. The teacher talks."

Several students mentioned family support or follow-up as being critical to their promotion. Students who completed school during or prior to 1983 also mentioned government attempts to run televised classes to make up for gaps. Delays and cancellations of Baccalaureate examinations and graduation ceremonies were also reported by students and teachers alike. "I remember being handed my diploma in my dorm room, which has been one of the saddest moments of my life."

### *Relationships within the school community*

Students reported both positive and negative impacts on their friendships at school. "In a way the war had brought my classmates and I closer together." Seven of the respondents noted that the friendships they made at this time are those which have endured until today. A male student related,

Some of my closest friends...I have been friends with since my last four years of school. Some of them belong to different religions. I am a Christian, but my school was in a predominantly Muslim area of Beirut. I strongly believe that my exposure to the "other" culture during times of war cultivated in me a strong understanding and tolerance to other points of view, something that my Christian friends in the Christian areas of Beirut, and my Muslim friends in the Muslim area, did not appreciate.

Several students reported their concern for the well being of classmates and their families. "I always thought of when I might be seeing them again and if they were still here in Lebanon or even alive." Friends provided an outlet to "share fears, share worries." One student explained that "moving around so much...made me a flexible and adaptable person able to make contacts and friends anywhere."

Students who described a negative impact on friendships generally attributed this to disruptions to school, absenteeism, not being able to see friends outside of school, personal displacements or relocations, and losing contact with students who left the country or to other schools "because they were from other areas." Three students talked about political differences as a key factor undermining their friendships. A male student recounted that he "had few friends due to a lot of political interference that was against my principles." Another detailed feeling caught in the middle between friends who "were with the Militias against the Lebanese army and those who were with the Lebanese army against the Militia." A female student related an incident in which she called an old friend she had had before the war and was "made to feel in no uncertain terms that our friendship could not continue because her parents objected to it. This struck me because it was the first time I had personally experienced the effects of the sectarianism that was fueled by the civil war."

Although several students recounted incidents in which other students physically threatened teachers, all students felt that the war had had little bearing on their personal relationships with teachers. Six students described these as being positive relationships characterized by respect and closeness. "A lot of teachers were like second parents to us, and always asked about our families after bombing incidents." Those who had been schooled previous to the war generally agreed that these relationships had not changed with the war circumstances. "I was always close to my teachers." A male student noted that teachers avoided having conflicts with "politically committed students." Only one student reported having negative relationships with his teachers and attributed this to his own "attitude problems."

Similarly teachers' accounts distinguished between personal relationships with students and incidents in which teachers' authority had been challenged, stating that these challenges occurred "along political/ sectarian lines, not along personal ones." Otherwise teachers did not mention any change in their relationships with students. One teacher did report being "very friendly with militia members" who were a source of trouble, and whose student members "bullied the non-members, who kept a low profile and were very quiet."

### *Social norms, behavioral expectations, and school authority*

All of the student informants talked about a general lack of discipline at school which they attributed to circumstances beyond the control of teachers and administrators whom they saw as no longer being in a position to uphold any code of conduct. According to two students' accounts, it was the students who were involved in militias who held power and "would come and go as they pleased knowing that the administration feared them." Students reported that



classmates called for strikes, “ditched classes” to attend “urgent political meetings,” and generally “indulged in the war atmosphere” by challenging school authority. Of the 12 participating in the interview, nine students and two teachers described at least one incident in which students threatened school staff at gun point (usually regarding grades), but no disciplinary action was taken in any of the incidents. Three of these incidents involved student threats to school principals. However, in one teacher’s account of a similar episode, teachers affiliated to a powerful militia took action against the students and “reassured the principal” of his authority. According to this teacher, the patriarchal nature of Lebanese society and “the moral authority of persons perceived by students as patriarchs was effective in diffusing tensions caused by students carrying arms.”

Several students talked about cheating on school exams and on the government Baccalaureate, which involved buying/selling exam questions in advance from teachers or other school staff. In referring to teacher corruption, one student said, “The general atmosphere in Beirut was chaotic, and this reflected on us at school. Morality was not a priority in the country in general, and at school (at times) in particular.” A teacher talked about militia members forcing the school to enroll and promote students. A student felt that with the chaotic nature of schooling, “the most important two years in which a person shapes one’s personality were stolen from us.”

#### *Security issues and recruitment into militias*

Narratives on security tended to gravitate around threats to teachers (“...a teacher gave a boy a failing grade and that boy went home and brought his gun and dog back with him.”), rather than personal danger. Seven students reported classmates and parents carrying guns to school, but not teachers because school regulations forbade arms. However, “the school could not but keep a blind eye” to students and parents carrying weapons. Both teachers concurred with these accounts. One explained that “it was hard to keep arms out [of school] but we usually spoke to big shots in the militias who were [alumni] to stop their members from carrying arms in school.” This teacher also reported that the school accountant carried a gun “not for safety” but as a militia member and that students brought revolvers from home to boast in front of their friends.

One student who finished school in 1978 talked directly about personal safety concerns and the impact of the war on her behavior: “I started looking behind me in corridors...and over my head [for bombs]...[and] getting bothered from being at school, so I hardly heard what anyone said; my whole concern was to go to school and return home safely.” Students also reported witnessing shelling from their school playgrounds.

Five of the students and one teacher identified students whom they knew personally, and who were under the age of 17, being forcibly recruited into militias. In one school all 16- and 17-year-old boys were removed from school for a three-month military training period, but otherwise recruitment of minors was reportedly not common there. One female student recounted that a 16-

year-old classmate and friend was the head of the "militia student council" and enlisted out of "political belief." She added that others enlisted "more because the militia house down the road from our school had become a 'hang out' place for teenagers." Girls enlisted with their brothers. All of the students who described such events concurred that the "school would not dare to intervene in such scenarios." One teacher concurred by saying, "we just shut up, or else."

### *Attitudes towards school*

Despite the circumstances described above and the general toll on school morale, seven of the students and both teachers reported that they looked forward to going to school. All of the students cited friendship as the major incentive. School provided the opportunity to reconnect with classmates after periods of isolation due to school closure. Students missed their friends and worried about their safety. For one student, going back to school signified going "back to normal life." Three students talked about school as the chance to learn; of these, two mentioned difficulties with concentration. However, none complained about "having days off" except that it meant resumption under pressure in the summer months.

The students who reported that they rarely looked forward to school were among those who finished during or prior to 1983. They cited fear and boredom as the reasons. One of the male informants reported that "school meant nothing to us. We went when we could and not when we couldn't." Despite these reasons, all of these students mentioned friendships as a positive reason for resuming classes.

Teachers talked about looking forward to school because they wanted to teach. One teacher explained it as an opportunity to "instill a questioning attitude toward a lot of what was taking place at the time, and point to the visceral sectarianism that characterizes the Lebanese mentality." School also "kept us busy" and provided a paycheck.

### **Emergent Themes on the Role and Agency of Schools and Their Coping Strategies**

Several themes emerge from the student and teacher narratives regarding the role of schools in establishing space for positive relationships and the limitations on providing structure and continuity, security, a model for social norms, and academic skills. The constant disruption to schooling stood as the most prominent factor influencing school experiences because it significantly impacted friendships and academic studies, both of which were highly valued by the informants. Ironically, schools served to create continuity in the lives of the students and teachers in spite of these unexpected closures. However, contrary to the general literature on emergency education, secondary schools did not seem to play a role in providing structure, routine, or a sense of security for adolescents (these findings are in line with Assal & Farrell, 1992).

Security concerns seemed to be most closely associated with the weakening of school authority, which all informants made reference to, rather

than outside factors. This is best illustrated by the fact that security related narratives generally focused on student threats to school personnel, indicating insecurity regarding the perceived loss of school authority, which undercut the school's role in creating order and transmitting social norms and values for the future. Paradoxically, these incidents did not seem to mar personal student-teacher relationships on the whole.

Secondary student experiences varied among the informants, particularly between those who finished school in the 1970s and early 1980s and those who finished school in the 1990s. However, what emerged from all of the narratives is that the main role and significance of secondary schooling during war was the establishment and maintenance of social networks and the acquisition of knowledge and skills, despite the obvious challenges and lack of relevance. The role of personal relationships seemed to echo much of the literature on emergency education; however, secondary schools' ability to maintain the norms of security, authority, stability, academic standards, and to foster future oriented values were severely challenged, reflecting the reality of a wider political situation.

Institutional coping strategies involved focusing on academic priorities and personal security, at the expense of social behavioral norms. The strategy of "turning a blind eye" was essentially a security strategy that placed personal safety above a fair application of the rules or an assertion of an ethical stance. Schools were decisive about school closure, sometimes in the middle of the day, and took measures to make up for disruptions by re-arranging academic calendars, daily schedules, and curricula in order to prepare students for government examinations (when they took place). Falling enrollments and permanent school closures were addressed by adjustments such as taking in selected boys into girls' schools. Local educators were active agents in ensuring the continuity of schooling by teaching extended hours, on weekends, and holidays, at times for reduced or severely delayed pay. They avoided or actively kept political discussions out of the classroom. One teacher described challenging students to take on a critical approach to the political situation. Schools attempted to keep arms off campus by appealing to affiliated militia members. They addressed school morale during assemblies and expressed reassurances to students, inquired about the safety of students' families, and advised students to focus on their studies and to make the best of the situation. Yet all of the informants concurred that teachers rarely, if ever, spoke to students about their future goals or prospects for peace; and schools did not interfere with the recruitment of minors into the militias.

### **The Potential for Secondary Schools to Have a Normalizing Impact on Adolescents**

The prioritization of personal security over the transmission of social norms or authority structures limited the potential for secondary schools to have a normalizing impact on adolescents. Schools reflected the new "norms" of a society at war, and according to one teacher, "the patriarchal underpinnings of Lebanese society," which served to enforce discipline through "expediency...over more refined ways of persuasion." The potential for a sense of normalcy was

further challenged by the prioritization of “getting students through” the national curriculum. However, I would argue that schools did achieve symbolic normalcy by establishing a sense of community and shared experience.

The potential of secondary schools to have a normalizing impact on adolescents is therefore present in the space created for fostering and maintaining relationships and engaging in learning, both of which provide a form of continuity in the adolescent’s life. The narratives reveal the need for schools to further provide a space for student agency in meaningful future-oriented activities and positive pursuits such as sports, which some students engaged in independently to “channel all [their] energy.” The narratives further reveal the need for finding ways to discuss behavioral expectations and the challenges to achieving these with students. The extent to which the above can be achieved, given external variables, will determine the success of secondary schools in achieving normalcy for adolescents and giving meaning to schooling during periods of conflict.

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# High Stakes Testing During a Time of Conflict: The Case of a Public High School in New York City Since September 11th

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As the United States government increasingly becomes involved in global conflict and occupation, Americans, including children, are confronted with the brutal images of war and terror, from the media display of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks to the more recent coverage of the war in Iraq. According to a study conducted by the Citizens Committee for Children, 93% of New York City children saw the WTC attacks, either as they were occurring or later on television (2002). Whether these images of conflict and violence are from home or abroad, they not only have potentially long-lasting traumatic effects, but also, like other forms of information, they can be manipulated, propagandized, and made into political tools, especially when there is a lack of space for people to come to terms with their meaning. It is therefore now more crucial than ever that politicians and policy makers rethink the impact of curriculum standardization on students and their education. While research suggests the need for schools to provide psychosocial support spaces, peace and human rights education, and critical pedagogy in a post-conflict context (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003; Machel, 2001; Save the Children, 1996), policies nationwide reflect the implementation of a more rigid, centralized, and standardized education, namely through the enforcement of standardized tests. Although schools have other functions and roles to provide for their students beyond crisis mediation, high-stakes standardized testing impedes schools from delivering necessary post-conflict educative services. The tests generally standardize curricular content, prevent structural flexibility, and weaken democratic, autonomous decision-making, ultimately obstructing the needed post-conflict educational services.

## Theoretical Framework

The majority of the literature on post-conflict education for children focuses on locales in which schooling has been severely disrupted by ongoing war or natural disaster. In these cases, either children have been denied basic educational services or the educational infrastructure has been completely destroyed. This was not the case in New York City after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks. While schooling was interrupted for two days during and after the attacks, public educational services resumed for most students on September 13, thereby not reflecting the more egregious circumstances that halt education in other parts of the world[1]. In fact, much of what is written simply promotes the *idea of schooling* as a way by which to deliver necessary services (Machel, 2001). Nonetheless, much in the contemporary literature can be

applied to the situation in New York City. While the circumstances of a modern developed urban metropolis attacked in one day are different from the circumstances of cities ravaged by years of war, the literature provides a theoretical framework for the *types* of educational services that should be rendered to children dealing with post-conflict situations like New York City after September 11th.

Three major types of educational services that emerge from the literature are: *psychosocial spaces* (see Triplehorn, 2001), in which children can process the conflict and the emotions that connect to it; *tolerance, human rights, and peace education* (see Reardon, 2001), in which children can construct ways to imagine and formulate a different future for themselves and their families; and *democratic critical dialogue* (see Freire, 1994), in which children reflect on their experiences and engage in the process of deconstructing the political and social aspects of the conflict so as to eventually act towards social change. Without these structures, educational systems and curricula can perpetuate divisions within a society and potentially fuel future conflict (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003).

The promotion of psychosocial well-being in education is essential in a post-conflict setting. When children are exposed to conditions “beyond the normal boundaries of human experience,” they are more susceptible to increased degrees of stress and trauma (Save the Children Alliance, 1996, p. 2). Studies also reveal that when students or teachers have experienced violence, they have difficulty concentrating in their environments (Machel, 2001). Psychosocial support spaces can provide forums needed to process these events, and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* drafted in 1989 emphasizes the need for this for conflict-affected children (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). While the closest caregiver is ideally the most effective administrator of this psychosocial care (Save the Children Alliance, 1996), there are times when parents are unable to provide guidance in the development of their children. In these situations, teachers and youth workers, as well as other children themselves, can provide the support that is unavailable at home (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003; Machel, 2001).

Tolerance, peace, and human rights education is also an indispensable component of post-conflict education. During times of conflict and emergency, traditional education often reflects the dynamics of the conflict (Machel, 2001). In order for schools to “counter rather than perpetuate conflict, it is crucial that injustices and stereotypes previously validated in the classroom are dismantled and that tolerance is encouraged” (Machel, 2001). In addition, during conflicts children who have witnessed violence can lose the sense of how to be non-confrontational. Education can address this through activities in listening, problem solving, and conflict resolution (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003), as well as through the incorporation of the arts (Machel, 2001). This work in the classroom creates the groundwork for a peaceful society, promoting a culture of peace, tolerance, social justice, and respect for human rights, as children’s own awareness filters into the community at large. Finally, the need for human rights and peace education has been reaffirmed at the *World Education Forum* in Dakar (Machel, 2001) and is stated as essential by the Humanitarian Practice Network (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). The latter argues that this type of



education enables children to have the skills and knowledge for citizenship in a time of peace, for the intelligent response to propaganda and misinformation, and for the cultivation of voice, analytic skills, and activism.

Finally, practitioners and scholars argue that education needs to provide a space for critical, democratic dialogue, in which the life experiences of the children and their families are validated and serve as catalysts for transformation and active participation in the school-wide decision-making process (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). This mirrors the Freirean pedagogical paradigm that seeks to engage students through a process of recognizing their own experiences and identities, and using these as vehicles to transform their lives and worlds (Freire, 1994). The literature states that children should be actors in their own protection, and should therefore be “actively involved in all aspects of educational programming, including assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring” (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). Furthermore, this active participation should involve all sectors of the community because it strengthens reconstruction and recovery efforts (Machel, 2001). This is a vital educational component if both tolerance education and psychosocial space are to be effective.

### **Relevance of Problem to Education in NYC**

New York City is currently functioning more or less as it did before the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, yet there is still a need to promote the types of education that are suggested in the post-conflict educational literature. According to the Citizens’ Committee for Children, 69% of New York City parents say that their children were still experiencing some form of anxiety over the events one year later (2002). Although resuming school immediately after the attacks created a sense of normalcy for New York City school children, the lingering effects, both psychological and political, need to be continually processed. For example, in a similar situation, two years after the Oklahoma City bombings, 16% of children in the surrounding area were still experiencing trauma-related symptoms from the incident, even though they were not directly affected (Todd Beamer Foundation, 2002). In addition, tolerance, peace, and human rights education is crucial in a time when hate crimes against Arabs, Arab-Americans and Muslims have risen on school campuses and in the United States in general (American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee, 2002). New York City schools are heterogeneous spaces and children of Arab descent and of Muslim faith are entitled to a safe and tolerant environment. Children also need to be able to deconstruct the “us vs. them” mentality that often goes hand in hand with war, and to envision a future in which this dichotomy does not exist. Finally, critical pedagogy is imperative as the United States government continues its war on terrorism and current occupation of Iraq. For example, there was a general perception amongst Americans that Iraq was involved in the September 11th terrorist attacks (Kelly, 2004). Given false perceptions such as this, children need spaces to critically examine issues and information so that they can make informed decisions about their stances in a time when government propaganda is high.

## Methodology and Description of Site

This research, a singular case study of a small, alternative, New York City public high school of 170 students, relies upon several types of qualitative research data collection: five teacher interviews, two administrator interviews, direct participant-observation, and archival records were used in order to analyze the school's response to September 11th and its aftermath. The site was selected for several reasons. As a social studies educator in the school for the last six years, the author has access to archival records and to interviews with other teachers and administrators. More important, however, is that the site represents a non-traditional and unique public school experience. The school has a democratic form of governance in which all staff and students are active in creating and shaping school policy. This is done through the structures of town meeting, advisory (small groups of 15 that meet four times a week to process personal, school, local, national, and international issues), and quads (community meetings of four advisories). The staff makes final decisions on school policy by consensus at twice-weekly staff meetings. In addition, the students, parents, staff, and administration of the school have been active in the statewide and national anti-high stakes testing movement. The school has been fighting to implement Performance-Based Assessment (PBA), a more holistic, student-driven process that resembles the college level thesis system. This system of assessment supports a curriculum in which teachers have freedom to design their own courses and students have choice in course selection. The classes, therefore, are heterogeneous by ability, age, and grade level.

During the school year of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, the school was still able to administer PBA in lieu of the Regents exams for graduation. Today, however, the Regents exams must be administered to all 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders in the school in order for them to graduate. Despite this, the staff has sought creative ways to prepare students for the exam without sacrificing the unique and constructivist curriculum that exists. Overall, the school embraces a Freirean approach to pedagogy, one that encourages critical dialogue between the students and faculty. Based on the author's own experience there, it was an ideal site to explore certain successes and shortcomings in the deliverance of post-conflict education since September 11<sup>th</sup>.

## Findings: School Responses

This study's findings reveal not only how the school was able to respond to September 11th and its aftermath (which are categorized into immediate, intermediate, and on-going responses), but also why they were able to respond in the way that they did. Interviews also yielded some speculation about what would hinder services in the future.

### *Immediate responses (Fall/Winter 2001)*

- On the day of September 11<sup>th</sup>, students were already in advisory groups. By chancellor mandate, the school was on "lockdown" and no one was allowed to leave without parental

pick-up. Students were then convened into large “triads” of three advisories and were immediately able to process feelings of trauma and anxiety amongst themselves and their advisors and teachers.

- On the day of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the principal continually checked in with each group throughout the day, explaining what was known and not known. He and the school social worker were also able to individually meet with students who may have been directly affected.
- On the day of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the principal and office staff were able to coordinate with parents, so that if parents were unable to pick up their children, a plan for their arrival home was developed.
- Throughout the city, public school was suspended for one day (September 12). On September 13<sup>th</sup>, classes began later in the day, so that the entire staff could have a meeting to discuss their feelings and responses to the tragedy. (This model was used again a year and a half later, when three students in the school drowned in a boating accident).
- In response to the chancellor mandate that all public schools must pledge to the flag every morning, this school first held a staff meeting to discuss concern over the mandate and then organized a school-wide town meeting to democratically decide as an institution how to respond. The school overwhelmingly voted against mandating the pledge, with the exception of one student who said that he would prefer to pledge. He was not denied this opportunity.
- The school received a grant from the *New York Times* to cultivate creative and artistic expression in response to September 11th. The program was implemented in an English class and enabled students to write and create a school theatre production. As a result of the grant, teaching artists were also able to come into the classroom and work with students directly.
- There were several thematically-related town meetings and quads. In October the school conducted a series of quads with themes like Anti-Arab Discrimination and War in Afghanistan. Guest speakers were invited to participate. In November there was a guest speaker from Citizen Soldier. He was a former Vietnam Veteran who talked to students about the realities of war and the military. There was also a town meeting that reflected on the school Core Value, Commitment to Peace. This was not just in response to the terrorist attacks, but also to the rhetoric of American leaders after the tragedy.

#### *Extended responses (Spring 02-Spring 03)*

- There were several curricular responses for second term. Not only was terrorism and war with Afghanistan woven into existing courses and advisory, but there were also specific and

deep courses created for the next term: The Middle East and America at War. They were designed with essential questions and inquiry-based projects and discussion. The references in other classes and advisories ranged from viewing documentaries like "Military Myths" to discussions about the decision of the US with regard to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

- There were more Town Meetings with guest speakers. In October of 2002, one featured an anti-war activist that prompted many students to organize and participate in the anti-war rally in Washington DC in November 2003. There was another Town Meeting in which students were able to discuss with an executive from a major television network the role of media in a time of war. There were also workshops and discussions about regeneration and commemoration one year later.

### *Ongoing responses*

- The courses conceived in response to the tragic events are still taught. Other courses continue to reflect related issues (e.g. the use of the word "terrorist" for guerilla fighters in Guatemala, and the connection between the invasion of Melos by Athens in Ancient Greece to the invasion of Iraq by the United States).
- Quads about the upcoming presidential elections, in which reference to the current war with Iraq and the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks are prominent.

Both teachers and administrators felt that the school was able to respond to September 11th and its aftermath in the way that it did because of the unique educational program that was already in place, one that promoted a democratic voice and critical thinking. They noted that the flexible structures that already existed in the school, like town meetings, advisory, and quads, allowed them to craft responses to the needs of the students. Teachers felt that these were spaces in which students could adequately process issues ranging from the trauma of the attacks to the pledge of allegiance mandate, bias against Arab-Americans, and the overall militarization of the nation. Furthermore, teachers noted that inherent in these structures is an emphasis on critical thinking, so that children can not only deeply process decisions like whether or not to join the military, but also analyze the media and its role in the promulgation of war. In fact, both a social studies teacher and the school principal noted that the critical thinking required for understanding September 11<sup>th</sup> and its aftermath were no different from the thinking that is required for any world, local, or school "event." According to one teacher:

The discussions [around September 11<sup>th</sup>] were sort of natural for us. We have the space to discuss what is happening in the world...so in some ways, it was no different from anything else, like a police brutality incident that occurred over the weekend, or an incident that happens in the girls bathroom. We always have a

structure in place that allows for discussion about the world, large and small. (personal communication, March, 17, 2004)

In their discussions with teachers from other schools, both the principal and a teacher noted that these teachers expressed the lack of adequate space and time to discuss September 11<sup>th</sup> and its aftermath properly with their students. The structures that existed in this particular school, therefore, were unique. The school co-director stated that:

What is clear to me suddenly is what a different animal we are from a large comprehensive school and maybe even some other small schools...We are really a concerned group of people with a mission, and so of course we are going to respond in a personal way that is school specific rather than responding to a larger mandate from the bureaucracy or head of guidance or something. And it is not like people in other schools do not have ideas but there is nowhere for them to actually process them. (personal communication, March, 29, 2004)

Teachers noted that this space to process ideas was linked to the democratic, collaborative leadership model of the school, in which teachers and students can develop their ideas about external events and respond accordingly. For example, one teacher noted that the staff meetings, built into the schedule twice a week, allowed teachers to process the students' feelings about the activities and curricula around September 11<sup>th</sup>, and respond accordingly. Another teacher noted that advisory and the staff meetings were the strongest structures that enabled staff to continually reevaluate how to address the community's needs.

Teachers and administrators asserted that the school's system of assessment at the time of September 11<sup>th</sup> was organically-related to the type of pedagogy and structures that were in place at the time. One teacher expressed that the September 11<sup>th</sup> grant received from the *New York Times*, for example, would not have worked in another school because the Regents exam-driven curriculum would not have allowed space for it. Another teacher reiterated that this curriculum does not allow for the creativity and space to discuss issues in depth, and in fact, promotes the use of history in sound bites, rather than towards an authentic understanding of the past. All indicated that the recent decision by the State Commissioner to administer the Regents in PBA schools has already had a profound effect not just in the administration of post-conflict education, but in the school's overall mission in general. In fact, one teacher emphatically stated that the school is:

on a precipice. When we as an institution are forced to respond to the outside forces just a little bit...we do not have the community that we want to have...as we try to accommodate more and more the effects of the imperatives of the regents exams, we will be more and more hindered and less effective at this work. (personal communication, March 17, 2004)

One teacher noted that the emphasis of the Regents perhaps goes along with the militaristic mood of the times, in that the exams are a centralized way of dealing with the assessment of students, much in the way that war requires a centralization of ideas to support it. Several teachers reflected, however, that the Regents exams, and the preparation required for them, would not only alter curricular content, but also potentially interfere with the various school structures, including town meeting, advisory, and staff meetings that have enabled the creative and effective responses to September 11<sup>th</sup> and its aftermath.

### **Background of NY State Testing Movement and Its Impact on Education**

The New York State high-stakes testing movement gained momentum several years before September 11<sup>th</sup>. While it originated in an effort to create higher standards and school accountability, it has turned into a system that determines promotion and in the case of high school students, a diploma. New York State has administered Regents exams since 1865, but it was not until 1996, when State Commissioner Richard Mills took office, that the tests became a requirement for graduation (Folts, 1996). Many politicians and even some educators have welcomed the decision, insisting that prior to this requirement, students were going to college without the proper skills (Viadero, 2001). Opponents of the tests argue that the emphasis on them waters down the curriculum, curtails creativity, and creates unnecessary anxiety. In fact, a poll stated that 44% of parents nationwide thought too much emphasis was placed on high-stakes exams, while only 22% thought there was not enough (Gerwetz, 2001). In addition, while advocates like Diane Ravitch (2001) claim that the tests will level the playing field for children by providing an equal and adequate education for all, opponents insist that testing will simply reinforce and exacerbate the social, racial, and economic stratification that already exist (Kane & Steiger, 2001).

The dimensions of the debate are multifaceted and complex in terms of the pedagogical, sociological, and economic ramifications, and although this study is focused on the impact the tests have in a post-conflict educational environment, the effects of the test, external to a post-conflict environment, are important to note. For example, valuable instructional time is lost in preparing for tests, prompting one state to get rid of them (Manzo, 2001). Furthermore, critics argue that various necessary non-academic aspects of education, like art, music, and even play time for younger children, have been already eliminated from the school day as a result of testing (Huffington, 2001). These effects could pose problems for post-conflict education execution, especially since the literature specifically suggests the necessity for time for these "non-academic" processes. In fact, Shelley Harwayne, educator and author of a book on children's responses to September 11<sup>th</sup>, concludes that art is needed more than ever as a means of expression for those children that are less verbal (2002). One scholar, Maurice Elias of Rutgers University, makes the direct connection between tests and September 11<sup>th</sup>. He argues that in light of the tragic events, schools must move beyond test scores and educate students for civic

participation, the development of sound character, and understanding democratic freedom (2001).

## **Analysis and Conclusion**

In 2001 and the years following, when PBA existed in lieu of the Regents at this school, its responses to September 11<sup>th</sup> and its aftermath aligned with the recommendations of those in the post-conflict field, as articulated in the theoretical section of this paper. Psychosocial spaces were created through the advisory curriculum, town meetings, and guidance support. Peace and human rights education, as well as critical dialogue, were implemented through the creation of new courses, the connections made within existing courses, and the advisories, town meetings, and interest quads. These structures exist because the school's mission requires a pedagogy and form of democratic governance that is responsive to the needs of the students, and not the mandates of the standardized tests. This school now faces the demands of the Regents exams, which will externally impose class content of less immediate relevancy to students' lives and potentially reduce the regularity of non-academic, supportive structures like advisory and town meeting. Based on this analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

*Meaningful post-conflict education is meaningful education.* All schools, even in times of "peace," should implement the recommended post-conflict services. Given the current global landscape, children need not only to examine constantly and critically the images and policies that affect them, but also to envision and create new alternatives for themselves, their communities, and the world. Schools that have both a clear vision of the need for structures that support student critical dialogue and emotional growth and that have the capacity to implement structures and curricula according to this vision may be more successful in implementing post-conflict services than schools that do not already have spaces in which to process issues. Structures of democratic governance in particular lead to a more sound and appropriate response to crisis and trauma. The experiences of the educators and administrators in this school support the necessity for this type of governance.

*High stakes standardized testing may prove to be a great hindrance to instituting effective structures and responses to conflict and post-conflict environments.* As the demands of the Regents and other standardized tests increase, the power of school decision-making bodies decreases. Schools are unilaterally forced to adhere to mandates rather than implement education that is responsive and relevant to the needs of their students. Because of the high-stakes nature of these exams, schools are forced to place emphasis on test preparation to the detriment of other needed educational services, such as those discussed in this paper. Furthermore, the rigidity of the exams stifles the creativity and envisioning necessary in peace education, and instead promotes an inflexible, superficial response to a problem.

Before concluding, it is important to note that no students lost a direct nuclear family member, although several lost other relatives and family friends. The findings, therefore, may have yielded different results had more students

lost members of their immediate family. Furthermore, students and parents were not interviewed for this case study, and their input would significantly augment the scope of the research. Finally, the school studied reflects an institution in which Regents exams were not yet fully implemented. It would also be informative to study how schools with Regents responded to September 11<sup>th</sup> and its aftermath and compare the findings.

Yet there is much to be learned from this school's experience. As states nationwide adopt the policy of high-stakes tests, it is crucial that we reexamine the impact on our schools, especially during the current global climate. Teachers and schools need to be equipped to deal with the psychological and emotional impact of this on their students. Flexibility of school design, schedule, and curriculum, buttressed by democratic structures that enable schools to respond accordingly, will in fact prepare schools more effectively to administer the necessary services. The increased reliance on high-stakes standardized tests, however, promises to undermine these structures, and thereby to impede the necessary delivery of post-conflict education.

## Notes

- 1) The exception to this is the schools that were in the vicinity of Ground Zero. Many of them did not resume classes until weeks after the incident. This involved moving temporarily to another site until schools were cleaned up and inspected.

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