Interest Convergence in Intergroup Education and Beyond: Rethinking Agendas in Multicultural Education

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Intergroup movements in the United States in the 1920s-50s provided leadership to schools and communities grappling with rising racial and ethnic unrest. C. A. M. Banks (1996, 2004, 2005) argues that the conceptual limitations of the movement's scholarship and its decline yield important lessons for multicultural educators. Building upon her work, I use Bell's (1980) interest-convergence principle to analyze the movement's successes and failures given the interests and values of prominent political, socioeconomic, and educational constituencies of the time. As an analytic lens, the interest-convergence principle simultaneously clarifies and complicates future agendas in multicultural education research, pedagogy, and curriculum.

The intercultural education movement that began in the 1920s, later known as the intergroup movement in the 1940s and 1950s, provided leadership to schools and communities dealing with the increasing racial and ethnic unrest that fueled widespread discrimination and prejudice during the first half of the twentieth century. C. A. M. Banks (1996, 2005), in her analysis of the history and scholarship of this educational movement, argued that the limitations of the scholarship and the decline of the movement could serve as important lessons for today's multicultural educators. Drawing from her work, I use Bell's (1980) interest-convergence principle as a lens to analyze the intergroup education movement's successes and failures in the context of its time. The historical, social, and political environment of the 1930s and 1940s provided fertile ground for the intellectual foundations and ethical values of the intergroup scholars. I argue that this convergence of interests was similar, in many ways, to that of the political and historical context of the civil rights era. The interest-convergence principle in Critical Race Theory, as an outgrowth of legal scholarship in the

1960s and 1970s, thus allows us to explore the rise and fall of the intergroup education movement as well as to suggest future conceptualizations of multicultural education. Coupled with other contextual factors embedded in the interests and values of prominent political, socioeconomic, and educational constituencies during the intergroup education and civil rights movements, the interest-convergence principle simultaneously clarifies and complicates future agendas in multicultural education research, pedagogy, and curriculum.

Critical Race Theory and Interest Convergence in Education

Critical Race Theory (CRT) encompasses a body of work developed by legal scholars and educators who argue that racism is a common occurrence in society. CRT is derived from scholarship in Critical Legal Studies (CLS), a method of legal analysis that rejects liberalism and maintains that the law serves the powerful elite (Tate, 1997). CRT scholars, who insist that the narratives of oppressed people of color cannot be told within the liberal, dominant civil rights discourse (Bell, 1980; Delgado, 1990), further argue that CLS does not adequately represent the voices of people of color (Tate, 1997). Tate defines the elements of CRT according to its: 1) recognition of racism as endemic in US society, 2) crossing of epistemological and disciplinary boundaries, 3) understanding of the limitations in civil rights law, 4) portrayal of legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy as "camouflages for the self-interest of powerful entities of society," and 5) insistence on a contextual examination of the law and the inclusion of the experiential knowledge of people of color in interpreting law and society (p. 235).

In his review of CRT in education, Tate (1997) analyzed the ways in which CRT can be applied to educational issues. He explained that "laws to remedy racial inequality are often undermined before they can be fully implemented" (p. 234). His thesis is especially relevant a decade later, given the recent Supreme Court decision in *Parents Involved v. Seattle* (2007) in which two districts' voluntary integration programs were ruled unconstitutional because the defendant's use of racial classifications was not narrowly tailored to serve the state's interests in promoting diversity. Tate (1997) urged educators to "challenge the ahistorical treatment of education, equity, and students of color" (p. 235) in current legal and policy discourse and explored the use of Bell's (1980, 2003) interest-convergence principle as a lens to examine claims of neutrality in the dominant liberal discourse of equity in education.

Bell's Interest-Convergence Principle and the Civil Rights Movement

According to Bell (1980), "The interest of [B]lacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of

[W]hites" (p. 523), and the Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) decision was driven by political factors beyond the lack of equitable schooling for Black children. Bell (1980) revisits Wechsler's (1959) argument that *Brown vs. Board of Education* could not be justified on the basis of "neutral" principles. Despite his well-known work as a dedicated civil rights scholar, Wechsler argued that based on the idea of free association, protecting the right of Blacks to associate with Whites by mandatory integration requires denying the rights of Whites to associate with whom they wish—and he warned that the limitations of the *Brown* decision would lead to unintended consequences for the civil rights movement.

Wechsler's (1959) critique was promptly refuted by leading civil rights scholars. According to Black (1960), racial equality *is* a neutral principle. His major premise is that "segregation is a massive intentional disadvantaging of the Negro race" (p. 421) and that this is a sufficiently neutral foundation for anti-segregation legislation. In his essay 20 years later, however, Bell (1980) reflects on the unheeded warnings of Weschler's incisive critique and argues that, in retrospect, there may have been merit in Weschler's narrow definition of "neutral principles" over Black's because

> [W]hites may agree in the abstract that [B]lacks are citizens and are entitled to constitutional protection against racial discrimination, but few are willing to recognize that racial segregation…[cannot] be remedied effectively without altering the status of [W]hites. The extent of this unwillingness is illustrated by the controversy over affirmative action programs, particularly those where identifiable [W]hites must step aside for [B]lacks they deem less qualified or less deserving. (p. 522)

Therefore, although the principle of racial equality is one that most people have come to uphold, the social, political, and economic changes necessary to end discrimination and inequality in education often meet with much resistance from dominant groups (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006).

Without diminishing the hard work and dedication of civil rights scholars, activists and leaders, Bell (1980) contended that *Brown* was feasible in the 1950s due to the convergence of interests between the plaintiff and the pressing concerns of dominant groups; for over 100 years, Blacks *and* Whites had fought to improve educational opportunities for Black students to no avail. What motivated this breakthrough? Since the end of World War II, tension had risen between White mainstream society and the Black veterans who fought for the United States in the war, and outlawing segregation would greatly increase the international credibility of the United States in the fight against Communist regimes (Bell, 1980). Additionally, much in the same way that the Northern industrial philanthropists in the 19th century opposed slavery as a major obstacle to the development of an industrial economy in the South (Anderson, 1988), segregation was viewed as a barrier to further industrialization in the mid-20th century South (Bell, 1980). Finally, Bell (1980) cites the Court's role in enforcing desegregation during the 1960s and 1970s as another example of interest convergence by noting that "*Brown*, in the view of many, might not have been a

wise or proper decision, but violent and prolonged opposition to its implementation posed an even greater danger to the federal system" (p. 529). Although these issues may not in themselves adequately justify a decision as important as *Brown* and the subsequent desegregation legislation, they cast the crowning success of the civil rights movement in light of the broader sociopolitical context of the period.

The process of contextualizing and historicizing legal decisions, as demanded by CRT, is an analytical exercise intended to broaden our understanding of important decisions and trends in jurisprudence and education; educators, scholars, and researchers may thus construct a more complex understanding of past and current policies, practices, and ideologies that underlie multicultural education scholarship. This perspective assists us in continuing to explore and contextualize the intergroup education movement, which in many ways parallels current multicultural educators' efforts to "reduce intergroup tensions and to increase the academic achievement of all students" (C. A. M. Banks, 2005, p. 1). CRT, via Bell's (1980) thesis on the role of converging self-interests during the civil rights era, thus serves as a lens through which we may more insightfully position ourselves toward the development of future research agendas in multicultural education.

Theory, Leadership, and Interest Convergence in Intercultural Education

C. A. M. Banks (1996) conceptualizes intercultural and intergroup education as "one continuous egalitarian movement that began in the mid-1920s with an emphasis on culture and continued into the 1950s with an emphasis on prejudice reduction" (p. 254). The movement encompassed the work of scholars from various academic, social, and political perspectives who developed programs and projects guided by the assumption that "there were more similarities than differences among people" and that individuals from various racial, ethnic, and religious groups would learn to "accept and respect each other" if they developed an understanding of others' backgrounds and cultures (C. A. M. Banks, 2005, p. 11). The leaders of the intercultural education movement, several of whom, like Hilda Taba, were immigrants, had overcome great obstacles in their professional careers and their research in anthropology, sociology, and education (C. A. M. Banks, 2005). They sought to infuse the school curriculum with values and principles leading to tolerance, prejudice reduction, and the appreciation of cultural and racial differences, as well as to improve relations between and within communities and schools and deal with rising immigration (C. A. M. Banks, 2004; Taba & Wilson, 1946).

Interest in early intercultural scholarship projects was consistent with the developing academic fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and their relationship to the "science" of education during the social efficiency period (Kliebard, 2004). Amidst the pressing concerns of unemployment, poverty, and rising crime in urban areas, which some attributed to the recent wave of

immigrants from Europe and migrants from the South, intercultural educators were united by a national interest in better intercultural and interracial relationships. Although Van Til and Denemark (1950) argue that it was not until the late 1940s that a "theoretical, conceptual framework regarding the nature of prejudice…[was] laid by the psychological and social sciences" (p. 274), Davis-Dubois' (1936) work encouraged teachers, especially in the arts, to become social engineers. She wrote about the "hope" of the new "science of human relations" in carrying out social goals that "can be set up and slowly worked toward if the social processes are understood and intelligently used" (p. 734).

Many intergroup educators thus developed a broader understanding of curriculum and schooling and examined "the ways in which residential segregation and stratification were paralleled by segregation and stratification in school club memberships and cross-group associations" (C. A. M. Banks, 1996, p. 265). Like today's ecological paradigm, which encompasses students' overall experiences with respect to learning in and out of school (Weiner, 2000), intergroup leaders sought to infuse school knowledge with an understanding of how prejudice and discrimination in and out of school was inconsistent with American creed ideals (C. A. M. Banks, 1996).

Two of the most successful and well-known intercultural projects at the time, The Springfield Plan in Massachusetts and the Benjamin Franklin High School in New York City, shared this understanding of a democratic education as a community affair (C. A. M. Banks, 1996, 2005). The leaders of The Springfield Plan designed a social engineering experiment to help youth and adults acquire the skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary to "embrace the principles of democracy in a pluralistic society" (p. 257); in the community, adults were invited to participate in a council of representatives from various ethnic, racial, and religious groups to create adult and youth programs that embodied the values of democratic society. In the school, teachers were encouraged to become intimately engaged in curriculum design and professional development and to infuse the curriculum with students' heritage and culture (Davis-DuBois, 1936, 1938, 1939; Taba & Wilson, 1946), striking many parallels with current work on how to incorporate students' "funds of knowledge" in the curriculum (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004). The Benjamin Franklin High School in New York City was another successful example of a school's positive impact on human relations and democratic citizenship by organizing a corpus of teachers and community activists who designed transformative curricula and engaged immigrant families as well as the community at large in the work of the school (C. A. M. Banks, 2004, 2005).

Not all intercultural educators, however, had the same perspectives regarding the end goals of intercultural and intergroup education. Unlike Van Til and Davis-DuBois, who were both cultural pluralists, many intercultural educators believed that assimilation and integration into American society were synonymous and that intercultural education served to facilitate the multigenerational process of assimilation (Park, as cited in C. A. M. Banks, 2005). They used the anthropological perspectives of the time (Boas, cited C. A.

M. Banks, 2005) to justify their work, arguing that cultures should be blended in US society.

Although anthropological discourse may have united the efforts of various intercultural educators, it also obscured the divergent agendas of the individual scholars and educators involved. According to Van Til (1962), "Some are suspicious of those who hold to their own language and customs and discriminate against new immigration waves. However, our country has adopted cultural pluralism as preferable to such an attitude" (p. 432). Yet there is little evidence that cultural pluralism ever became the overall agenda of the intercultural and intergroup movements given the internal conflicts faced by leaders such as Davis-DuBois when the interests of White ethnics, Blacks, and new immigrants did not coincide (C. A. M. Banks, 2005). For example, Mead (1978) discussed the ways in which interculturalism had an impact on education in the 1930s and 1940s and noted that although customs, songs and food, and the dance and dress of various cultural groups were "recognized within the schools and within the community," cultural pluralism at the language level was hampered (p.711). Her anthropological explanation was that "so many of the immigrants had been nonliterate and spoke only a dialect" that it would have hampered the influence of various languages (p. 711). However, in light of the controversies over bilingual education in recent history (Artiles, Trent, & Palmer, 2004), one may also argue that the limitations of cultural pluralism might have been related to the resistance to incorporating other languages and cultures as fully valid and equal in the curriculum. The interest in food, music, and dress, much of what J. A. Banks (2004a) has classified as inherent in the "additive" or "contributions" approaches to multicultural education (p. 15), represents a nod to ideals of tolerance and diversity but does not work toward changing power structures in society and schooling.

Interest Convergence in Intercultural and Intergroup Education

In the 1930s and 1940s, a rise in immigration and a struggling economy meant a greater threat of racial and ethnic unrest all over the country as people vied for limited employment opportunities, housing, and services. The wave of riots and unrest in many cities created a sense of urgency in dealing with intolerance and discrimination, as evident in the report of the President's Committee on Social Trends: "There can be no assurance that violent revolution can be averted unless there is a greater integration of social skills and fusing of social purposes than is revealed by recent trends" (Davis-DuBois, 1936, p. 395). Government thus validated the national interest in intercultural and interracial relations; institutions and organizations funded the programs; and the shared ideals of democracy and citizenship united minorities, communities, academics, and educators during the time of war and looming socioeconomic and political unrest. The school and the curriculum seemed ideally poised for interventions aimed at prejudice reduction; the intercultural movement was thus at least

superficially supported by a fairly broad range of constituents.

Nonetheless, in the 1940s when the second generation of early 20th century immigrants (mostly White ethnics) were becoming increasingly assimilated, the general thrust of the movement became somewhat fractured (C.A. M. Banks, 2004). Jewish groups, which had funded much of the early work in the movement, became increasingly integrated in post-war society and worried that the emphasis on cultural issues in the transformative curricula developed by Davis-DuBois would stir up former religious intolerance; they supported a human relations approach that emphasized similarities rather than highlighting differences (C. A. M. Banks, 2004, 2005). According to Jacobson (1999),

> Chastened by war and the Nazis in Europe, and in light of massive immigration of African Americans from the south, race relations became solidified as a [B]lack-[W]hite issue, and ethnicity became a more accepted way to conceptualize differences between different groups. (p. 96)

In addition, the success of the eugenics movement in making the Johnson formula for immigration into law "quickly reduced the threat posed by inferior [W]hite races in the body politic, and so decreased the political and social stakes that had kept such racial distinctions alive" (p. 95) among Whites.

Furthermore, toward mid-century the convergence of interests between mainstream society and racial minority groups began to fade. For example, according to J. A. Banks (2004b), the "candid criticism of racism and discrimination in the American South" in G. Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, a comprehensive study on US race relations funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, "surprised and embarrassed" the funders "who identified with America's power elite" (p. 232). As a consequence of its publication and reception, which challenged the status quo, foundation funds for race relations were greatly diminished thereafter (J. A. Banks, 2004b). The convergence of interests between oppressed minorities and mainstream leaders seeking to alleviate interracial tensions was compromised when the status quo was challenged. The loss of funding venues for interracial and intercultural research, along with the rise of other national concerns such as the Cold War and the increasingly reactionary climate of McCarthyism in US politics (C. A. M. Banks, 2005), weakened the intercultural education movement despite the national emphasis on similar democratic ideals. As the interest-convergence principle casts this conflict in greater relief, it begs the question: Would an awareness of the interest convergence underlying the movement's earlier successes have led them to strategize differently toward the future of intergroup education?

C. A. M. Banks (1996, 2005) argues that the intergroup education movement waned, in part, due to its failure to change with the times: "Intergroup educators focused their attention on prejudice and discrimination at the personal level and did not give much attention to the structures in American society that supported those perspectives" (p. 127). As well, she explains, people of color had always been somewhat at the margins of the movement, contributing

occasionally to the scholarship but not involved in the leadership of the major institutions and organizations in the movement. Although Davis-DuBois and a few other intercultural educators left the Bureau of Intercultural Education to join the civil rights movement and Van Til redirected the work of the Bureau toward prejudice reduction (C. A. M. Banks, 2005), the Bureau closed in 1954, coincidentally and perhaps symbolically, the year of the *Brown* decision. From an interest-convergence perspective, however, the civil rights and intergroup movements might have complemented each other well had there been more dialogue between them, as well as an awareness of how the two movements might have advanced some of the other's goals.

An example of the intergroup movement's missed opportunity to capitalize on the convergence of their interests with those of the civil rights movement is evident in Van Til's research and scholarship after the closing of the Bureau in 1954. Van Til's (1959) review of instructional methods in intercultural and intergroup education demonstrated his complex understanding of the shifts and changes of the era. He categorized the movement into four stages: 1) the "missionary stage" of the 1920s in which educators were converted to the necessity of this work in schools, 2) the stage of "simple answers," which oversimplified the complexity of the intercultural education task, 3) the stage of "promising practices" during World War II, which identified promising hypotheses and approaches, and 4) the "research stage" in the mid-1940s and early 1950s (p. 369). In this review, Van Til commented on the "evidence of reappraisal of the philosophy and techniques of intercultural and intergroup education" (p. 370). He cited scholarly articles that critiqued the movement's assumption that conflict and hostility are due to "lack of understanding" and emphasized the irrelevance of human relations approaches in dealing with racial friction in the South (p. 370). Van Til's work marked his departure from the many intergroup educators who were still in the stage of "simple answers" and called for substantial research on "the necessity of integration accompanying desegregation" (p. 374). Although Van Til's scholarship emphasized the need for rethinking intergroup education in the context of the civil rights era, his insight was perhaps too late; by 1959, civil rights activism was generally dominated by the legislative and policy-driven struggles of desegregation in schools, and little attention was paid to the quality of that education for students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2004).

Intercultural and Intergroup Parallels in Multicultural Education

In his classification of approaches to multicultural education, J. A. Banks (2004b) compared the intercultural and intergroup movements to Sleeter and Grant's (1987) analysis of the human relations approach in multicultural education. Sleeter and Grant conceptualize this approach as multicultural education that emphasizes the need for people to get along and appreciate each other's differences but does not address concerns about social stratification, poverty, institutional discrimination, and powerlessness. Like the intercultural and

intergroup educators, this approach assumes that the work done in the classroom and better communication among different groups will lead to cooperation between Whites and people of color, eventually working to diminish inequality (Milner, 2005). Sleeter and Grant (1987) argue that this emphasis on instruction without social reconstruction "puts the burden of eliminating racism on people of color and their teachers rather than on the general population" (p. 425). Furthermore, Ladson-Billings (2004) argues that the multiculturalism that has "made it to Main Street" (p. 50) in many ways undermines the transformative work of multicultural education by promoting a superficial notion of diversity that appropriates the voices of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups without disrupting power relations in society. This approach is exemplified in Hirsch's cultural literacy model that seeks to incorporate "diverse" voices into a canon framed by and derived from Western epistemology (1987). It is not surprising that the human relations approach, which may also be referred to as mainstream multiculturalism, demonstrates a similar convergence of interests to the intercultural movement's resonance with mainstream society in the 1940s, when many educational and political leaders viewed intercultural education "as a means to maintain a united America" (C. A. M. Banks, 2005, p. 124). The parallels between the intercultural and multicultural education movements suggest that applying the principle of interest convergence has the potential to broaden as well as deepen our understanding of how contextual and historical factors must be considered in determining the direction of future scholarship, research, and practice in the field.

Benefits and Limitations of Interest Convergence

Since the 1980s, Bell (1980, 2003) has argued that the legal, political, social, and economic "convergence of Black and White interests" surrounding the *Brown* decision in 1954 that "influenced the character of its enforcement has begun to fade" (p. 526). In the last two decades, the Court has reversed much of what *Brown* was to have accomplished by increasingly regarding the use of racial terms as unconstitutional, even as compensatory practices to counteract a history of institutional racism and discrimination (Bell, 2003). While in *Gratz vs. Bollinger* (2003) it was ruled unconstitutional for Michigan State University's (MSU) undergraduate admissions policy to automatically distribute one-fifth of the points needed to guarantee admission to underrepresented minorities, the MSU College of Law's admissions diversity policy was affirmed. The law school's focus on diversity, reflected in its attention to other factors beyond race, won the swing vote in the majority opinion. Thus, Bell noted that "it was diversity in the classroom, on the work floor, and in the military, not the need to address past and continuing racial barriers, that gained O'Connor's vote in *Grutter vs. Bollinger*" (Bell, 2003, p. 1625). *Gratz* (2003) and *Grutter* (2003) are examples of how principles related to diversity and colorblindness in legislature and policy have conflated various disparate agendas in the liberal discourse of educational equity.

As in my analysis of the intercultural education movement above, the interest-convergence principle can shed light on the way multicultural education today must consider the lasting impact of the recent conservative political and policy context in education (Lipman, 2004). Colorblind language and policy, politically correct discourse, and "neutral" reform practices mask mainstream society's discomfort and reluctance to face difficult racial issues, and, as a result, students of color continue to be underserved (Pollock, 2004). In *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007), the Supreme Court deemed integration efforts in public schools unconstitutional. In a statement that hearkens back to Jewish groups' unwillingness to allude to past wrongs in curriculum in an attempt to keep intolerance at bay (C. A. M. Banks, 2004, 2005), as discussed above, the current desire to move beyond difficult racial issues seems to trump an honest assessment of the ways in which racial and structural discrimination impacts the lives of students of color in the United States. The opinion of dissenting Justices Breyer, Stevens, Ginsburg, and Souter claims,

> [T]he history of race discrimination in public education, the current inequities based on race in public education, and the need for a more pluralistic tolerant society must be taken into account when assessing the compelling nature of race in public schools. (Kaufman, 2008).

Yet the plurality decision by Justices Roberts, Scalia, Thomas, and Alito maintained that "allowing racial balancing as a compelling end in itself would effectively assure that race will always be relevant in American life" (p. 2759). As many postwar Americans in the intergroup movement felt about transformative curricula, these Justices seem convinced that avoiding conversations about race makes it more likely for the problem to fade into the annals of history. Our recent historic election of President Barack Obama complicates the notion of a colorblind "post race" America further, as leaders on both the right and the left point to our first African American president as evidence that racial discrimination is a thing of the past. While seeing an African American in the nation's highest office is certainly an inspiration to all children of color, it is naïve to assume that structural discrimination and inequity of resources and opportunity will all resolve themselves. Again, with haunting similarity to those who abandoned intercultural and intergroup education agendas in the 1940s and 1950s, proponents of current policies and legislation based on the notion of a colorblind "post race" America argue that those who are actively "fighting for racial equality are actually perpetuating racial discrimination by continuing to live in a world that has long passed" (Kaufman, 2008). Arguably, an interest-convergence analysis of historic moments of "progress" in racial matters, one that highlights the contrast between the optimism generated by the *Brown* decision and the glaring evidence of school resegregation in US schools since the 1990s (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Weiner, 2000), can best expose the fallacy of a "post race" America.

Nonetheless, the interest-convergence principle also has important limitations that must be considered when analyzing educational issues. A focus on the convergence of mainstream and marginal constituencies' interests can obscure the contextual factors and unintended consequences of scholarship,

research, and policy. For example, J. D. Grambs' *Intergroup Education: Methods and Materials* (1968) was consistent with Van Til's (1959) call for research on education in integrated settings. While Grambs' work in intergroup education offered insightful approaches to the complex issues faced by integrated schools such as teacher attitudes and the need for a transformative curriculum, one of her published critiques of Black history undermined the work being done by Black scholars to disrupt the hegemony of Western epistemology in the curriculum (J. A. Banks, 1969). Such conflicts, driven by the positionality of intergroup educators as White middle-class scholars, surely contributed to the parting of ways between the civil rights movement and intergroup education, yet they would not be addressed from an interest-convergence analysis.

Therefore, while there is promise in exploring the connections between intersectionality, positionality, and interest-convergence, none of these frameworks is a panacea. Matsuda and others have argued that "oppressed people have certain types of insight that others may lack" (as cited in Delgado, 1990, p. 99), and "persons who have grown up in a minority community may have information not easily accessible to others and a special stake in disseminating it (p. 100). This seems an appropriate argument on which to base the assertion that today's increasingly global society could benefit from an intersectional and positional perspective on education and democratic society. The principle of interest-convergence would suggest that it is in the interest of dominant groups to seek an understanding of the advantages of positional perspectives in working with increasingly diverse constituencies. However, this is problematic premise due to the unusual burden of disclosure placed upon marginalized groups. Indeed, some scholars argue that the powerful actually gain more access and power from the disclosure of privileged information about oppressed people (Garrison, 2005; Jones, 2005). Rather than simply providing knowledge about the "other" to inform dominant groups as in the human relations approach, new information must disrupt the knowledge that is already there (J. A. Banks, 2004b; Kumashiro, 2000). This is particularly significant due to the usual unwillingness of persons from dominant groups to recognize the unearned privileges they enjoy (Houston, 2005; McIntosh, 1988). In the same vein, it is crucial to address the complexities of power and privilege beyond ethnicity and race. For instance, although I am a person of color, the power relations inscribed in my position as a middle-class professional and academic complicate my work on behalf of other marginalized groups in society.

Future Agendas in Multicultural Research, Scholarship, and Pedagogy

As in the early 20th century, contemporary educators and social leaders are again grappling with the challenges of increasing immigration, diversity within the nation-state, and the blurring of national borders (J. A. Banks, 2004d) amidst the persistence of the "education debt" perpetuated by the inequitable education of students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Both of these agendas, although

often approached separately, arguably have converging interests. For example, J. A. Banks' work on citizenship education in a global world, with its emphasis on helping students "to develop thoughtful and clarified identifications with their cultural communities and their nation-states" maintains that students cannot develop a strong allegiance to national values if they are marginalized within their own communities (2004c, p. 293). As evident in the marginal successes of reforms in education to date (Lee, 2002), comprehensive efforts to create more equitable schooling for a multicultural society are contingent upon the convergence of interests between policymakers, activists, mainstream educators, and social justice educators. They also depend upon the ability of the marginalized to learn to navigate the "culture of power" (Delpit, 2006). Reconceptualizing multicultural education for democracy as a key component of global citizenship requires that students be incited to dialogue about the ways in which the interests of cultural communities may be at odds or in congruence with national values. However, those who seek to work at the convergence of interests between mainstream and marginal groups must bear in mind that "hegemony refers to processes of domination that are maintained 'not by sheer force' but through 'consensual social practices'" (McLaren, cited in King, 2004, p. 355). A counter-hegemonic agenda and a complex understanding of the intersection between issues of race, ethnicity, and culture within the context of history, politics, society, and schooling can contribute to the ongoing transformative process of rethinking multicultural education.

Acknowledgment

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