COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC POLICY:

Proceedings of the 2008 International Colloquium on Communication

Eric E. Peterson, Editor
University of Maine

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2009

Contents

An Introduction to Communication and Public Policy

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The 21st meeting of the International Colloquium on Communication, held on July 27 – August 1, 2008, focused on the theme of communication and public policy. Laura Lindenfeld, Kristin Langellier and I, as conference organizers, developed this theme to explore the ongoing conversation about the relationship between public policy and communication studies that ranges across a wide variety of issues: for example, what role(s) does communication scholarship have in the analysis and implementation of public policy? How might engagement with public policy offer new opportunities to communication studies scholarship? How important is it to bring communication scholarship to discourse on public policy? The participants of this colloquium take up these and other related questions as a way of joining this ongoing conversation about public policy.

Communication figures in public policy in a variety of complex ways. Communication is one site where policy is publicly worked over, often in hearings and debates, in the editorial pages of newspapers and magazines, on radio and television talk shows, and on political weblogs and social networking sites. Communication is the subject of public policy, most notably in laws and regulations on forms of speech, mass media, and telecommunication. Communication is the object of policy, as witnessed in the efforts by government and non-government agencies to inform and educate various publics about problems in society. And, communication is an academic discipline that studies public policy. These varied relations between communication and public policy offer numerous possibilities for scholars, practitioners, and activists.

The emphasis on the importance of communication to public policy is not new nor is it unique. For example, Iris Marion Young (2000), in her book on *Inclusion and Democracy*, emphasizes that inclusive political communication is key to the legitimacy and success of democracy. She argues:

Law and policy are democratically legitimate to the extent that they address problems identified through broad public discussion with remedies that respond to reasonably reflective and undominated public opinion. The associational activity of civil society functions to identify problems, interests, and needs in the society; public spheres take up these problems, communicate them to others, give them urgency, and put pressures on state institutions to institute measures to address them. (p. 177)

Young concludes that:

Public organizing and engagement, then, can be thought of as processes by which the society communicates to itself about its needs, problems, and creative ideas for how to solve them. The democratic legitimacy of public policy, moreover, depends partly on the state institutions being sensitive to that communication process. The moral force of the processes of public communication and its relations to policy, then, rests in part on a requirement that such communication be both inclusive and critically self-conscious. (p. 179)

Communication, from such a perspective, is not merely the site, subject, or object of public policy. Rather, communication is essential, in the phenomenological sense, to public policy in a democracy.

The following essays from the colloquium explore the ways in which attention to communication can enrich public policy and, conversely, how attention to public policy can enrich the lived world and our ecology of communication. The essays are grouped into three sections: communication education, communication analysis, and language and media issues. In the first section on education, Hellmut Geissner – a co-founder of the Colloquim forty years ago – describes his ongoing work with the Institute for Rhetoric and Methodology in Political Education. The IRM is an adult education effort that emphasizes the importance of communication as a way to manage and foster democracy. In the second essay, Tim Hegstrom

describes a similar effort in the U.S. to use group discussion as a way to foster participative democracy and citizenship training. Roland Wagner, in the third essay, focuses on specific forms of communication education used with politicians from Heidelberg. He outlines the specific demands that politicians make on educators and suggests a variety of ways that communication education is a valuable resource for them. In the final essay in this section, Gary Selnow describes how video and Internet-based technologies can be used to extend medical education, especially in dispersed geographic regions and in hostile environments such as Iraq and Kosovo.

The authors in the second group of essays employ different forms of communication analysis to explore particular public policy issues. Elizabeth Fine conducts a metaphor analysis to unpack how a U.S. Congressman from Virginia uses language to frame the discussion and representation of supposedly "clean" coal technology. Etsuko Kinefuchi takes up the challenge of how communication can work to develop public policy focused on ethnic and racial diversity in Greensboro, North Carolina. Donal Carbaugh analyzes the gap between how service agencies approach local communities and how those same communities conceptualize their situation. He identifies three areas that contribute to this gap: differences in the concepts and symbols people use to think and speak, differences in what is thought of as good conduct and practical action, and differences in designing cooperative action. In the final essay of the section, Werner Nothdurft argues that how we conceptualize people and social interaction makes a difference for how we conceptualize and practice public policy.

The third group of essays focus on the importance of language and media in public policy. Edith Slembek describes the process of training speakers to give brief testimonials for a television program broadcast in Switzerland. Slembek examines the case of three speakers to suggest the impact of the program. Edward Sewell explores three approaches to language policy – assimilation, bilingualism, and confederation – and the conflicts that result from these policies especially in a context of globalization. Shane Perry, in a case study of a National Geographic documentary, examines how media production practices both engage and frame international events for domestic audiences. In the final essay, Imke Schessler-Jandreau considers U.S. government policies on health and weight loss. These policies adopt a form of medical discourse that frame obesity as an individual problem in need of "therapy" or "treatment."

Three other presentations from the colloquium are not included in this volume because they are published elsewhere: they are authored by Kristin M. Langellier (2010), Laura Lindenfeld and Gisela Hoecherl-Alden (2008), and Nathan Stormer (2008). Kevin Carragee, recently publishing in the area of policy and communication activism (Frey & Carragee, 2007), responded to the presentations.

Finally, I would like to empahsize that organizing and hosting the colloquium was a collaborative effort. Kristin Langellier, Laura Lindenfeld, and I met and planned. We selected the Schoodic Education and Research Center for the site of the colloquium. Located just past the town of Winter Harbor on the Schoodic peninsula, the Center provided a welcoming gathering place where the colloquium participants could enjoy the natural beauty of the Maine coast in summer, the fellowship of international colleagues, and the stimulation of scholarly dialogue. Shelly Chase developed the colloquium website and travel support materials. Shane Perry and Imke Schessler-Jandreau helped out with local arrangements and with transportation for colloquium participants. Bernd Schwandt, coordinator of the previous colloquium meeting in Erfurt, Germany, provided much informal assistance and suggestions on working internationally. And, Betty Fine, with the assistance of Gail McMillan at Virginia Tech, was a key figure in helping me prepare this volume and in making the move to the digital publication of the proceedings.

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International Colloquium on Communication

Founded by Hellmut K. Geissner and Fred L. Casmir on behalf of the
Deutsche Geselleschaft für Spechwissenschaft und Sprecherziehung and the
National Communication Association (formerly Speech Communication Association)

1968 Heidelberg	Germany/USA	The Systems of Higher Education in the USA and Germany
1970 Hattingen	Germany	The Role of Speech at Universities in the USA and Germany
1972 Walberberg	Germany	Ethical Goals in Speech Education Curricula in the USA and Germany
1974 Marburg	Germany	The Development of Rhetorics in the USA and Germany
1976 Tampa, Florida	USA	Intercultural Communication
1978 Hernstein bei Wien	Austria	The Rhetoric of Minorities
1980 Lincoln, Nebraska	USA	Rhetorical Analysis and Criticism
1982 Kopenhagen	Denmark	Rhetoricity of Literature and Literarity of Rhetorics
1984 Tempe, Arizona	USA	Performance: Theories, Methods, Models
1986 Landau	Germany	On Narratives
1988 Blacksburg, Virginia	USA	Perspectives on Science, Technology, and Culture
1990 Lausanne	Switzerland	Communication and Culture
1992 Alexandria, Virginia	USA	Ethnorhetoric and Ethnohermeneutics
1994 Jyväskylä	Finland	Critical Perspectives on Communication Research and Pedagogy
1996 San Francisco, Calif.	USA	The Changing Public Sphere: Issues for Communication Education and Research
1998 Budapest	Hungary	The Voice of the Voiceless
2000 Boston, Mass.	USA	The Voice of Power
2002 Berlin	Germany	Communication and Political Change
2004 San José, Calif.	USA	Communication and Conflict
2006 Erfurt	Germany	Applied Communication in Organizational and International Contexts
2008 Schoodic Point, Maine	USA	Communication and Public Policy

Rhetorical Education for Public Responsibility

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Two of my intellectual children will turn 40 in the year 2008, the ICC and the IRM. It is therefore a good opportunity, here in Maine at a colloquium of the ICC, to speak about the IRM and its goals, and to consider whether and how the two organizations might be related.

The ICC is the "International Colloquium for Communication," which — after several preliminary negotiations — was convened for the first time in Heidelberg in the summer of 1968. Since that time people in communication from Europe and the United States, specialists in both theory and pedagogy, have met every two years, now on this side of the "big pond," now on that side.

The IRM is the "Institute for Rhetoric and Methodology in Political Education," which began its work in October 1968 at the European Academy in Otzenhausen (EAO) in the Saarland. Since then some thousand people have participated in extra-curricular adult-education seminars at the Institute.

As president of the DGSS [German Society for Speech and Speech Education] at the time, my idea for the foundation of both organizations was, at first glance, professional and professional-political. In both cases, however, closer examination reveals that the motivation comes from a theory of democracy. (Both organizations were possible only in the Western-oriented, democratically constituted Federal Republic of Germany; the GDR (German Democratic Republic) on the other hand, was occupied by the Soviets until 1989 and was ruled during that time by a single state party, therefore it was a democracy in name only.)[1]

The ICC was the first "international" establishment with which the decidedly and emphatically "German" disciplines "Sprechkunde" (fields of speech) and "Sprecherziehung" (speech education) freed themselves from their narrow, nationalistic traditions after WWII. This was especially important for a field whose basic concepts during the racist Nazi years were biological, and whose great success in supporting Nazi ideology was to train teachers based on essentialist notions of the "mother tongue." Small wonder that the field all but disappeared from the universities after the end of the war. In America, on the other hand, the profession had been established on democratic principles since the beginning of the 20th century and was able to develop steadily, with the right to grant doctorates and to function as an independent discipline. The large number of publications, monographs and periodicals since 1910 attest to this independence and development.[2] If the discipline was to have a chance in Germany, then it was high time to look at last beyond one's own nose, to a place where the discipline had established itself in a democratic context, both at the college level and in school systems.

An early milestone in the (at first only spiritual) international cooperation was the publication of a collection in which the editor, Wilbur Schramm (1963)[3], reported on the findings of such researchers as Lazarsfeld, Levin, Lasswell, and Hovland: Festinger wrote about the doctrine of "cognitive dissonance"; Osgood on the "meaning of meaning;" and Maccoby on the "new scientific rhetoric." Moreover, there were other important contributions in this book, for example about mass communication, voter behavior, the effects of television, and programmed instruction. Both professionally and politically this was all *terra incognita* for the people in Germany who were thinking about communication, in a country where democracy still stood on "shaky legs."

In October 1965 many of these ideas were echoed in a question-and-answer session (that I led and) that was broadcast by Radio Saarland (another innovation!) on the occasion of the first convention of the DGSS. "Communicating — Talking to Each Other in Community." Colored by the awareness of Germany's undemocratic history, the conversation ran to some of the contemporary transformations in the language, to the difference between communicating and understanding in everyday life and in international politics. It was not about techniques but about a particular social attitude as

the prerequisite for democratization, about the resistance that was being encountered on this path and the extent to which the resistance might be overcome by rhetoric, as a general approach to life, maybe not by all citizens, but by "opinion leaders." One person asked the panel: "Has any thought been given to how you might reach these people (that is the opinion leaders) in order to influence larger groups through them?" A guest, Fred Casmir (of the Speech Communication Association), described developments in universities and schools in the US, all under the motto, "Keep the channel of communication open." Someone asked whether this was not a particularly important task for adult education. Where should people learn how to handle conflict, for that is an essential trait of democracy. This led to the (my) closing words: "Talking to each other honestly, the courage for conflict, for thinking controversially, for listening to different opinions is a way in which truth can be found. Of course this will require people to reflect, listen and talk to each other." (4, 117) [4]

Basically this already amounted to a curriculum for an adult education course democratic rhetoric. But it took another three years and some preliminary negotiations — by Fred Casmir for the SCA, by me for the DGSS — before the ICC and – independently - the IRM were founded in 1968, the two organizations whose goals and work I would now like to report on.

Because the schools in Germany were not generally preparing young people for democratic behavior by providing them with training in rhetorical skills, and as a result many adults remained without this background, an institution was necessary in which adults could learn what the schools had denied them. Of course this could not be accomplished for the graduates of all the schools in the country, rather this remedial work made sense only for opinion leaders ("multipliers"). No polytechnic, no university was equipped for the task. But still, this "basic democratic" concept could only be realized within an active organization that had no ideological bias of its own, as would be the case with organizations sponsored by churches or political parties. I found what I was looking for at the European Academy at Otzenhausen. After various discussions with the academy's directors and giving some seminars there, I was sure this was the place. It was there that the Institute for Rhetoric and Methodology in Political Education, the IRM, took up its work in November 1968.

The current director of the European Academy, Eva Wessela, wrote the following in 2004 on the occasion of the Academy's 50th anniversary: "The basis of the institution's work is Hellmut Geissner's conception of 'rhetorical communication,'" which is laid out in the first programmatic publication, "Goals and Methodological Foundations of the Institute for Rhetoric and Methodology in the Political Education" (1968)

1. Political action requires a capacity for judgment. The capacity for judgment requires information. Information is available only through communication. Informed Communication is education. The capacity to judge exists in a process of continuous education.

2. "Rhetorical communication" is the leading element in this process because "talking to each other" is fundamental among the opportunities for social interaction. Talking and answering back, this keeps the channel of communication open in both directions, because there is freedom on both sides. It reduces the risk of indoctrination, opens possibilities for rationality, and forms the basis for common action.

3. The term "rhetorical communication" encompasses in its broader sense all attempts to inform, to structure knowledge, to form opinions, to change attitudes, to spur people to action. The basis of and model for communication—whether verbal or nonverbal, optical or acoustic, direct or indirect—is always, strictly speaking, rhetorical.

4. Therefore communicators, political trainers, advisors, conference directors, politicians, leaders of all kinds—should recognize their function in this communication process and acquire new methods for their work. This goal, together with the previous knowledge and experiences of the participants, determines the program, which is divided into foundation courses and continuing courses: Basics of the Communication Process (Role Theory, Field and Situation Analysis, Group Dynamics); Forms of Rhetorical Communication; Forms of Frontal and Non-frontal Instruction (Group Work), of Education and Publicity (with the use of audio-visual teaching aids and media).

5. Only superficially can these be considered "formal courses": a) they treat the 'formalia', the formal aspects of rhetoric and methodology by applying them to appropriate material, 'realized', b) work with rhetorical communication is always at the same time "materialized", applied political education, because democratic behavior is being

practiced. This is where formal education becomes 'material' education. The institute pursues this goal on a scientific basis. For some it offers the opportunity to examine and further educate themselves. For others it offers the opportunity to take up the tasks of political formation and leadership. Political rhetoric should be liberated from the mode of declamation in the tradition of the "Grand Appeal to the Good Will of the Good People"; it should become more effective by the application of more rationality.[5]

This curriculum makes it clear: The IRM "is not primarily concerned with improving people's conversation and speaking skills […], but with altering them as a 'condition of the possibility' to change social practices."[6] Whether these precisely defined, admittedly very optimistically formulated goals could be achieved, that is, whether the work of the IRM had any influence on the politics of the Federal Republic of Germany, cannot be ascertained. It is however fair to say that the political consciousness of the participants changed, as did their communicative behavior, especially their democratic behavior. The examples of some target groups show this.

Seminars for "Education Officers"

The rearmament of West Germany (promoted by the United States' anti-Soviet policy) forced the question of how to build a competent fighting force without violating the first article of the Federal Republic's Basic Law: "Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority." (GG Art 1,1) There is a paradox, a contradiction between the basic military operation of "command and obey" and the citizen who is competent to engage in free communication: on the one side the demand for absolute subordination to the point of blind obedience, which prepares "cannon fodder" to die for the Fatherland; on the other side the right to the free expression of opinion and personal responsibility for one's own actions as a citizen in a democratically constituted society. From this situation came the idea of "inner leadership," which should preserve the soldier's dignity as a "citizen in uniform." The task of implementing this idea fell to young officers, the "education officers," and group after group of them came to the IRM to learn methods that might facilitate the balancing act they had to perform: talking to the soldiers as human beings, not just chewing them out; breaking the habit of abusive recruit-jargon; listening, not just giving orders; involving subordinates in conversations, not just

giving them top-down instruction; learning new pedagogical procedures for managing groups rather than blindly defending old traditions; realizing that rank is not an argument, i.e. that subordinates think, too; understanding that there are "parliamentary" procedures for submitting and deciding upon proposals and, finally, that it is their, the officers', communicative competence that is of primary importance, and only secondarily that of the soldiers that report to them. None of these insights was delivered in a frontal way, but the participants could experience them in exercises based on historical cases (from the Nazi military in WWII, the situation in the Cold War, Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Irak Wars 1 and 2), and then discuss them in feedback sessions.

Even inner leadership cannot resolve the fundamental paradox, but it is possible to get leaders not only to learn new forms of interaction but also to notice how much their own self-respect and authority depend on the extent to which they attend to their responsibility for their "subordinates" as citizens. It is not a matter of techniques for conversation and speaking, but of conduct and attitude and these are moral categories, not parameters of fitness. Nor are conduct and attitude necessarily related to people in uniforms; there are civilians with exemplary conduct as well.

Seminars for Teachers

In the very differentiated German education system, which — from kindergarten to the university level — does not admit of a totalizing overview, it would be necessary to further specify the term "teacher," were it not for one attribute that teachers seem to have in common: the belief that, as publicly acknowledged know-it-alls they are superior to other people. This is not a particularly communicative attitude, because it tends more toward some kind of didactic monologue than a listener-accessible form of mutual speech between equals. The attitude is supported by the institution "school," (in which duly appointed public servants meet with school-aged children), even if it is not required, in that, in school—according to an obsolete concept of education—it is all about the grown-ups having an effect on those who are still growing. This leads directly to a container model of communication: things that are worth knowing and that (in the view of the state) will be useful in future life are transferred, bit by bit, from full containers into empty ones, primarily through speech. It is unimaginable that this nonsensical idea of communication manages to survive, even though the

contrary has been known since the times of Humboldt and Schleiermacher at the beginning of the 19th century; every speech act is the "mutual production" of the speaker and the listeners. This is true in the schools as well, because even children, and certainly adolescents and college students, "think," have had experiences in *their* world, have developed — mainly through conversations — *their* "mental encyclopedia," and want to learn new things for *their* life. But they can also experience how much the past, the Old impinges on the present, their New, that their life is a new beginning indeed, but that their feeling, thinking, speaking and movement are not being totally invented by them, but rather exist in a historical continuum.

Therefore the Seminars at the IRM attempt to strengthen teachers' social competence; that is to reduce their reliance on "official authority," on which they often rely exclusively, since they are used to being the person in the room with all the power. In terms of pedagogical method, the IRM's approach means less frontal instruction and more group activity, more partner work and projects; in rhetorical terms it means fewer lectures and other kinds of instructional speech by the teacher, and more conversation. This begins, for example, when, once the teacher has announced the topic of study, groups determine for themselves what they want to talk about. In order to do this students must first become clear about what they are thinking, about what aspect of the topic is important to them, and that they must be prepared to listen to each other and to follow up with questions. In the event of differing or even contradictory opinions, reasons must be given instead of just maintaining a position — teachers, too, are obliged to give reasons! This "disputing with reasons" (arguing) is a central content of the seminar for objective-logical reasons, and for political reasons as well, because democracy is not a harmonious affair, it is contentious. Teachers struggle with this insight: How can their often authoritarian teaching style be reconciled with the young peoples' claim to equal communicative rights, and their struggle to realize this claim? And even this question is only possible once it has been accepted that one *can* argue with high school and younger students, that they *are* permitted to decide some things. But the maxim is valid for both sides and without reservations: "The more thoroughly things are explained, the more reasonable the dispute can be, and the more responsibly the matter can be decided."[7]

While the "fundamentals of conversation" can be learned in the basic seminar, a follow-up seminar

moves on to "forms of speech,"[8] that is talks (*Ansprachen*), informational presentations, persuasive speeches. Talks can be developed from personal experiences (personal narratives),[9] because they are must be adapted to the listeners and therefore they require a dialogical posture. Even for the instructive or didactic lecture and for informational speaking in general, "monologue" is only a formal designation. The manner of speaking, the asides that facilitate understanding and — in direct talks — the possibility to interrupt with questions: The posture of a dialogue is evident in all of this. For the sake of a dialogical relation to the listeners, it is better to speak from bullet points than to read from a prepared text, or to perform covert reading by delivering a memorized speech, because the speaker can respond immediately to the reactions from the audience, be they utterances, facial expressions, or gestures. For this reason a method is practiced for finding and developing "talking points," a method that is accomplished by speech acts tailored to the "thinking by speaking" that promotes conversation. Another process, usually not necessary for teachers, be helpful for inexperienced speakers: describing the main points to others, then writing down what has been said and reading the written text aloud, after which the points that are still not clear are discussed, and the whole thing is finally summarized in key words.

The primary focus in these seminars is on the rhetorical competence of the teachers, not on instructional methods; it is important to distinguish between the "rhetorical communication that is common to all instruction" and a specialized "instruction in rhetorical communication," in which the emphasis is on the speaking competence of young citizens. Rhetoricity is required of teachers not only in their actual teaching, but also in the communication with colleagues at meetings and conferences, and in counseling with students, in discussions with individual parents and in public school meetings.

Seminars for Parent Representatives

The legal obligation for children to attend school forces parents to take an interest in school. This "interest" usually extends to the performance and successes of their own children, especially when the performance disappoints, is "troublesome". Only then do parents consider whether it might be a good idea to talk to the teachers. Is my child the only one having problems, or is there something wrong with the teaching, maybe something peculiar about the teacher? How can I express my concerns? In general,

teachers are considered to be elevated by their authoritative position, their learning, their verbosity. It is (in Germany) not uncommon for parents who do not have college degrees to have inhibitions about talking to these "better informed" people, even in private consultation. Of course there are parent evenings, but who is so bold as to express his or her questions or criticisms publicly? It can be helpful if parents, as a group and according to valid rules, elect a teacher.

Communicative inequalities — whether real or only "felt" — can do real damage in human society. This is especially true in instances where decisions are being made that affect one's life. School, as a seat of social authority, is such an instance. Therefore parents must not be limited to a mere "right to be heard," rather they must be fully engaged in dialogue, and this means that, if they do not know how to do this, they have to learn. This is why the IRM has seminars for parents who have been chosen by other parents to represent common interests. This is why the IRM has "Seminars for Parent Advocates," for "Parent Advisors."

More important than any rhetorical skills that might be learned in these seminars is the courage to "work one's way out of a minority — here in the sense of being a minor, of not being recognized as a responsible adult — that has become second nature." Yes, the participants must be "encouraged" to speak, but that is only a first, albeit important step toward encouraging them to use their freedom.[10]

Step by step the seminars attempt to reduce the inhibitions mentioned above and to build up the participants' confidence in their own "rhetorical competence." Again, the path leads from personal narratives and receptive listening to clarifying conversations in small groups, to giving the rationale for one's opinion. The next step, to dispute "with reasons" in a session of the entire seminar group, requires a lot of self-assurance, which will also be necessary in order to motivate other parents to common action. Now it is a matter of inviting people to — oral or written — discussions, leading these discussions, and making sure that practicable decisions are taken.

To do all this, and to negotiate with teachers and school boards, representatives must know how to run a meeting: all the mechanics of invitations, agendas, proposals, and voting. In order to practice at least the basics of parliamentary procedure, lively simulated debates – if they are conducted with pedagogical adroitness — can be a fun way to learn

about and acquire skills in these stiff and awkward legal processes, skills that can later prove useful. When the videos of these sessions are played back, the result is not only salvos of laughter, but also reflection, because people can see how in certain situations an unfortunate formulation can defeat a proposal.

In this way parent representatives can learn to exercise their rights, not only to look after the welfare of their children but at the same time to help the school become a "school community." "A democratic community must have cause to be in deliberate and systematic education," wrote John Dewey in 1916.[11] The critical path is "freedom of communication." This opens "the possibility of conducting disputes, controversies and conflicts as cooperative undertakings in which both parties learn by giving the other a chance to express itself, instead of having one party conquer the other by forceful suppression."[12] Way back then Dewey called it "faith," faith in the possibility of communication within democracy, a communication that stabilizes democracy.

Consequences

In the mean time, not only the bloody wars of the last century, the decades of the Cold War, the present wars in Afghanistan and Irak, and the ceaseless global tensions have compromised the blind faith in the blessings of democracy, which hegemonic policies have degraded into an export article. It has been shown that even in democracy "an invisible but effective tyranny" (Deetz; 1990)[13] is at work. There is a gap between the election day and the everyday that neither good will or glib words can bridge: Communicative competence does not fill bellies; rhetorical competence does not prevent stock market crashes; the power of the unelected mighty is greater than that of the elected officials. But does this mean we should give up? Shut down the IRM? Better to disabuse ourselves of unrealistic expectations. Understand what Aristotle wrote in his *Politics*, that democracy is not a condition of eternal happiness, but rather a frail process, a chance, which must be won again and again, for a just conviviality. Of course, unlike in the myth, the gods have not imposed this never-ending task on just one individual; we are all Sisyphus now.

Democracies will continue to exist only if they renounce any blind faith in the future, if they exercise and foster criticism — as Adorno said in 1969: "Criticism is essential to all democracy […] democracy is fairly defined by criticism."[14]

Education, too, is now and in the future only possible in a critical mode. "Critical Perspectives on Communication Research and Pedagogy" was one ICC impulse a few years ago.[15] The critical posture is now even more urgent, for a theory of communication and for education in communication as well. That is, unless specialists want to abandon their responsibilities, to submit to the authority of, for example, the so-called "free market" or some other hierarchy, and relegate the control of the political to the Internet. But that would mean that responsible adults were relinquishing their independence and sinking back into the twilight of some atavistic herd. That would mean, basically, that we could not defend ourselves, at least not verbally— as the ancient Greeks said: *Lógon didónai* (to account for oneself)— that we were unable to account for ourselves and what we say, because — in the long run — we would destroy language, the characteristic that defines us and without which there is no responsibility.[16]

There is no easy way out, for this "... is the price human beings pay for freedom, and the impossibility of remaining unique masters of what they do, of knowing its consequences and relying upon the future, is the price they pay for plurality and reality; for the joy in inhabiting together with others a world whose reality is guaranteed for each by the presence of all." (Arendt 1958, 244).[17]

Once again our considerations arrive at the relationship, invoked by the title of this presentation, between rhetorical competence and political responsibility. Perhaps this is *the* fundamental guiding principle of the ICC and the IRM. But it remains a mere invocation. "Critical competence" ('Mündigkeit') is more concrete and practicable as the goal of rhetorical communication. But then, too, it remains uncertain, whether all disputes can be settled in "public deliberation," even if all citizens have become critical and competent. Rhetorical communication itself cannot produce certainty here; it can only work toward the conditions that make changes possible. The Sisyphus work goes on.

Translated by John Minderhout, Michigan

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Group Discussion and Democracy:
The Status of our Attempts to Teach Productive Participation in Public Policy Decision-Making

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Some thirty years ago I witnessed the newly elected board members of a local school district in action. It was not an example of effective public policy communication. The new members had all been elected by the local "taxpayer's" association, a political action group that hoped to thwart many of the initiatives of the school district's administration. Acrimony prevailed at all meetings of the board. Name-calling, personal attacks, and character assassination were the orders of the day. The silliest moment followed the board's decision to hear the case of a teacher who was accused of being drunk in class. The teacher had requested that the matter be settled publicly. So, gavel held high, the chairman presided over a hearing that lasted until two o'clock in the morning. The board had not discussed a procedure, and the result was anything but orderly. In frustration, one board member, the President of a local electronics company, began interrogating witnesses, moving from one witness to another, in what seemed to be an entirely random manner. Most of us in the audience simply looked on in amazement. One consultant hired by the district had previously been a communication professor. As we talked after the meeting, he reminisced about an earlier era, and suggested that the board, and the public in general, needed instruction in the fine art of discussion. Thinking back on that conversation, I realize now that he had experienced discussion education in US colleges and universities when it was at its apex in purpose and popularity. The school board in question in the late 1970s had demonstrated little understanding of the communicational knowledge, values, and behaviors that can be useful in setting public policy.

As we consider "Communication and Public Policy" in this colloquium, we might well address the prospects for improving students' ability to resolve policy questions through discussion. In doing so, we are fortunate to be able to draw upon a recently published (2007) comprehensive history of the attempts to teach discussion in the US written by William Keith, Professor of Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. We will first summarize the history of the discussion course by referring to Keith and others, and then propose an assessment of the extent to which our contemporary group communication courses succeed at, and fall short of, addressing public policy concerns. Our conclusion is that the communication field needs to re-consider the content of the course usually referred to as Discussion or Small Group Communication.

The Progressive Era and Discussion Instruction

Most of us who teach or study group communication in the twenty-first century may not realize that the course in discussion was first designed to meet the needs of a particular time and place in US history, the Progressive era. The Progressive movement generally dominated US politics in the early part of the twentieth century, from approximately 1890 to 1920, although its influences were felt for decades after. It was a middle class movement urging social reforms such as equality, worker's rights, universal education, and more democratic participation. Prominent politicians from both major parties such as Theodore Roosevelt, a Republican, and Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat, are identified as Progressives. Social reformers like Jane Addams, Upton Sinclair, Margaret Sanger, and Ida Tarbell are also so identified. In describing the "Historical Roots of Discussion" Bormann (1969) explains it as follows:

> A new urban value system developed gradually but inevitably. The Progressive movement in politics and the Social Gospel in religion gave voice to the new value system. The primary targets were the practice of competition and individualism. Proponents dramatized these issues as a question of the masses against the

classes and pointed to the unsavory conditions that developed from unregulated competition and the exploitation of the masses by a few ruthless predators. The Progressive orators and Social Gospel preachers expressed the new values in terms of cooperation and brotherly love. (p. 8)

Keith (2007) traces the educational and intellectual influences of Progressivism on the speech communication field to New York City and Columbia University where such luminaries as philosopher John Dewey and historian Charles Beard lived and worked. Prominent speech scholars James McBurney, A. Craig Baird, and Alfred Sheffield were students or close associates of Dewey. They all wrote articles and textbooks promoting the study of discussion. Discussion was seen as a way to both educate the citizenry and increase participation in public affairs, particularly when practiced through public forums.

Other fields besides speech and communication were interested in the possibilities of discussional approaches to participation. Philosopher Dewey explicitly addressed this work (Pellegrini & Sterling, 1936, iii; Philipsen, 1994, 100; Keith, 2007, 103). Historian Beard wrote a book connecting historiography and the discussion of public affairs (1936). Organizational theorist and public intellectual, Mary Parker Follett (1924) acknowledged Sheffield's influence (Philipsen, 1994, 99). As Philipsen notes, "Here the communication theorist joined in intimate association with political scientists and psychologists, to invent a social form and communicative practice which has come to be understood as a sine qua non of democratic life" (p. 101).

Many of these same scholars were simultaneously involved in the adult education effort in the US. Advocates of adult education embraced the philosophy and methods of discussion and promoted the forum movement. Citizens were encouraged to attend these meetings and discuss the important issues of the day. Bormann (1969) says

By 1920, adult education programs were using the discussion group as well as the lecture as an educational tool….The increasing use of discussion groups for educational purposes was accompanied by the appearance of handbooks on the organization and conduct of discussions. Thus, when speech teachers began instructing students in public discussion, handbooks were already available. (p. 11)

Keith (2007, 15) explains that the relationship was reciprocal, and that speech textbooks and articles were included in bibliographies of the Office of Education publications on forums and discussion.

The forum movement reached its height during the 1930's when it became federally funded with Work Project Administration money (Keith, 2007, 302-303). Over a million people participated in forums in 1937-1938 with a US population of about 129M, with an average attendance of 130 per forum. The WPA money was all expended by 1941. After World War II there was an attempt to once again invigorate participative democracy through discussion, integrating the work of the speech scholars with others who had written about communication (See Lasker, 1949), but the public forum did not regain its importance in the US.

Initially, an important impetus for the college and university course was to train forum leaders (Allison, 1939, 118; Cohen, 1994, 290). The content of the course dealt primarily with public discussions. Sometimes this meant introducing a speaker and handling the question and answer period after. Sometimes it meant moderating a panel discussion in front of a group of a hundred or so and then moderating the discussion afterward. It only occasionally meant problem-solving in a small group. This led to definitional confusion later among academics used to the small group emphasis. Cohen (1994, 275), for example, expresses surprise that Sheffield's (1922) book included the term "public discussion" in the title, but that the bulk of the book dealt with public speaking and parliamentary procedure. A few pages later, Cohen (1994, 280) notes that Sheffield's 1932 <u>QJS</u> article was mostly about discussion, although the title included debate and forums for consideration. Baird (1937, 358) defined group discussion as "an informal session of the committee of the whole." Well, a committee of the whole is by definition the entire assembly, not a small group. Articles in 1939 by Allison and O'Brien attempted to clear up the ambiguity. O'Brien understood that it was important to classify groups by size and defined the group discussion as having between three and twenty participants and the public discussion as having from twenty to thousands (236; Cohen, 291-293). Regardless of definition and taxonomy, the early discussion course had a clear mandate to further civic education. Its first purpose was to educate the public about policy issues and to encourage them to discuss those issues cooperatively.

Thus, the Progressive era in the US gave birth to the course in group discussion, which expanded its

reach in US colleges and universities over the next several decades.

Participation in the 21st Century

One hundred years after the Progressive era in US history, we find citizens attempting to re-kindle the flame of democratic participation. Participation implies communication. The term is used to refer both to public affairs and decision-making in private work settings. In all cases, an emphasis is placed on the superiority of decision-making that proceeds democratically, rather than dictatorially.

Similar to the Progressive era, in the past two decades, public forum programs have been re-invented as a way to involve citizens. Hegstrom and Spano (1997, 181-183) summarize four approaches: public journalism projects, the National Issues Forums (Kettering Foundation), The Public Conversations Project, and Kaleidoscope Projects associated with the Public Dialogue Consortium. These efforts have taken several different forms, but have yet to approach the scale of those of 80 years ago.

Many communication scholars have shown a renewed interest in the relationship of public speaking and participative decision-making to democracy. Invoking Cicero, Isocrates, and other ancients, rhetorical theorists have underlined the role of free and open communication in democratic states (Keith, 2007, 2-3). As the field re-affirms its role in democratic policy-setting, what contribution has been made by the course in group discussion?

Group Dynamics and Communication

Keith (2007) informs us that the forum movement foundered after the 1930's, and that by the 1960's a burgeoning interest in group dynamics radically changed the nature of the group communication course as taught in most universities in the U.S. The social science research on group dynamics grew dramatically after World War II, and the work of the National Training Laboratories (NTL) was located in Bethel, Maine, approximately 190 miles from our conference site here on the Maine coast. The work that German émigré Kurt Lewin and his associates did there was influential throughout US academia. By the early 1950's psychology departments were offering courses in social psychology. Speech scholars were also involved at the NTL, an impetus for further study of the communicational aspects of group work. Group courses began to be renamed, a trend that has

continued to the present day. Many of them are today called Group Communication instead of Discussion. Publishers reacted accordingly as their internal studies showed that the market had shifted by the 1980's, and most textbook authors dropped the term "discussion" from their titles.

It is important to note that the works of many of the Progressive intellectuals that had been leaders in the movement to promote discussion on public policy such as John Dewey, Charles Beard, and Mary Parker Follett were read by those who were leaders in the NTL. The concept of democratic group leaders, as opposed to authoritarian or laissez faire ones, was conceptualized by Ronald Lippett who was a graduate student of Lewin. Further, there were at least two speech scholars there by 1950, John W. (Sam) Keltner and Franklin Haiman. Haiman worked on the NTL staff and was a representative to the NTL from the Speech Association of America. All of this is documented by Keith (2007, 202-204) as he explains the shift away from public policy concerns in the study of groups at the NTL. The NTL was involved in the study of different kinds of groups, but within a decade, interest in A-groups (groups working on community action) were overwhelmed by the interest in T-groups (therapy groups). Human relations became the focus of scholarship almost to the exclusion of public policy concerns. As Keith (2007) suggests

> Sensitivity, diagnosis and insight took center stage here, in contrast to argument, reason, and cooperation. While it wasn't reflected in textbooks until the mid-1960s, this fundamental change of perspective dooms the discussion course as civic education. By 1961, the change, at least at the NTL, is virtually complete. (pp. 207-208)

Referring to Gouran's (1999, 3-10) summary of the empirical research in small group communication, one can note that by the end of the 1960's a similar change had occurred in the speech discipline. Empirical research on group discussion began in the speech field in the 1930's. A good number of studies in the early 1960's dealt with the positive outcomes of reflective thinking and discussion, but by the 1970's the research focus on discussion had disappeared. Gouran tells us:

> Whereas the 1960s saw the beginnings of a more narrow emphasis on messages … the sharpening focus had the almost paradoxical effect of broadening the issues and range of questions about interaction that scholars chose

to address. The result was a proliferation of inquiry but no consensus concerning what needed to be known. Hence, communication researchers went off in many directions; nevertheless, they retained the centrality of messages in groups as a primary interest. (p. 11)

So small group communication researchers moved away from research on discussion in the 1970's, and started focusing on other message-based concerns.

This all constituted a paradigm shift for the group communication sub-field. Scholars became more interested in other aspects of the small group than they were in public discussion as an inherent element of public policy decision-making in democracies. Soon after, the content of communication courses focusing on small groups began to change to reflect some of these new research interests. Yet there remains some interest in the democratic workings of the small group itself, and in effective decision-making. Some courses pertain to public policy deliberation; others do not. It might be useful to suggest how we could assess the extent to which today's group communication courses prepare students to productively participate in public policy decision-making.

Public Policy and the Current College Course in Group Communication

The prospects for discussion courses dealing with public policy depend on two things, the content of the course and the nature of the contexts in which discussion skills are applied. Students have to learn how to participate, but opportunities for democratic participation must also be present, or the course lapses into irrelevancy. First, we turn to the question of course content.

Does the group communication course actually teach public policy discussion?

Just as many a public speaking course can be turned to ends other than speaking as a member of the "public," so too can the group communication course be completely devoid of any reference to a public policy question. A so-called "public" speaking course might be comprised largely of demonstrations, business presentations, oral reading, and stand-up comedy, having little bearing on training citizens to speak on the great deliberative, forensic, or epideictic topics of the day. The group discussion course can similarly be distracted from its original purpose. In other words, the sociological, psychological, or the conversational might completely displace the rhetorical. So, one obvious question to be asked is, "Do the students actually discuss public policy issues in the course?" Doing so in class will probably make them better able to do so as citizens.

A number of other questions can be asked of the individual course to determine whether it prepares students to participate productively. Most of these issues have been raised over the decades in published scholarship on group discussion.

Public Policy Research. The course might present a clear mandate to be informed about public policy issues as a prelude to discussion. The Platonic and Aristotelian criticism of democracy was that the *demos* was often under-prepared and too ignorant to govern effectively. Students should not be left with the impression that their uninformed opinion is good enough. The college-educated citizen should actually have to read widely and gather evidence on policy topics before forming an opinion. She should also be taught to evaluate the evidence and data that have been gathered.

Reasoning. In order to apply this research to the topic under discussion, the group discussion student will need to know what constitutes a reasonable inference from the data. Some attention to reasoning and argument seems important. As a field, we have not agreed on the best model for doing so. The classical approach is to teach the syllogism, and to introduce the student to some of the inductive fallacies. The early textbooks on discussion (e.g., Baird, 1937, 130-141; McBurney and Hance, 1939, 196-203; and Pellegrini and Sterling, 1936, 32-36) taught basic syllogistic types including the categorical (Aristotelian), hypothetical and disjunctive. Black (1955) made a strong case for teaching the enthymeme in discussion, which is derivative of the syllogism. Dewey's reflective thinking method was called "The New Logic" and Keith and others argue that systemic and syllogistic logic are contradictory (Keith, 2007, 92, 134-135, 140-141), but Dewey himself used the syllogism to explain the essentials of reflective thinking and "scientific reasoning" (1910, 93-100). He clearly did not see his model as a replacement for the basic classical forms. Most current communication textbooks seem to prefer the Toulmin model (1964) to the syllogism. The model lends itself well to analysis of arguments in discourse. Whichever model is taught, the task of drawing reasonable inferences from evidence, and making reasonable

distinctions, is a challenge to some discussion students. If we want reasonable deliberations about public policy decisions, we should probably continue to teach some form of reasoning.

Discussion approaches that emphasize reasoning methods have, at times, been criticized for favoring rationality over social-emotional considerations. This criticism would only hold if rationality were taught to the exclusion of the other topics. Otherwise, the criticism seems to make the error of the 19th century faculty psychologists who thought that a clear line could be drawn between logic and emotion. In actual communication, one can be both logical and emotional, both, or neither. Surely we want to embrace the emotional in promoting citizen education.

Discerning question types. In addition to the analysis of data and warrant (to use Toulmin's terminology), students could learn to distinguish among types of questions and to specify the relevant issues connected with each type and topic. Early scholars distinguished questions of fact from questions of policy. Bormann (1969) suggested that there were four distinct types of questions: fact, value, policy, and conjecture (sometimes called future fact). Gouran (1974, 2003) has argued that different question types require different forms of analysis. Thus, discussion about the policy question, "What should be the United Nation's response to the war in Iraq?" might fruitfully pursue causes of the problem, but an analysis of the causes of the problem does not work as well in discussing the question of fact, "Has the incidence of terrorism in Iraq decreased in the past year?" the question of value, "Are conditions for Iraqi women worse now than under Saddam ?" or the question of conjecture, "Will the Shiite opposition topple the Iraqi government after the US withdraws?" Things generally go better if students can distinguish among question types, and decide what type of question they are actually discussing.

Issue Analysis. Issue analysis in policy questions is greatly served by reference to Dewey's (1910, 72) reflective thinking model, which came to be known as the "standard agenda" by those who applied it to discussion.[1] Philipsen (1994, 102-104) refers to the period of 1934-1964 as a period of orthodoxy in the teaching of discussion characterized by a universal emphasis on reflective thinking. As he points out, there has been some criticism over the years about the model's actual utility in organizing group discussions (Ehninger, 1943; Bormann, 1969, 278-290; Gouran, 1974; Fisher; 1974; Cohen,

321). An important concern was that the standard agenda when followed in lockstep fashion without deviation was counter-productive to creativity and did not reflect the ways in which groups actually made decisions. Sheffield warned about this possibility early on (1932, 526-527; Cohen, 1994, 283) though many classrooms failed to heed the warning. This rigid application of Dewey's model seems inconsistent with Dewey's own advice. Two pages after presenting his five step model, he says, "The essence of critical thinking is suspended judgment… (1910, 74)." Dewey was considering the individual reflective thinker and did not elaborate as to whether this model would work in group discussion. It seems, however, that the advice to "suspend judgment" is advice to think and re-think each step on the way to a decision. Three decades later Scheidel and Crowell (1964) published an important research report showing that groups tended to proceed, not linearly, but in small cycles, suggesting an idea and then later coming back to it to anchor it in place. Thus, the linear application of the reflective thinking model was doomed to failure, but it turns out that the model itself holds up fairly well in group discussions if treated as issues to be addressed. In a series of clever experiments, Hirokawa convincingly demonstrated that group decisions are better when the questions asked in the reflective thinking model are addressed in the discussion (See Hirokawa and Pace, 1983; Gouran and Hirokawa, 2003). It seems that another way to look at the research of Hirokawa and his associates is that they have shown the utility of thorough issue analysis in discussion, and that issue analysis can be enhanced with reference to the reflective thinking concerns, as long as the group leadership avoids rigidity in enforcing agendas and structuring the group's work. As noted above, question types other than policy questions might require a different kind of analysis. The key thing for the student is to learn to determine what the important points of analysis might be.

Asking Questions. Closely connected with the study of evidence and reasoning, is practice in asking clarificational and critical questions. Discussion has traditionally emphasized inquiry over advocacy, and if they are to inquire, students surely must be schooled in the art of asking questions of themselves and others. Such questioning, too, has been recommended as an antidote to "groupthink," the uncritical acceptance of the prevailing opinion in a group (Janis, 1972, 1989; t'Hart, 1990).

Democratic Values. A final criterion by which one can assess whether public policy discussion is

actually being taught, is to note whether the course addresses the values of participative democracy. Our intellectual forebears knew that this meant maintaining an open mind, resisting the hurried judgment (Cohen, 1994, 290). As we look back in our time, the enthusiasm with which the early champions of the discussion course addressed these values, it is tempting to mock this effort, as follows.

> One gets the impression that Baird expected discussion participants to be model ladies and gentlemen. They were not to be abrasive, aggressive, competitive, or insensitive. Presumably persons who did not possess the desired characteristics could not participate in group discussion unless they could undergo significant personality change. (Cohen, 1994, 287)

Perhaps our efforts to be scientific have led us to emphasize description and resist prescription (Philipsen, 1994, 103), when the students actually need to address both. In class and in our research we might ask ourselves, "What group values should have normative force?" Civility is important in this respect, and early scholars were quite prescriptive in their suggestions about dealing with the socio-emotional aspects of group work, particularly those they believed would foster democratic participation (see Sheffield, 1932, 528-529). The forum experience made it clear that cooperative, reflective, problem-solving was often an elusive goal and required a competent leader. Heckling and defensiveness was seen as detrimental to open-mindedness (Keith, 2007, 136-137).

Hand in glove with the communication values of democratic participation, students may need some familiarity with the group's decision rules and accompanying apparatus. The discussion and small group literature has had much to say about the merits of consensus-seeking, but what of those situations when consensus is impossible and a vote is called for? The course in Parliamentary Procedure has almost entirely disappeared from the curricular offerings of communication departments. Yet, the most popular book in the former Soviet Union after the satellite states regained their independence was *Robert's Rules of Order*. For the first time in decades, these peoples needed to know how to govern themselves democratically. Similarly, almost every local government board or standing committee in the US names this book in its bylaws as the group's parliamentary authority.

In summary, if the group communication course is really going to prepare students to participate in public policy discussions, it might be useful to ask them to actually prepare to discuss such questions, to hone the analytical skills necessary for such discussions, and to consider the discussional behaviors that honor values of participative democracy. However, the course cannot exist in isolation; it must be relevant to the needs of policy-making in the twenty-first century. The changing nature of the public sphere requires different forms of communication. So we turn to the matter of context and consider both the historical moment or current relevance of the course, as well as the limitations of popular media as pertains to discussion.

Is the present historical moment conducive to renewed discussion activity?

Discussion teachers in the first half of the 20th century saw themselves as preparing students for participation in public forums. Keith (2007, 12) says, "without the forum movement, there would have been little purpose in teaching discussion skills." Today there is no call for forum leaders on the same scale as existed in the US in the 1930's. We have no WPA providing work for those who have been trained. However, there are more government committees and boards than ever before that require competent participants. Sometimes these deliberations are public and sometimes they take place behind closed doors. California's "Brown Act" requires that almost all decisions of government boards be made in public with ample opportunity for citizen input. Such open meeting laws would suggest that students might find themselves involved in chairing a public discussion. We wait to see whether the public and the government will encourage a more participative democracy. However, whether the discussion is public or closed-group, boards and committees that formulate public policy require discussion leaders and competent discussants. A recognition that government would increasingly occur in committees helped to propel discussion education in the first place according to Bormann (1969):

> Although the lecture and the sermon were still important and political stumping was still influential in elections, by the 1920s, the style of public discourse was changing and the role of legislative debate in decision-making was on the wane. Increasingly, legislative assemblies made important decisions in committees, and the floor debate became more of a ritual (p. 11; see also Cohen, 1994, 148-149, 287-288).

Of course, this is no less true today. This need for education in committee and board participation remains. With it, the need for discussion courses dealing with policy issues is still present. However, if the shift in content of these courses is any indication, there is little urgency felt among most communication scholars.

Among the historical exigencies that encourage discussion education is the fear that the citizenry might come to favor some less desirable form of government. Discussion was justified as a kind of grass roots effort to inculcate democracy, republicanism, and the virtue of listening to dissenting opinions, in view of the perceived threat of dictatorship and totalitarianism in parts of Europe during the last century (Bormann, 1969, 13-14). Cohen (1994) notes that:

> Articles and books were motivated by the perception that speech was an inherent characteristic of democracy. The profession viewed the teaching of speech as a means of providing students with the tools of democracy. The commitment to speech in the interest of a democratic society was most marked in the late 1930s and 1940s, when the totalitarian states of Europe, who suppressed speech, seemed antithetical to American ideology. Speech teachers, together, with the population in general, sensed a threat to "The American Way of Life." (p. xi)

From the vantage point of the 21st century, it may be difficult to understand this fear, but it was widespread. Richard Hofstadter (1968) explains it as follows.

> Above all, most American liberals were convinced by the experiences of the First World War and by the subsequent political conflict of the 1930's that American democracy could not survive another such effort. The idea that democracy would collapse under the stress of a major war was one of the most pervasive clichés of the 1930's; it was held by men along a wide spectrum of political opinion from Norman Thomas to such conservative isolationists as Robert A. Taft. (p. 329).

The depression caused class strife, and the threat of another war created enough fear for democracy that the universities and adult education programs began teaching discussion, perhaps as an alternative to violence, as well as a safeguard for representative government. A similar crisis today might make education to improve public policy deliberation a higher priority. At present, however, there is little evidence that the "great recession" is as great a threat to representative democracy as the "great depression" was.

Short of such an emergency, a change in emphasis could bring certain benefits, though perhaps not as compelling. If the public and government were to encourage a more participative democracy, discussion might replace the pro forma decision-making that accompanies so many governmental board decisions. We might help build such a public, if students were actually taught how to participate. Not universally, but very often, it seems as if the executive staff of an agency recommends a policy, and it is quickly passed without an attempt to perfect it in any way through discussion. It is as if our democratically elected leaders lack the democratic impulse. In order for democratic participation to prevail, discussion theory and skills must be taught to citizens, and democracy itself must be valued. Until this is universally accomplished, students will have to learn to be prepared for non-democratic contingencies. Some of these contingencies involve media.

Will the nature of the old and new media support "discussional" programming?

The forum movement in the early 20th century fostered radio programming in which public discussion of policy questions was broadcast to the public. *America's Town Meeting of the Air* is an example (Keith, 2007, 229 ff.). In those days, the traditional values of discussion, described above, were also evident in such programs. On radio, "an illusion of spontaneity and informal conversation" in broadcast round-table discussions was more desirable than airing public speeches (Bormann, 1969, 12). Talk radio of today features the listener call-in feature, and there are some good examples of discussional behavior, especially on National Public Radio. Other talk radio programs seem rife with ignorance, polarizing positions, and incivility.

Print journalism can also either encourage or ignore opportunities to promote discussion of public affairs. Just twenty years ago, Carey (1989) suggested that it should be one role of newspapers to promote public discussion instead of attempting just to present "objective" information. In the 1990's a number of newspapers did so, and perhaps some of these programs are still operative.

Keith (2007) describes the difficulty of airing such programs when the media favors entertainment to participation. Public policy programming on television is often highly polarized, with representatives of two sides exaggeratedly and aggressively arguing, and many of our students get their public policy information from John Stewart or Stephen Colbert, whose stock in trade is ridicule and satire.

A lack of civility has also been noted in attempts to present web-based discussions of policy matters. It seems likely that some possible interlocutors do not participate in these cyberspace discussions because "flaming" is dominant over respectful consideration of other viewpoints. Papacharissi (2004) on the other hand, makes a distinction between civility and politeness and sees potential in the internet for fostering "heated discussion" and "democratic emancipation." A content analysis of political newsgroups showed that 30% of messages were either uncivil or impolite. Yet the author maintained "that incivility and impoliteness do not dominate online political discussion" (276). A message was coded as uncivil if it "verbalized a threat to democracy," assigned "stereotypes," or "threatened other individuals' rights" [e.g., free speech] (274). Respondents who were impolite sometimes apologized; those who were uncivil never did. It does not seem like too great an inferential leap to suggest that some media are friendlier to democratic forms of communication than others. Entertainment media, both old and new, has had little use for thoughtful discussion. Bombast, sarcasm, name-calling is prevalent. However, just as there are a few places in the broadcast media for meaningful policy discussion, we might find ways for it to co-exist with pornography and slander on the internet. We may find that discussion principles fit the new media as well as the small group setting.

One Course or Two?

As we have seen, public policy discussion courses began in the early part of the 20th century as large group discussion, in synchrony with the forum movement during the Progressive era. Discussion shifted to a small group focus, and then small group communication largely replaced discussion. The typical academic department of communication has perhaps a single such course. We could argue that the small group course has lost its moorings and needs to return to its discussional origins. It seems just as worthy to call for two courses, one dealing solely with the nature of the small group setting and one dealing with discussion. The discussion course could involve multiple settings: large group, small group, broadcasts, and internet communication. Its province would be the discussion of public policy. The term "discussion" implies transactional considerations, with multiple participants rather than the construction of speeches or other extended discourses, which topics could be left to other courses.

Conclusion

The group communication course began as an attempt to teach productive discussion of public policy. This attempt can be traced to a particular historical moment that made discussion a priority for American Progressives. After the 1960s, it was no longer perceived as a priority and group communication scholars and teachers moved on to other concerns. Today in the US there is some interest in improving the public sphere, which is widely believed to have deteriorated, but there is not yet a sense of urgency to do so as was felt in the US in the 1930s. The media encourages discussion forums to only a modest extent, and there are serious limitations to current attempts. If communication teachers were to once again take up the cause of civic education, they might actually address public policy questions in group communication courses, require careful study of public policy questions, show how to apply tests of evidence and reasoning to discourse on public policy, give experience in analyzing question types and issues, foster the art of asking questions, and discuss open-mindedness and other values of democratic participation. The small group communication or discussion course would have to change considerably if it were to return to its original focus of public policy discussion.

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[1] Although the standard agenda is explained in slightly different versions in the various textbooks, Dewey's original formulation gives the general idea: "Upon examination, each instance reveals, more or less clearly, five logically distinct steps: (i) a felt difficulty; (ii) its location and definition; (iii) suggestion of possible

solution; (iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief" (1910, 72).

Communication Education and (Local) Politics

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Probably my issue would not draw much attention in Germany since politicians are not very popular here. Almost as unpopular as prostitutes or pimps. To give an example: A few months ago a comedian (Frank-Markus Barwasser, better known as Erwin Pelzig) asked: Why do only six percent of the Germans like politicians? His answer: Because 94 percent have already voted before.

That politicians only manage six percent on the popularity stakes is most likely accurate. This is the result of a public opinion survey conducted by a well-known opinion research institute from Allensbach last year.

Yes, it is sad. There are a lot of prejudices about politicians, for example that they lie, are selfish or corruptible, that they talk a lot and do little. It is also believed that they receive disproportionately high daily allowances and pensions – all at the taxpayers' expense.

My contribution, "communication education and local politics," will not only take a close look at these prejudices but also give answers to the following three questions:

- What do politicians expect from communication education?
- How useful is communication education in politics?
- How useful is politics for communication education?

First Preliminary Note: Which Politicians am I Talking About?

In Germany, there are approximately 10,000 professional politicians in the German parliament, the Bundestag, in the 16 state parliaments, in the upper levels of municipalities and political parties. In my presentation, I do not want to put the focus on these politicians but rather on those more than 100,000 unpaid local politicians in the municipalities. They work free of charge or for a very low representational allowance. To give a concrete number: The members of the Bezirksbeirat (district advisory council) in Heidelberg receive 26 Euros for a session, which corresponds to an hourly wage that is lower than the American minimum wage of 5 dollars 15 - if you take into account the time expenditure for preparation and follow-up. And the local councils receive a representational allowance of 665 Euros per month for their outlays and loss of salary. That does sound better, but they spend an average 80 to 100 hours on that.

Second Preliminary Note: Why Communication Education Rather than Speech Education?

I have chosen the term communication education not only as reference to Hellmut Geissner[1] but because linguistic interaction in local politics generally covers written as well as oral communication. The session documents are in written form, petitions and inquiries from citizens are submitted and answered verbally or in writing, the discussions in the sessions are verbal and recorded in written form; in addition, there are frequent power point presentations by the administrative staff. By the way, communication in the sessions usually takes place by way of conversation and conventional speeches are rather an exception (mostly in budget debates).

Third Preliminary Note: What Kind of Politics am I focusing on Here?

Here, it is not about international or national policy but rather about local policy. All German cities and municipalities have the right of municipal autonomy. This means: They may deal with and decide their local issues on their own as long as they stay within the framework of the law. This right is guaranteed in the German constitution, in the basic constitutional law, section 28, paragraph 2. The citizens may elect the municipal council and the mayor. The specific details of this municipal autonomy, the term of office, the selection of committees and offices open for election, this is defined in the municipal constitutions, the constitutions of the individual federal states and the municipal codes. The regulations of the individual federal states may vary, yet the fundamental principles are identical.

Every German citizen who has reached the age of majority (18) has the right to elect these people who are, in turn, responsible for decisions concerning the municipality, for example the construction of roads, libraries, public swimming pools, the road map and schedule of public transportation, the terms of garbage removal, the regulations governing house constructions and setting the level of fees and charges.

Before I move on to communication in local politics, I have to explain the general conditions. I will do so by using the example of my hometown Heidelberg[2].

Most of you probably know this city. Based on population, Heidelberg is ranked only as fifty-third among the eighty-three German major cities, yet it is one of the internationally best known cities. Heidelberg is also widely believed to be among the most beautiful cities in Germany. The harmonious ensemble of castle, the old part of town and river inspired the writers and painters of the Romantic Movement and still today fascinates millions of visitors from all over the world. Currently, the population of Heidelberg is approximately 145,000 within an area of 109 square kilometers. In addition, there are around 20,000 members of the armed forces with dependents from various NATO States. Add to that approximately 3.5 million day-trippers per year (that is almost 10,000 a day) and on average approximately 930,000 overnight accommodations (thus over 2.500 per day). Another attraction: Heidelberg has the oldest university in Germany, founded in 1386. Recently, the University of Heidelberg was chosen to be one of the few German elite universities, it employs roughly 10,600 people. Currently Heidelberg has more than 30,000 students. In Heidelberg there are proportionally more university graduates and physicians than in any other major German city. In addition, Heidelberg is a very youthful city: Almost four out of ten inhabitants are younger than 30 (that is approximately 53,000 people). Due to its many visitors and the significant number of foreigners - among them many scientists and students - Heidelberg has always been a multicultural city.
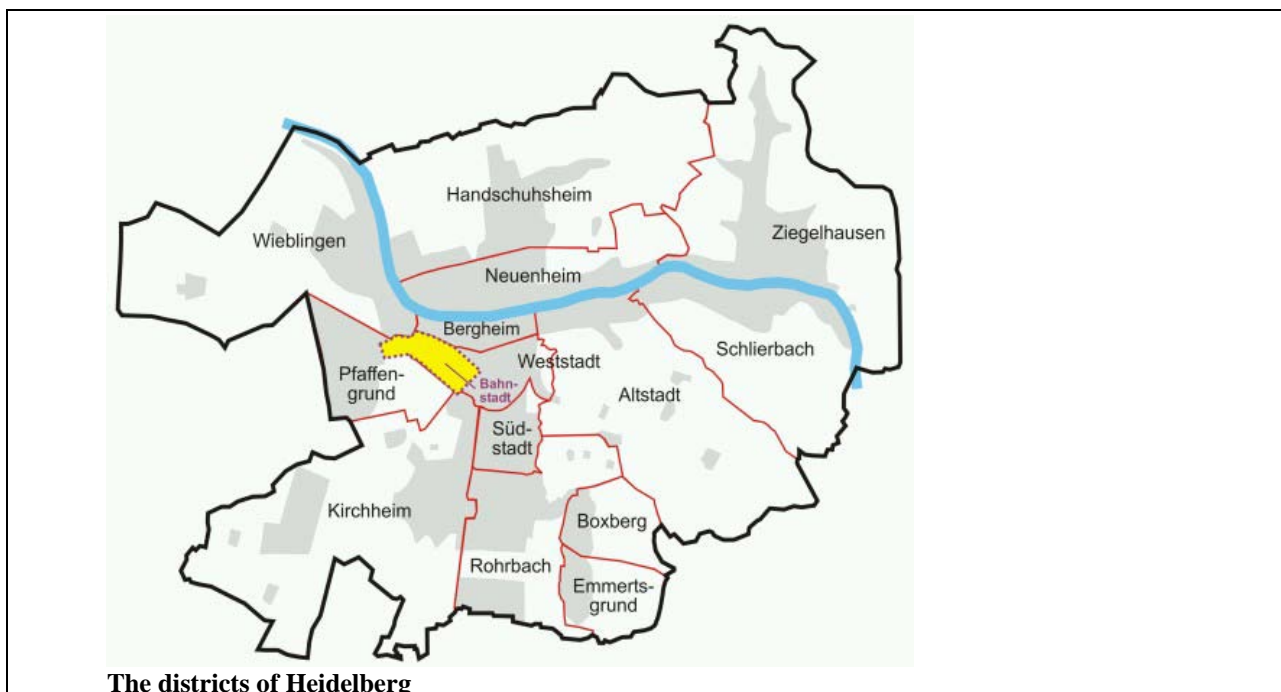

Heidelberg

Some Information About the Political Structure of Heidelberg

At the head of the city council there is the mayor. For 16 years (from 1990 to 2006) we were governed by a female mayor, a trained teacher. She was a member of "my" political party and was also a graduate of "my" university. She majored in speech education and one of her teachers was my predecessor Gabriele Waechtershaeuser, who studied under Hellmut Geissner himself. Since 2006 we have had a new mayor who is not a member of any political party. He has a doctorate in Geography and had been in charge of environmental policy for a couple of years before.

The municipal council consists of the mayor as chairperson and 40 unpaid members, the city councilors. They are elected for a term of five years. After the election in 2004 the municipal council was composed like this: The biggest German political parties CDU and SPD gained 10 seats each, the GAL-Green Party got 8 seats, the group "Die Heidelberger" (translated: The people of Heidelberg) was allocated 4 seats, the *Freie Waehlervereinigung* (Independents) and the FDP (The Liberals) got 3 seats each, the "*Bunte Linke*" (mixed leftists) and the "generation.hd" one seat each.[3] In summer of 2008 the parliamentary party of the GAL Greens separated, so now there are nine groups in the municipal council and every major vote requires intensive discussions within the various parties.

The municipal council decides on all the local issues unless they were referred to the mayor. Sometimes there are still additional local political committees. For example, since 1989 there has been in Heidelberg a foreign council in which 6 councilors and 19 non-nationals or late repatriates discuss the issues important to them about once a month. Since 2006 Heidelberg has, in addition, had a youth municipal council which consists of 30 directly elected adolescents aged 14 to 19 and six advisory members of the municipal council. Students from special schools, high schools, junior high schools, secondary schools and technical schools are elected in proportion to their distribution. The youth municipal council represents the interests of youth against the municipal council and its committees as well as against the mayor. In addition, its members may serve as advisers to the municipal council if the issues are of concern to them.

And now I would like to present a committee that even many politically interested Germans do not know. But it is the committee with the most politicians working on a voluntary basis in the major cities of Baden-Wuerttemberg: the district advisory council. The district advisers - according to the statutes - are to advise the local council and the administration in important issues concerning the city districts and to represent the interests of the districts. Heidelberg has 14 districts.

The districts of Heidelberg

For these 14 districts there are 13 district advisory councils - every district usually has one, only in my area is a district advisory council also responsible for two districts, *Weststadt* (the west area of Heidelberg) *and Suedstadt* (the south area of Heidelberg). A district advisory council has between 10 and 18 members according to the number of inhabitants of the district. Since *Weststadt* has more than 12,000 inhabitants and *Suedstadt* more than 4,000, the district adviser in charge was allotted the maximum number of seats.

The district advisers are not elected directly by the inhabitants of the districts, the election procedure is a little more complicated. First, every five years the seats for each district are allocated according to the respective results of the elections for the municipal council. Thus, in our district advisory council there are six Greens, four members of the SPD, four members of the CDU, two "Heidelberger," and one seat each for the FDP and the "Bunte Linke." In their meetings now the members of these parties elect their representatives from the members residing in this district. The elected members then are appointed as district advisers by the municipal council.

Locality: The sessions of the district advisers usually take place in the municipal districts, sometimes they may also use the council chamber of the city hall. The session dates and the agendas are published beforehand in the press as well as on the internet. Often the meetings are in parts public and non-public.

The participation of the citizens varies greatly. If the issue, for example, is the construction of a new tram line, more than a hundred might come to the meetings, but that is still less than one percent of the population. If the issue is less attractive (for example the relocation of a protected colony of lizards), then only two or three guests show up. Many interesting subjects, however, are discussed *in camera*, construction projects for example, so that none of the companies competing for the contract gains an edge on information.

I may give here some examples of issues that our district advisory council has been discussing lately:

- the construction of a new sports or multipurpose arena
- the creation of a roundabout instead of an intersection with traffic lights
- the outline planning draft of a new city district on the former grounds of *Deutsche Bahn* (the Federal Railway Company)

- the renewal of a through road
- the improvement of cycle path connections
- the loud squeaking and rumbling of some trams
- the cultural life of the city district
- a preservation charter to prevent an impairing of the outstandingly beautiful areas of a district by mismatching new buildings - and most of all:
- a zoning map for a central area in the district.

This last topic I want to present to you in somewhat more detail, since it exemplifies the opportunities and limits of our communicative interaction in local politics.

In Heidelberg, to be more precise, in the centre between the old part of town and the main station, there is an area with a mixed structure: courthouses, the tax office, the custom office, a hardware store, several restaurants and a hotel. Here is a picture of the "Bahnhofstrasse" taken in the spring of 2008[4]:

The properties and buildings on the right side of the picture - the tax office and the court house belong to the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg. They are in need of rehabilitation and are contaminated with asbestos. In our state capital Stuttgart the officials have been pondering for years now on how to solve the problems of these buildings. Finally they decided for a PPP-project (ppp = public private partnership). They started a request for proposals and several large construction companies took part in the "anonymous bidding procedure." A company belonging to the Austrian road construction company Strabag with the name "Zueblin" received the tender. The company agreed to buy the premise from the state, to build a new courthouse which would be let to the state and to cover the remaining areas with business and apartment buildings. In the fall of 2007 the plans are presented to the public and the committees. The residents are shocked: The adjacent road is supposed to be narrowed down from 33 meters to 18 meters, many big old trees would have to be felled. Furthermore, the building plot itself would be covered up to the last square inch and the proposed new buildings would be in part up to six stories high - much higher than the four stories otherwise prevalent in this district. Here is an artist's impression of the proposed development[5]

The local residents created an action group, they organized several sessions and information meetings, one is even attended by the Ministers of Finance and Justice of the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg. They stated explicitly that they do not want to change the plans any more. There are even threats to move the district court to the larger neighboring city of Mannheim, which would mean the loss of approximately 400 jobs. Thus: a classic "*argumentatio ad baculum*".

At the crucial meeting of the district advisory council I proposed a motion, on behalf of my parliamentary group, which reflects demands of the citizens' action group. We asked the district council to keep the *Bahnhofstrasse* at least 22 meters wide, to adapt the new buildings better to the existing structure of buildings, to limit the eaves height of the new buildings to 17.50 meters and to save the trees. This motion is carried with a large majority, only the five representatives of the CDU and FDP did not vote in favor of it (these parties also form the federal state government).

A few days later the matter is presented to the municipal council. After a long discussion a vote is held. The result from our point of view: We were short of one voice. The way is cleared for construction!

What do Politicians Expect from Communication Education?

It seems like the politicians primarily expect hints on how to look more popular, likeable and pleasant in order to gain more votes at elections. However, this only applies to a minority. Often the people aspiring to a well-paid office do not trust our profession. Thus, our last mayoral candidate, renowned in his field and very cautious in talks with citizens, told me at a district get-together: "I am what I am and I don't want to be forced to change." He received so few votes that he did not even make it into the second round ballot.

In seminars for local politicians I heard much more often the following expectations:

- How can I use my voice so that I won't have a sore throat after a long day of talks and meetings?
- How can I make myself audible against a loud background noise for example at an information desk on the market place?
- How do I bring forward my arguments in order to convince as many people as possible?

- How can I contribute to an increased effectiveness in sessions?
- What can I do to reduce my stage fright?

And while we are on the topic of "Expectations": The fellow party members expect that - at least at local level - the communication advising and training is free of charge.

I think that I do not need to explain here the basics of speech education. Concerning vocal prophylaxis and volume training politicians are not in any way different from anybody else. I would rather focus on the rhetorical aspects of local politics.

1. Talks with citizens. Local politicians represent the initial point of contact for people with problems. They suffer for example from traffic or construction site noise, from traffic jams during rush hours, they complain about the shortage of parking space, cars exceeding the speed limit or the dangerous crossings on their children's way to school. The citizens expect their concerns to be taken seriously. But not every request can be supported without reservation, for example, according to current jurisdiction we are not allowed to reduce the speed limit to 30 kilometers per hour on main roads, we cannot introduce a progressive signal system for everyone and we will not arrange for each no-parking zone to get its own traffic wardens right around the clock. But if dangerous potholes are concerned, overflowing glass recycling containers or questions like how long a certain construction site is likely to be there, then we usually are able to help quickly. It only takes one phone call if you know the right person at the Administration Department. During conversations with the complainants themselves, primarily active listening is in demand, sometimes also the ability to interrupt with a compliment and to finish conversations in a polite manner.

2. Preliminary discussions within the parliamentary groups. The term fellow party member may be justified now and then, yet often it is downright euphemistic. Often the members of a party don't agree on certain issues since their personal interests and individual communication styles are too diverse. Someone who has children of school age, for example, is more likely to support school investments, someone who does not own a car does not care so much about the parking space problem; someone living in a traffic reduced area has little motivation to fight against the noise of the bypass roads. A general attitude for cooperation is in demand here, the search for compromises must come before the ambition to win the elections.

3. Preliminary discussions with other parliamentary groups: At the local level it is not too difficult to find common interests with the members or representatives of other parties since the issues are hardly ever about ideological differences but rather about district concerns. With the chairman of the Green party - he lives on the same street - I have a lot of pleasant conversations. We inform each other about our motions and often support them together. Positive and constructive conversations are even possible with members of the conservative parties or groups - especially at the numerous festivities and receptions organized by the city or the churches and at private parties. On one occasion - we received very extensive documents only two working days before the session date - we even organized a common preliminary talk of all parliamentary groups to counter the time pressure by the administration appropriately. Almost unanimously (there was only one dissenting vote), we decided to postpone the session, unanimously we decided for a special session with the mayor on the treatment of the committees by the administration.

4. Actual sessions of the political committees: They are very formal. A mayor or a high-ranking official of the city administration chairs the session. Usually the invitation to that session is accompanied by elaborate documents. In most cases, members of the respective departments are invited to discuss the items of the agenda. They inform more or less in detail and are available for further questions afterwards. The desire to speak varies. If there are important issues (and the press is present) some follow the motto "Everything has been said already but not by everyone." And of course the speech desire decreases with the increasing duration of the session.

5. Information on the session results. This usually takes place in the board meetings and sessions of the members of the respective party organizations - at the SPD these are the local associations. Brief, concise, descriptive - that's what the reports are supposed to be because - apart from local politics - other numerous issues of the national and federal state policy should be discussed.

So much for the information on locality and subjects. If you ask a local politician for further demands you will get some meta-communicative complaints. Most frequently they moan about the high expenditure of time for the sessions caused by lengthy lectures and contributions to discussions. They also get annoyed by individual rivalries, open or concealed. The younger politicians often talk too fast for their older colleagues. On the other hand,

some younger incomers have to surrender to older politicians lapsing back into their dialects. I still remember one of my first sessions as a district adviser: It was about a children's playground and I heard the word "*Fuchsenei*" over and over again. I couldn't find the word in any document or street map. Certainly, I knew that foxes lay no eggs (which would be the literal translation) but that this was a traditional name for a playground area confused me until I got the explanation after the session. "*Fuchsenei*" was the name of an oval green area near the former mansion of the railway car manufacturer Fuchs until around 50 years ago.

How Useful is Communication Education for Politics?

If I advise politicians in speech education I aim for the following four goals[6]:

a) I would like to be able to give participants individual feedback on their communicative competence and establish criteria with them;

b) I want to supply information leading to a better understanding of communication situations and counterparts, with their various opportunities and problems;

c) I want to present and suggest exercises that serve to enhance the vocal and linguistic skills and to reduce disagreeable habits;

The expectations in terms of contents include reasoning and negotiating, advising, methods of posing questions, moderating discussions, presentations, structuring assistance and the handling of conflicts.

Here are possible services which our profession might make to politics – expressed as learning targets [in alphabetical order]:

Advising: Politicians should
- know the various advisory situations and accept them as an important component of their occupation;
- distinguish between purely informative sessions and those that require the solving of problems
- recognize and avoid the risks of over-intense questioning, assumed interpretations and hastily suggested solutions;
- have the ability to create and point out positive discussion conditions;
- be able to practice discernible active

listening;
- arrive at a better problem comprehension with the help of repetition methods;
- be able to structure discussions through occasional summaries;
- address also emotional aspects;
- be able to finish advising conversations in a positive way.

Aids of Structuring: Politicians should
- know how to enhance the effect through a logical structure and an approach that always keeps the audience in mind;
- know structuring aids to prepare discussion contributions, lectures and speeches;
- know deductive and inductive approaches and be able to adapt them to the target group;
- be able to put short explanations into effective and comprehensible words;
- be able to address difficult issues in an objective and constructive manner;
- be able to structure discussion contributions according to the three or five-step method (also as comments or conciliatory statements);
- know and apply methods to structure discussions and debates.

Conflicts: Politicians should
- know the conditions and rules of a discussion aimed at conflict resolution;
- know the characteristics of a fact-based informative discussion;
- be able to employ core questions in order to structure a conflict resolution discussion;
- know examples of traditional and modern methods of negotiating
- be experienced in the techniques of paraphrasing and verbalizing as aids for conflict resolution discussions.

Methods of Posing Questions: Politicians should
- know the different functions of questions;
- be able to differentiate open and closed as well as direct and indirect questions;
- be able to rephrase pseudo questions to real questions;
- know and use when necessary special kinds of questions like yes-no questions, control questions, filter questions, trick questions, counter questions, motivation questions, rhetorical questions, leading questions, questions chains;
- be able to place well-founded questions in sessions and other discussion situations in a constructive and flexible manner;

- be able to allow for sufficient time to think and reply after questions.

Moderating Discussions: Politicians should
- be able to acquire and to put into practice the theoretical background knowledge necessary for any clarifying talk based on facts;
- learn how moderation and participants affect the discussion atmosphere;
- be able to prepare and moderate a discussion;
- have the ability to create an environment that is appropriate to the occasion of the discussion and the participants;
- be able to prepare properly for one-to-one conversations and group conversations and to take over the responsible task of moderating these situations;
- be knowledgeable about the basics of conflict management.

Presentations: Politicians should
- know how to prepare and structure a presentation;
- know and use expertly different presentation facilities and media (overhead projector, flip chart, data projector *et cetera*);
- know how to create an appealing presentation;
- recognize the appropriate means of expression, be they linguistic, concerned with the manner of speaking or physical, as well as the presentation media suitable for conveying contents;
- be able to arrange a presentation according to a situation that is goal and audience oriented.

Reasoning and Negotiating: Politicians should be able to
- protect themselves and others from manipulation attempts. For that, it is necessary that participants are able to differentiate between reasoning and manipulation;
- distinguish between confrontational talks (debates, disputations and panel discussions) and deliberate conversations (conferences, sessions);
- create contributions with convincing arguments with structuring assistance;
- recognize and apply the basics of a fair reasoning;
- analyze the structures of reasoning;
- make clear to participants how goal-oriented thinking along structured lines helps them to perceive their own situation more precisely;
- master the basics of conducting negotiations

(differentiation between position, interest, goal);

- know and use traditional and modern techniques of negotiation;
- bring intensely emotionalized situations onto a more objective level with appropriate strategies.

Since this has been a rather abstract enumeration, I want to give a concrete example: At a seminar for local politicians in a large city in Saxony several city councillors complained that their inquiries and motions were not taken seriously enough by the city administration. I asked them to repeat one of these inquiries as literally as possible. Roughly, it went like this: *"Mister Mayor, I've been informed by the citizens of the district X that the condition of Y Street is still terrible. There are huge potholes. It would be really nice if someone would do something about that!"*

This article may sound very polite yet it is hardly convincing because there are no precise descriptions of the damage, no constructive proposals of a solution nor a clear call for action. If problems are to be addressed I found the MISLA/MANSA-Model very helpful, published by Richard Wittsack as early as in 1935[7]. The acronym MANSA contains the initials of the five structuring terms Motivation, Actual status, Nominal status, Solution, Appeal. Or put as questions: "Why am I speaking?" "What is the problem?" "What should it be like?" "How do we get there?" And "What must be done?"

After the explanation of the method the inquiry looked like this: *"Mister Mayor, several people of the district X have informed me of a serious problem. There are more than 100 potholes in Y Street, some of them already more than four inches deep. As you know, the city is in charge of safe road conditions and it would be better to avoid any possible car damage for which we would have to pay. The holes could be filled with asphalt just like the holes in Z Street a short time ago. Therefore I ask you: Get the job done next week!"*

How Useful is Politics for Communication Education?

This is the shortest chapter of this presentation because I don't want to emphasize the individual benefit of political decisions for individuals; for example, if certain Highways (or Autobahns), due to some cabinet decision, are developed so that certain colleagues get faster to their seminars. I also don't talk about the benefit for some colleagues when they get a contract for a rhetoric seminar by the education

founding of a party now and then. And also, I don't talk about that sense of success either that you might get as an adviser if a friend and politician goes in for a career and wages successful campaigns, as for example did a member of the Bundestag from Heidelberg, Lothar Binding, against smoking in public locations.

I am more concerned with the responsibility of politics for the conditions under which we live. I hope you agree with me that successful discussions are a substantial element for a healthy society. For that, we do not only need politicians that exemplify the culture of debating but also politicians that allow and call for such topics in schools and universities.

I hope we may see grounds for optimism here: If more politicians learn that modern communication education is no longer the rather primitive original speech education which it used to be, if more politicians sense that the tradition of aggressive rhetoric is obsolete, then our chances will improve greatly.

An example of the step in the right direction is the plan for a new teachers' education program in Baden-Wuerttemberg. The draft of April 8, 2008 obligates all students of education to take a class in Speech Education for two credit hours per semester. Pessimists would call that two drops in a bucket but optimists are happy about the increase of a 100 %.

Back to the question "How to deal with our politicians." I found an article on this topic in our renowned weekly paper "Die Zeit." The author Werner Jann is Professor of Political Science at the University of Potsdam. He wrote[8]:

"There is one point that armchair strategists, the tabloids and critically-concerned commentators agree on: "The politicians" are incompetent at solving imminent problems. ...they are uninspired and too aloof to see the worries of the people. ...

After a short moment's thought the question arises why our politicians are supposed to be so much more insensitive, uninformed, egoistic, ponderous and finally so much more ignorant than we voters are? ...

Our politicians are far from being indifferent and badly informed, rather they are too specialized.

Also, there is no such thing as "the typical politician" but rather human beings with a concern for sports fields, nature reserves, schools or the

integration of immigrants ….

They all care about the distribution of scarce resources because they are the ones that have to decide how much budgetary funding is available for theatre, schools or homes for asylum seekers.

Such processes are extremely unpopular and require people to deal with these conflict and consensus processes.

This is not meant to be uncritical praise of these "secret heroes" since there are of course incompetent, narrow-minded or even corrupt politicians. But probably in far lower numbers than in the rest of the population. This is ensured by the considerable competition for positions and the control via the public in particular. There is no area that is as transparent as politics. Whoever wants to go into politics must brace themselves for merciless criticism. But do these same people also have to accept the fact that they are deemed to lack competence and integrity? Is it nowadays only masochists that aspire to a political career?

Here may be the answer to the original question: Our politicians are more ignorant than the rest of us since even the most catastrophic reputation cannot deter them from getting involved for their fellow citizens. But how much longer? In the east German state Brandenburg, many municipalities cannot now find the necessary candidates for the local elections any more.

Thus a solution to the problem begins to appear: If there are no politicians any more, then we don't need to despise them any more either."

I confess it: I like politicians. Not all of them, but I know many who are quite likeable. This is one of the essential premises for giving direction to politicians in terms of communication education.

It's our job now not just to do this but to do it well.

[1] GEISSNER, H. K. 2000. *Kommunikationspädagogik. Transformationen der „Sprech-Erziehung."* St. Ingbert

[2] http://www.heidelberg.de/servlet/PB/menu/101 2904_l1/index.html (19.3.2009)

[3] http://www.heidelberg.de/servlet/PB/menu/106 6076_l1/index.html (19.3.2009)

[4] Source: Unpublished material of the district-council meeting (2008)

[5] Source: Unpublished material of the district-council meeting (2008)

[6] WAGNER, R. W. 2004. *Grundlagen der mündlichen Kommunikation. Sprechpädagogische Informationsbausteine für alle, die viel und gut reden müssen.* Regensburg

[7] WITTSACK, R. 1935. *Lerne Reden! Ein Weg zum Erfolg. Praktische Redelehre.* Leipzig (p. 93)

[8] http://www.zeit.de/1998/39/Sind_Politiker_du mm_ (19.3.2009)

Internet-based Approach to Continuing Medical Education in Developing Regions

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Video and Internet technologies offer, as never before, fresh fields for medical education over long distances and demanding environments. Until the 1990s, for most practical applications, someone had to get on a plane to fly to a conference, hold a lecture, or demonstrate a procedure; today we send electrons instead of people, and medical education can arrive by video not only by Airbus.

Medical knowledge delivered electronically has many virtues. Not only is it less costly, it also leaps across hostile environments and locations otherwise difficult to reach. Indeed, if the WiRED experience during the past few years in Iraq, Kosovo, and elsewhere proved one thing, it is the advantage of IT-based healthcare education in difficult settings.

Cheaper, safer, and faster, live programming allows for a far greater number of participants. With hundreds of trainers, we can reach thousands of physicians and nurses, from wide geographic regions, in distant medical communities. The scope is almost without limits. We can address all medical specialties, involve the most respected medical educators, cover topics in great depth, and allow receiving physicians to select material that is both relevant and at a level appropriate to their knowledge and skills.

Two Delivery Approaches: Examining Their Advantages and Disadvantages

The WiRED experiences in telemedicine from the Middle East, the Balkans, and Central America have a common thread: long- distance education involving two delivery approaches. They are 1) live sessions via video conferencing, and 2) stored material via the Internet coupled with live down streaming and up-stream chat.

1. Live, Large Format Video Sessions

Large format live sessions (Video Conferencing or VTC), popular since the mid-1990s, can connect large numbers of people typically gathered in lecture halls. These systems usually involve sophisticated cameras and a lot of costly bandwidth. Because the VTC sessions collect participants in a single location at a prescribed time, they must be carefully arranged well in advance. Operating these sessions requires a fair amount of coordination. Hosting the VTC facilities and running the sessions must have administrative endorsement and support. This is often a weak link in many developing regions where VTC programs suffer from ineffectual and unfocused central administrations.

Advocates for the VTC approach are often drawn to the appearance of two rooms full of people connected by a video bridge. No question, these sessions often make striking photographs, casting the appearance of colleagues working hand-in-hand across the miles. The pictures, however, are often more compelling than is the educational value of video sessions. Yes, people can see and hear each other in real time, but the burdens imposed by arranging and attending these sessions often outweigh their usefulness. Moreover, as a key communication tool in a recurring Continuing Medical Education program, they run into serious problems.

Time zone differences often make scheduling difficult. In the Middle East, for instance, the 8- to 11- hour difference with the United States requires people on one side of the video link or the other to arrive very early or to stay very late. Security conditions in some locations require doctors to be home, behind locked doors before dusk, imposing even tighter time restrictions. For recurring sessions, the inconveniences become significant; they can even halt a program.

Access to video equipment for live sessions can be problematic. In our sessions between San Francisco and Baghdad, for instance, doctors in Iraq have to be in a single location (Medical City Center). This is difficult for doctors in Baghdad, a sprawling, congested and sometimes dangerous city, and nearly impossible for doctors outside the city.

Given the cost of equipment and connectivity, the number of working sites is small, restricting access to all but limited audiences, and these are almost always in major cities. Meanwhile, more than 95 percent of medical professionals remain out of "live" reach simply because they are not near a video conferencing facility, or are unable to travel to one, given pressing schedules and travel conditions.

Live sessions are ephemeral – they disappear the moment they conclude. Someone with a schedule conflict, or who shows up late, or who lives outside key cities will miss the session.

Feedback is immediate, but restricted. Advocates argue that because interactions are immediate and visual, feedback in a video conference is ideal. While these features are appealing, they don't ensure an optimal exchange. Why? For one, in group settings, the vocal few often monopolize discussion, eclipsing the input of others. For another, once the group sets an agenda other important topics become buried by a few items that preoccupy the discussion. Compounding these problems is an inevitable time limitation that restrains participants from engaging in a thorough exchange.

Despite their virtues of interactivity, spontaneity, and audience involvement, live video conference sessions are not the most effective and efficient approach to sustaining medical education, especially in developing and war-affected regions.

2. <u>Stored content with live video streaming</u>

Stored content is almost the equal and opposite of live video conferences. Stored material does not permit instant feedback, the audience cannot ask questions and register its views, and the speaker cannot benefit from immediate audience reaction. That said, these inadequacies are reduced or eliminated by live streaming and other IT feedback tools now available. Before looking at these tools, let's consider the variety of types of stored material.

By stored content, we mean digitally recorded lectures, seminars, and grand rounds.

Any session that can be delivered live can be recorded and archived. The recordings can then be indexed (by topic, key terms, words spoken in a lecture), and made searchable and available for downloading or streaming. Think of it as a Medical Education YouTube with a few extra bells and whistles.

By stored content, we mean self-pacing tutorials, such as PowerPoint presentations. Topical outlines, graphic images, photographs and other visual elements allow users to study the lessons at a time and in a place convenient to them. Moreover, adding voice and audio extends the capacity and the interest of this educational tool.

By stored content, we also mean electronic "print." One of the best examples is the World Health Organization's HINARI database of biomedical journals and textbooks, available to doctors throughout the developing world. This extraordinarily rich archive of medical knowledge allows qualifying institutions to access the most current editions—and previous editions—of leading journals from around the world in multiple languages.

In addition to HINARI, doctors can access a number of other collections containing journals, books, monographs, research archives, tutorials, and raw empirical databases. They can systematically search this material as conveniently in Kirkuk as in Kansas City, in Baghdad as in Boston. The point: Distance no longer imposes isolation from resources once trapped on paper; electronic delivery removes the barriers. Access requires Internet connections, but these are far easier to provide and less costly than high-end video links. Accordingly, for the same amount of money, we can outfit a greater number of Internet access sites than we can video conferencing centers.

Stored Content – Whether Digitally Recorded Video or Electronic "Print" – Offers Many Other Advantages.

Stored content provides the capacity to join a variety of formats into a high-impact curriculum. For instance, journal articles, book chapters, and PowerPoint tutorials can be linked with video lectures and organized through connective discussions packaged as a complete course. Research data and study guides can be joined with Websites to prepare doctors for illness outbreaks, epidemics and other public health issues.

Recently in Kirkuk, we provided access to readings and tutorials in preparation for video conferences that readied doctors for an impending cholera outbreak. These study tools enabled doctors in Kirkuk to acquire the background knowledge necessary to obtain the most value from live video sessions that followed. They allowed doctors and medical students to access the information where and when they found it convenient. For stored programs, in general, the readings, lectures, study guides, and other resources are mutually supportive, approaching the subject through a variety of formats.

Stored content opens access beyond the cities where video conference facilities are located. Any doctor with Internet access (and remember Internet access is easier to provide than VTC access) can participate in the program. They do not need to be in a particular seat at an inconvenient hour, but can study the readings and view the videos from any place at any time they choose.

Stored content allows physicians to pursue a range of interests. With live VTC video conferences, only physicians in relevant specialties are likely to attend. A lecture on psychiatry will be of limited interest to a gastroenterologist; a lecture on dermatology is unlikely to attract many pediatric cardiologists. The stored material, by contrast, allows physicians to pursue their interests—in their own fields or in others.

The point here is simply that a stored program serves a larger audience and has a greater potential impact because it expands the audience by geography, time of day, and medical interest. Whereas a lecture can reach a few dozen doctors for an hour, a stored program can reach many thousands every day with a wealth of material.

Maximizing Feedback and Interaction of Stored Content

We pointed out earlier that a practical weakness of the stored program is its lack of capacity for audience/speaker interaction. (Even VTC video conferences allow only limited interaction.) Doctors cannot interact with a digitally recorded video, but adding live streaming with instant feedback capabilities, brings us very close to a genuine face-to-face exchange. Thus, we address one of the shortcomings of a stored program by building in live interactions between lecturers and participants.

Like VTC conferences, the live video streaming—sometimes referred to as a Webinar--

allows participants to view a lecture as it happens. The difference is that live streaming takes place on the Internet and not in a large lecture hall. We know the drawbacks of assembling large audiences for a video conference. The benefits of Internet-delivered live lectures is that doctors in the remotest regions need only Internet access to participate. They can sit at home or in an hospital-based Internet facility to engage in the live session.

But what about feedback? When we join the live stream with live chat and other up-line tools, we close the loop. The lecturer in, say London, will be seen live on line. The receivers anywhere in the world, with the click of a mouse, can engage in interactive chat (video or voice) through which they can send questions and comments—while the lecture is ongoing or during the Q&A session. Moreover, the chat allows participants from around the world to meet in one location for a virtual discussion with the lecturer. And, for those who cannot attend, we can record the entire exchange, and post it for later viewing. Email and other means of exchange permit the discussion to continue.

Consider this scenario: Each month (or week, it doesn't matter), we feature a medical topic, including appropriate stored videos, readings, and study material. This material is highlighted for example, from August 1-15, during which time participants are encouraged to study or review the readings and videos.

On the following week (August 18, 19, and 20), from 9:00 a.m. to noon, we will provide a content expert, via live streaming, to answer questions and engage in a discussions with clinicians who have studied the stored material. The live video image of the lecturer would be available to participants around the world; the participants could engage by way of video, voice or live chat, depending on the number of participants in the exchange.

This approach offers a constructive feedback channel, it's accessible from anywhere, and it requires minimal equipment. Moreover, it allows highly effective and productive interchanges among subject experts and professionals in the field.

There is reasonable expectation that audience members will have studied the material beforehand and formed more thoughtful questions than they might form on the fly in a live video conference. Whereas the live video conference typically limits interaction to 15 or 20 minutes, on-line interaction permits hours. Furthermore, with the potential for

even larger audiences, we might anticipate a richer information exchange as more people participate in the discussion.

Of course, other feedback opportunities are available including traditional email, VOIP telephone conversations (e.g., Skype) and Webcam discussions. If we discover a sustaining interest in a given topic, we can easily open another discussion session or chat room to allow wider audience participation. In response, we also can prepare additional video and text material for further study.

So, while many people have favored large format VTC sessions because, they believe, the "face-to-face" sessions permit the richest feedback, recent developments in on-line streaming and instant message exchange (text, video or voice) trump that argument. In fact, on-line approaches offer greater opportunities for information exchange among participants. The feedback is every bit as rich; it permits live images and voice, opens other feedback channels (email, discussion groups, chat), expands the time frame for exchanges and accommodates a larger number of participants.

Final thoughts: A Large VTC Program Requires Administrative Support

Whereas a Continuing Medical Education program using stored and live streaming formats can function without strong administrative support within the host country, a live VTC-based program, requires the backing of a central health ministry or medical specialty association. Both programs benefit from official support, but the VTC program requires it. This issue is addressed in this final section.

The most important element for success of a live content video program (VTC) isn't hardware or connectivity or even content from a reputable medical school. The most important element is support from an administrative body. Without backing from the government or other credentialing agency, a VTC program cannot succeed. Providing video program tools without administrative leadership is like pushing a rope. An authoritative agency must support, encourage and even require participation. It must provide for the equipment and a meeting place, schedule and coordinate events, and recruit clinicians into the CME program. Outsiders can provide equipment, buy bandwidth, and construct medical curricula, but administrative support in the host country is critical for success.

Generally, institutional support for a live content program begins at the national level where decisions about credentialing, public health policy, and the overall direction for medical study takes place. A health minister's direction for continuing medical education and continuing professional development has a direct impact on how training programs—and video conferencing and other IT programs—operate. The minister's mandates for training programs affect local decisions about medical curricula, including the video conferencing program. This is especially true for live, centralized training.

A stored content program with live streaming also benefits greatly from institutional support, but it does not require it. Because communication equipment—computers with Internet connections-- is widely available, any physician, on his or her own initiative, can participate. Intrinsic motivations, such as a physician's personal interest in professional development and a desire to know and practice the most advanced medicine possible, are enough to engage many clinicians. Stored programs with live streaming allow a physician to participate using personal equipment, at a convenient time, studying preferred topics without the need for complicated logistics of a large VTC program.

Consequently, In locations with weak health ministries and medical school administrations, an on-line-based CME system may be the only effective approach to CME study. Doctors with sufficient interest in their own skills development can pursue medical study directly from the outside. Continuing Medical education, therefore, is not at the mercy of a dysfunctional administrative system.

Communication, "Clean" Coal Technology, and U.S. Global Warming Policy

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One of the greatest challenges of the 21st century is how to abate global warming quickly and safely by decreasing CO_2 emissions. In 2007-2008, new data on the rate of climate change caused scientists to heighten the alarm. In November 2007, Rajendra Pachauri, the head of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said, "If there's no action before 2012, that's too late. What we do in the next two to three years will determine our future. This is the defining moment" (Romm). And in June, 2008, NASA's climatologist James Hansen said "climate is nearing dangerous tipping points. Elements of a 'perfect storm,' a global cataclysm, are assembled." Since "over 70 percent of the electrical sector's CO_2 emissions" worldwide come from burning coal (Brown, 214), leading environmental writers such as Lester R. Brown and Tim Flannery argue that one of the first priorities is to stop building new coal-fired power plants (Brown, 215, 273, Flannery, 254). Flannery further argues that the coal-industry's dream of fixing the problem of CO_2 emissions by sequestering it in the earth or the sea is not feasible (p. 254). Nevertheless, Democrats and Republicans from coal producing states are working hard to support so-called "clean coal" technology involving the capture and sequestration of carbon dioxide in the earth.

Using George Lakoff's theory of political framing, this paper examines the framing techniques of one influential proponent of clean-coal technologies, Congressman Rick Boucher, Chairman of the Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee in the U.S. Congress. According to Boucher's website, his subcommittee will write "the country's first mandatory greenhouse gas control measure, which will have economy wide application while not dislocating any economic sector." After chairing two Congressional hearings dealing with Carbon Capture and Sequestration [CCS] in 2007, Virginia Congressman Rick Boucher introduced a bill in the House on June 12, 2008, to create a non-governmental research corporation to stimulate the early deployment of carbon capturing and sequestration technology. This Carbon Capture and Storage Early Deployment Act would allow utilities that burn fossil fuels to increase consumer rates in order to fund a one billion dollar a year research corporation.

Lakoff's Concept of Framing

Cognitive linguist George Lakoff argues that human rationality is intimately linked to the body and is the product of what he calls "the embodied mind." He first developed this idea in his 1980 book, *Metaphors We Live By*, coauthored with Mark Johnson, and updated in 2003. Lakoff and Johnson argue that basic human experiences, such as orientation to space, perceptions of time, and bodily sensations form the basis of reasoning, which is accomplished largely through metaphor and metonymy. Applying this theory to politics, Lakoff argues in his books, *Don't Think of an Elephant!* and *The Political Mind*, that conservatives and progressives frame their arguments on different models of the family, with conservatives subscribing to "the Strict Father" model and liberals embracing "the Nurturant Parent" model. While everyone subscribes to aspects of both models in different areas of their lives, Lakoff argues that differing values of conservatives and progressives can be traced to their differing predispositions towards parenting.

These two different parenting models generate different metaphors of nature and our relationship to it. The Strict Father morality "includes the notion of the natural order of domination: God has dominion over human beings; human beings over nature; parents over children; and so on" (Lakoff, 2002, 212). In contrast, the Nurturant Parent morality views the natural world as "what gives us life, what makes all of life possible, and what sustains us. Thus, our relationship with nature involves attachment, inherent value, gratitude, responsibility, respect, interdependence, love, adoration, and continuing

commitment" (Lakoff 2002, 215). The conservative, Strict Father model uses metaphors such as:

Nature is God's Dominion (given to man to steward wisely).
Nature Is a Resource (for immediate human use).
Nature is Property (for the use of the owner, and for sale and purchase).
Nature Is a Work of Art (for human appreciation).
Nature Is an Adversary (to be conquered and made to serve us).
Nature Is a Wild Animal (to be tamed for our use).
Nature Is a Mechanical System (to be figured out and put to use) (Lakoff, 2002, 213-214).

The Nurturant Parent model uses metaphors of nature such as:

Nature is a Mother (who provides for us).
Nature is a Whole (of which we are inseparable parts).
Nature Is a Divine Being (to be revered and respected).
Nature Is a Living organism (whose needs must be met if it is to survive).
Nature Is a Home (to be maintained and kept clean).
Nature Is a Victim of Injury (who has been harmed and needs to be healed) (Lakoff, 2002, 215-216).

Lakoff advises progressives not to fall into the trap of arguing within the frames of their conservative opponents, for to do so simply reinforces their opponents' frames (2008, 233). For example, the conservative frame of "tax relief" invokes the metaphor "Taxation is Affliction," and leads to the inferences that "those taxed--the public-- are victims, the proponents of taxation are villains and hence evil, and opponents of taxation are heroes and hence good" (2008, 236).

Background on Congressman Rick Boucher

Congressman Rick Boucher is serving his 14th term in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing the Ninth Congressional District in Southwest Virginia. His district is one of the largest geographical congressional districts in the eastern U.S., encompassing more than 20 counties. In 2008, Boucher received the Sunshine in Government Award, along with Representative Mike Pence, for promoting the Free Flow of Information Act to ensure that government is accessible, accountable, and open. Also in 2008, a non-partisan, public interest organization, Congress.org, ranked him 11th in effectiveness in the 435 member U.S. House of Representatives. In 2007 he became Chairman of the Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, whose jurisdiction includes national energy policy and the Clean Air Act. According to Boucher's website, "As Chairman, he is uniquely positioned to develop national energy policy with the views of Southwest Virginia's industries such as coal and agriculture at the forefront" (2008, "About Rick"). His website also says that "With scientific opinion regarding the human contribution to global warming now deeply solidified, Boucher's Subcommittee will write this Fall the country's first mandatory greenhouse gas control measure, which will have economy wide application while not dislocating any economic sector" (2008, "About Rick"). In 2007-08, 72 percent of his campaign contributions came from PACs, and his largest industrial contribution came from electric utilities ($212,297). In the House, he is the second largest recipient of funds from coal mining interests, according to Open Secrets.org.

Framing the Debate to Protect the Coal Industry and Electric Utilities

Prior to drafting new legislation to address global warming, Congressman Boucher held a series of hearings in 2007. His remarks, both in his opening statements as well as the hearings themselves, show a clear bias in favor of continued use of coal to generate electricity. Indeed, in his March 6 hearing, Boucher said,

I can say that my goal is to make sure that electric utilities under whatever carbon constraints we adopt have the ability to continue to use coal pretty much the same way they are using it today in those quantities, and my personal goal also is to protect the ability of coal to continue to grow as a percentage of the total fuel mix for electricity generation. So I am particularly very interested in making sure that we team the arrival of regulations with the availability of these technologies [CCS] for commercial deployment. (p. 13)

I will examine Boucher's opening statements framing two hearings dealing with Carbon Capture and Sequestration [CCS]: the March 6 hearing on Carbon Capture and Sequestration, the March 20 hearing on "Climate Change: Perspectives of Utility CEOs," as well as salient points from the March 6 and March 20 hearings. In addition, I will analyze his floor statement of June 12, 2008 introducing a bill in the House to create a non-governmental research corporation, paid for by consumers through an

increase in their energy bills, to stimulate the early deployment of carbon capturing and sequestration technology. Through my analysis I hope to assess how the hearings produced an outcome supportive of the coal and electric utility industries, whether the weight of the evidence cited in the hearings supports Boucher's CCS early deployment act legislation, and how Boucher's framing techniques influenced the outcome of the hearings.

March 6, 2007 Statement on Carbon Capture and Sequestration: An Overview

In introducing this hearing, Boucher emphatically frames coal as the "most abundant domestic fuel" and "least costly energy resource." Further, he announces that a key caveat to the goal of drafting climate change legislation will be to protect the coal industry, but he carefully masks this caveat by using more general language, as well as the bodily metaphor, "dislocating": "In drafting climate change legislation our goal will be to have our nation make a substantial contribution to resolution of the global problem *while not dislocating any domestic economic sector* [emphasis added]." But a following statement makes clear that he is interested in protecting the coal industry: "We should enable electric utilities that desire to use coal to have the continued ability to do so after the carbon control provisions we will write become effective." In order to enable the continued burning of coal, Boucher says that, "The technologies for carbon capture and sequestration we will discuss . . . will be essential to our ability to meet that test." Introducing urgency into his statement as well as the bodily metaphor "unbearable," Boucher argues, "If carbon controls take effect before the capture and storage technologies are available, there could be a rapid switch from coal to other fuels that would be unbearable for our economy." Without providing any discussion of alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, or geothermal, Boucher claims that, "switching away from coal would significantly increase electricity prices to the detriment of both residential and industrial electricity consumers." Assuming that consumers would switch to natural gas rather than renewable resources, he claims that a switch from coal to natural gas would force some companies to leave the U.S. to get cheaper natural gas, and that the "flight of jobs would worsen if fuel switching from coal to natural gas occurs." Further, increases in natural gas prices would cause farmers to "suffer" because they "use fertilizer manufactured in a natural gas intensive process." Boucher links the development of CCS and burning coal to effective climate change legislation, saying that: "To avoid these problems, we must protect the ability of electric

utilities to continue coal use. In a very real sense, therefore, the technologies we will discuss today will be the enablers of a successful climate change program for the nation" (Boucher, March 6, 2007).

Salient Points from the March 6, 2007 Hearing on Carbon Capture and Sequestration

The House participants with prepared or opening statements in this hearing consisted of Rick Boucher, Chair, and five representatives from the states of Illinois, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Texas (Joe Barton and Michael Burgess). Ten other committee members asked questions. The ten witnesses included administrators from the U.S. Department of Energy (Thomas Shope) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (William Wehrum and Ben Grumbles). One witness was the Director of the Climate Center of the National Resources Defense Council, a non-governmental environmental organization (David Hawkins), and one witness was a Texas attorney familiar with legal and regulatory issues dealing with the sequestration of carbon dioxide (Jay B. Stewart). The other five witnesses came from businesses or research laboratories dealing with carbon capture and storage, such as Babcock and Wilcox, GE Energy, and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. The hearing itself lasted almost four hours, and the single-spaced transcript is 69 pages long, excluding the attached prepared statements. Here, I want to focus on the salient information pertaining to key issues critical to supporting the research and development necessary to widely deploying carbon capture and sequestration in the U.S. The issues include:

1. Will such technology be affordable to American consumers?

2. When will such technology be ready for wide-scale deployment?

3. Does today's legal and regulatory structure permit wide deployment of such technology?

Will such technology be affordable to American consumers? Conservative Republican Dennis Hastert, from Illinois, introduced the theme of cost and affordability in his opening statement, by saying, "Make no mistake, it will increase the price of electricity. That is why before we jump into anything, we need to know how much we are asking the American people to pay and what we will get in return" (p. 3). He adds that, "We cannot ask the American people to pay a heavy price in jobs and consumer costs in the name of solving global

warming only to discover there is almost no environmental benefit" (p. 3). Congressman Barton noted in his prepared statement that a cap and trade program in Germany added 40 percent to the wholesale cost of electricity in Germany, without any CCS technologies. "Combined, carbon capture and sequestration and a cap and trade program could lead to a real rate shock for electric consumers. High electricity costs will only drive manufacturers overseas, and American jobs along with them."

Addressing the cost issues, Thomas D. Shope, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, said, "We can capture CO_2 today. What we cannot do is capture the CO_2 of combustion and maintain prices that we can afford for electricity and other energy-intense products" (p. 9). Shope stated that EPA has the goal of 2012 to have developed "a portfolio of technologies that are available" for CCS at "a reasonable cost . . . . no more than 20 percent cost increase for PC, or post-combustion capture of CO_2, and a 10 percent cost increase for IGCC-type [Integrated Gasification and Combined Cycle] technologies, pre-combustion capture" (pp. 12-13).

Current technology, however, would come at a steep increase in cost to consumers and bring with it a decrease in electrical output. For example, Stu Dalton, of the Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, California, says that, "current post-combustion processes are large energy consumers and could reduce the power plant electrical output by 30 percent" (pp. 49-50). He adds that their "most recent cost estimates suggest that for pulverized-coal plants, the addition of CO_2 capture using the currently most developed technical option would add about 60 to 80 percent to the wholesale cost of electricity in life cycle terms. That is not including any storage site monitoring, liability insurance, et cetera, which is unknown at this point." While Dalton notes that the current cost premium for capture, drying compression and storage in IGCC plants is 40 to 50 percent and is thus cheaper than for PC plants, "IGCC plants initially cost more than PC plants, so that "the bottom-line cost to consumers for power from IGCC plants today is likely to be comparable to PC plants with capture" (p. 50).

Near the end of the hearing, Rep. Dingell asked each witness a yes or no question: whether the Department of Energy's goal of commercial deployment of CCS "by 2012 of capture technologies that achieve 90 percent CO_2 capture at less than a 10 percent increase in the costs of the energy" is "an achievable goal?" (p. 61). The seven answers to this question were decidedly mixed, with hedges, fudges, and worries about places to store the carbon dioxide. Dalton said, "Technology can be built by that date but it will not have established the long-term storage and the safety of that storage at that point" (p. 61). Mr. Fees said that "we believe that what is underway at DOE will work. However, our concern is that it will not be enough, that the combustion technologies will be there much earlier and a broader-based deployment of the combustion technologies may be limited by the availability of storage, and that is our concern, that we may actually limit our ability to deploy new plants with the new technologies because we won't have anywhere to put the CO_2" (p. 61-62).

The only other "yes" answer, from Edward Lowe, general manager of Gasification Market Development, GE Energy, was based on the projected completion date of the Carson Hydrogen Power Project, in 2011, which will use CCS, storing the CO_2 in depleted oil wells. But the success of that project has yet to be demonstrated.

When will such technology be ready for wide-scale deployment? Knowing that a cap and trade law on CO_2 emissions would severely impact the coal industry and electric utilities, Boucher wants to make sure that "we team the arrival of regulations with the availability of these technologies for commercial deployment" (p. 13). Thus, he asked Mr. Shope, from EPA: "So when are we going to have that assurance? Is that 2012 or is that some later date?" Shope replied that "the first testing of our FutureGen plants" would be in 2012, and "it would be approximately 10 years before that technology is then widely available for commercial deployment and you could envision full-scale the technology of choice deployment in the 2045 time frame." Boucher noted that Shope's answer "is a longer time frame than others have suggested," and then asked whether greater funding would "accelerate your time frame for the arrival of these technologies with commercial reliability." Shope replied that if their budget were to double, they "could reduce the amount of time for that full deployment," although he did not specify by how much (pp. 13-14). Under questioning by Mr. Hastert, Shope provided further information on the timing issue: "Now, when I mentioned the 2045 time frame, that would [be] the technology of choice, full-scale deployment. . . . FutureGen will be coming online in 2012, 3 years of testing, about 10 years following that, you are looking at a 2025, 2026 time frame for deployment" (p. 15).

One of the most startling statistics that emerges from the hearing is the sheer scope of the problem

that CCS must address: storing the 7 billion tons of carbon dioxide that the U.S. emits annually, mostly from coal power, according to S. Julio Friedmann, of the Carbon Management Program, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. To help visualize this statistic, Friedman points out that "Just 1 billion tons of anything is more mass than all the human beings on the planet" (p. 46). Imagine moving seven times this mass every year and storing it forever, and one can understand the challenge that CCS poses. In his book, *The Weather Makers*, Tim Flannery visualizes the necessary scale of carbon sequestration by writing, "Imagine injecting twelve cubic miles of liquid CO_2 into the earth's crust every day of the year for the next century or two" (p. 254).

A great irony that runs through this 2007 hearing is that many of the participants reference a demonstration project of a "clean coal" plant called FutureGen, which was supposed to have near zero emissions of CO_2 and be running by 2012. But in January 2008, the US government cancelled its funding for the project, citing massive cost overruns of nearly double the original estimates, amounting to 1.8 billion dollars (Smith and Power). Without the testing that would have taken place at FutureGen, the timing for wide-scale deployment will be further delayed. Similar CCS projects have been cancelled in the UK, Canada, and Norway, due to cost overruns and delays (Rochon, 18). According to the United Nations Development Program, CCS "will arrive on the battlefield far too late to help the world avoid dangerous climate change" (Rochon, 17).

One other irony noted by Representative Edward Markey deals with the "potential for utilities to exploit loopholes in the 2005 Energy Policy Act to get subsidies for coal plants that don't actually capture CO_2 but are merely capture-capable or carbon capture-optimized" (p. 66). Markey explains that a utility executive might build "a big open building attached to it" and qualify for a subsidy by claiming that it "was designed to accommodate installation of carbon capture technologies" (p. 19). Markey continues, "Saint Augustine used to say: Oh, Lord, make me chaste but not just yet. These utility executives are saying Oh Lord, make me carbon-free but not just yet; I am getting ready to be carbon-free but I will leave a space there, maybe in another 20 years" (p. 20).

Does today's legal and regulatory structure permit wide deployment of such technology? Transporting and storing CO_2 presents legal and regulatory challenges, particularly since stored CO_2 can leak back into the atmosphere, migrate, interact with minerals to contaminate ground water, and even kill people and animals in surrounding communities, should it escape in large quantities. While CO_2 is neither flammable nor explosive, according to Greenpeace, CO_2 is denser than air and tends to pool in low-lying, poorly ventilated areas posing a hazard to human health if it reaches concentration levels higher than 3% by volume" (Rochon, 12). For example, in 1986, a large amount of CO_2 that had accumulated at the bottom of Lake Nyosin in a volcanically active area in Cameroon, was released suddenly, "killing 1700 people and thousands of cattle over a range of 25 km. " (Rochon, 30). Since the CO_2 would have to be stored forever in order to avoid creating global warming, and humans have no experience storing anything forever, issues of liability and regulation are paramount.

According to Ben Grumbles, EPA's Assistant Administrator for Water, regulation of CO_2 sequestration comes under the Safe Drinking Water Act and is based "on what we know in using the Underground Injection Control program," used with enhanced oil recovery (p. 33). Since no state in the U.S. "currently has experience with long-term large volume storage of CO_2," and because of the "risks they present to underground sources of drinking water and public health," Grumbles believes "that a combined approach, a Federal and State approach, working together using the regulatory tools under the Safe Drinking Water Act is the way to go" and is "essential in developing a cogent management framework for the long-term success of these promising but unproven technologies" (p. 37). In the combined approach, the EPA issues "overall guidance and regulatory framework" and then has a "process where States meet certain criteria and then are delegated the authority to run the program" (p. 38).

Texas has more experience storing carbon dioxide than any other state, as it has been injecting CO_2 into depleted oil wells to enhance oil production since 1973. Attorney Jay B. Stewart, who represents individuals and entities regarding oil and gas and injection activities before the Railroad Commission of Texas and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, said that, "Carbon sequestration intended to be permanent adds a significant new component to the legal analysis. Liability for the unlikely possibilities of release or migration of sequestered CO_2 that could occur well beyond the time frames that are occasioned by present operations should be evaluated" (pp. 51-52). Indeed, such long-term storage necessitates very careful evaluation of potential storage sites before

approval to sequester CO_2 is granted, said Stewart. In anticipation of Texas being awarded the FutureGen project (it instead went to Illinois), the legislature passed a law to transfer "the ownership of the CO_2 from the FutureGen facility to the State of Texas." Since the goal of carbon sequestration must be permanent, "the permanence of the State is the only entity that can provide the necessary notice and monitoring beyond what one would expect in a private entity's life span." Further, "The State is protected by the principles of sovereign immunity while it cares for the injected CO_2, that is, by State law, its property and responsibility." He also added "that many States including Texas through a task force of the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission are very far long in developing a model legal and regulatory framework for the geologic storage of CO_2," and that IOGCC hopes to publish this model framework within a year (p. 52). It is clear from Stewart's testimony that power companies would be able to externalize the liability costs of sequestering CO_2, thus passing on the risks to taxpayers.

March 20, 2007 Statement on "Climate Change: Perspective of Utility CEOs"

This hearing focused on the perspectives of the electric utility industry to climate change legislation, with testimony from six chief executive officers of "some leading coal fired generators." Again revealing his bias towards the coal industry, Boucher says, "As we draft a greenhouse gas control measure it is essential that we preserve the ability of electric utilities to utilize coal, our nation's most affordable and abundant energy resource with a 250 year reserve." He repeats the same arguments made in his March 7th statement involving the consequences of utilities switching to natural gas, driving up prices for the half of all US homes heated with natural gas, and the loss of manufacturing jobs to countries which have "lower and more stable natural gas prices," and the strain on American industry which is "natural gas dependent and would suffer adversity if prices escalate." Boucher reiterates his goal of "drafting a control program of economy wide application that does not dislocate any economic sector." He asks the witnesses to give their views "regarding the potential for carbon capture and storage technologies to enable utilities to continue to rely on coal as the predominate fuel for electricity generation."

Salient Points from the March 20, 2007 Hearing on Perspectives of Utility CEOs

While this hearing was not transcribed, the prepared testimonies are available on the website of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. Comments from Jackson (Jack) Reasor, President and CEO of Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, Glen Allen, Virginia, and Michael G. Morris Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer American Electric Power, reveal the range of opinion from different types of electric utilities.

Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) is a not-for-profit wholesale electric supplier to 12 distribution cooperatives that own ODEC. It generates electricity from "a diversified fuel mix, including coal, nuclear, gas, oil, and renewable sources." Like other electric cooperatives in the nation, it provides power "to some of the most rural, and some of the poorest, areas of the country" (Reasor, 3). Coops nationwide generate 80 percent of their electricity from coal because historically, it has been the "lowest-cost form of generation available," according to Reasor (p. 8). His data indicate that "a mandatory greenhouse gas reduction program will have a disproportionate impact on rural electric cooperatives and our member-consumers" (p. 8). Reasor argues that in the short term, "terrestrial sequestration, conservation, and energy efficiency measures appear to offer the most cost-effective methods of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and those efforts should take priority and be recognized" (p. 10). He points out that, "equitable incentives must be provided to co-ops as well," noting that in the past, "tax incentives have only benefited the for-profit segment of the electric utility industry" (p. 11).

In contrast to the not-for-profit cooperatives, such as ODEC, that serve primarily rural areas, American Electric Power is (AEP) "is one of the nation's largest electricity generators with over 5 million retail consumers in 11 states. AEP has a diverse generating fleet – coal, nuclear, hydroelectric, gas, oil and wind. But of particular note, AEP is one of the largest coal-fired electricity generators in the U.S." (Morris, 1). AEP's CEO, Michael G. Morris, begins his testimony by citing the voluntary actions that AEP has taken to "to reduce, avoid or offset greenhouse gases (GHG) . . . by planting trees, adding wind power, increasing power plant generating efficiency, retiring less-efficient units among other measures" (Morris, 1). He also states that AEP continues "to invest in new clean coal technology that will enable AEP and our industry to meet the challenge of reducing GHG emissions

longer term. This includes plans to build two new integrated gasification combined cycle (IGCC) plants and two, state-of-the-art, ultra-supercritical plants. These will be the first of the new generation of ultra-supercritical plants in the U.S. AEP plans to take the lead role in commercializing carbon capture technology" (Morris, 1).

Despite this last statement about AEP's plans to take the "lead role" in commercializing CCS technology, Morris points to a number of problems with CCS that argue against mandating it at this time:

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) should not be mandated until and unless it has been demonstrated to be effective, and the costs have significantly dropped so that it becomes commercially available on a widespread basis. Until that threshold is met, it would be technologically unrealistic and economically unacceptable to require the widespread installation of carbon capture equipment. The use of deep saline geologic formations as the primary long-term geologic formations for CO_2 storage has not yet been sufficiently demonstrated. There are no national standards for permitting such storage reservoirs; there are no widely accepted monitoring protocols. Underscoring these realities, industrial insurance companies point to a lack of scientific data on CO_2 storage as one reason they are disinclined to insure early projects. In a nutshell, the institutional infrastructure to support CO_2 storage does not yet exist and will require years to develop. In addition, application of today's CO_2 capture technology would significantly increase the cost of an IGCC plant, calling into serious question regulatory approval for the costs of such a plant by state regulators. Further, recent studies sponsored by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) suggest that application of today's CO_2 capture technology would increase the cost of an IGCC plant by 20 to 50 percent, and boost the cost of a conventional pulverized coal plant by up to 75 percent, which would again jeopardize state regulatory approval for the costs of such plants. (Morris, 17)

In summarizing his stance on Greenhouse Gas Reduction legislation, Morris says that AEP advocates "a pragmatic approach for phasing in GHG reductions through a cap-and-trade program. The emissions cap should be reasonable and achievable [. . . .] *Substantial GHG reductions should not be required until after the 2020 time frame* [emphasis added]" (p. 9). It is clear from Morris's testimony that as long as AEP continues to burn coal, it will not be able to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly enough to avoid the tipping point in carbon dioxide emissions that scientists such as Hansen and Pachauri argue will arrive in 2012.

Carbon Capture and Storage Early Deployment Act

On June 12, 2008, Rick Boucher introduced a measure in the House of Representatives to accelerate the deployment of CCS technologies for petroleum, natural gas, and coal. The bill would allow utilities that burn fossil fuels to increase rates in order to fund a one billion dollar a year research corporation to conduct CCS research. Boucher estimates a $10-12 rate increase per year per energy consumer. The new corporation would be a "division or affiliate of the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)" and would be managed by a Board of "not more than 12 members" appointed by EPRI that "and will include representatives of investor owned utilities, utilities owned by a federal or state agency or a municipality, rural electric cooperatives and fossil fuel producers."

His floor statement frames the bill in much the same way that he framed the March 6 and March 20 hearings, but he adds a new and telling metaphor: "necessary first step." He says, "The legislation I am introducing today represents a necessary first step toward the implementation of such a cap and trade system to address global climate change." This metaphor serves to make CCS technology seem as though it is as basic as walking is to humans and part of an inevitable developmental process. The metaphor "first step" also implies that one will take subsequent steps, and that one will walk on a path to a destination to pursue a goal. Boucher makes clear exactly what his goal is, which corresponds to the personal goal of protecting the coal industry he revealed in the March 20 CCS hearing. He says in his floor statement, "The Carbon Capture and Storage Early Deployment Act addresses this clear need by enabling electric utilities that use coal to have the continued ability to do so when a mandatory program is implemented to control greenhouse gas emissions." In the same paragraph, he adds, "The use of CCS technology will enable fossil fuel users to meet the reduction requirements of the measure while continuing to use coal, oil or natural gas."

Nowhere in this floor statement or in his two other opening statements does Boucher consider whether the enormous amount of money necessary to

develop CCS to a widely deployable stage could be better spent on further development of renewable energy such as wind, solar, biomass, or geothermal. He falsely depicts natural gas as the only "fuel-switching" alternative to coal, when in fact a number of utilities are beginning to switch from coal to renewable sources.

Boucher also repeats the metaphor of "dislocation" and associates it with "deep economic pain" and the metaphor of "disruption," and in the process appeals to fear in order to stimulate adoption of his CCS bill. In the following two paragraphs taken from his floor speech, I have placed in bold his adjectives and metaphors that create fear and urgency:

> The legislation I am introducing today represents a **necessary first step** toward the implementation of such a cap and trade system to address global climate change. If **severe emissions reduction requirements** in a cap and trade system take effect before the carbon capture and storage technologies are available, the effect on coal fired utilities in particular would be **severe**. They would rapidly switch from coal to other fuels. Such fuel switching would significantly increase electricity prices to the **severe detriment** of both residential and industrial electricity consumers. Fuel switching from coal would most likely result in far greater uses of natural gas for electricity generation, **severely stressing** an already constrained natural gas supply and dramatically increasing natural gas prices.

> Today, 58% of U.S. homes are heated with natural gas, and numerous industries are heavily reliant on it. If large scale switching by utilities from coal to natural gas occurs, tens of millions of Americans would experience **deep economic pain**, and many domestic industries, from fertilizer to chemicals would be **dislocated**. The early arrival of CCS is essential to prevent this **economic disruption** in a carbon constrained economy. (Boucher, 2008)

Conclusion: Is CCS a First Step or a Wrong Step?

This analysis of Congressman Rick Boucher's hearings and bill on carbon capture and storage has larger implications for the future of effective climate change legislation in the U.S. His own statements of his personal interest in protecting utilities, the coal industry, and facilitating a growing use of coal as a fuel through CCS technology must be viewed against the large campaign contributions he receives from these interests. Further, his stated goal to team the arrival of cap and trade legislation with deployment of CCS may be viewed as a delaying tactic for meaningful carbon control, since many experts, both in his hearings and elsewhere, argue that widespread deployment of CCS will not be possible before 2045, if then. It is ironic that a well-respected and powerful Democrat seems to be operating directly out of Frank Luntz's playbook for conservatives who are opposed to environmental legislation. Luntz, a consultant who writes training manuals for conservative candidates, advises that conservatives can counter the efforts of global warming scientists that run counter to conservative positions by using "the words healthy, clean, and safe whenever possible, even when talking about coal plants or nuclear power plants," writes Lakoff (2004, 22-23).

Does the data that emerges in the CCS hearings of March 6 and March 20 justify the early deployment act? It is easy to see the point in the March 6 hearing where Boucher draws the conclusion that greater funding of CCS research might speed up its deployment. When Mr. Shope, from EPA, states that CCS will not be widely deployed until 2045, Boucher responds that the time frame is longer than he had thought, and asks whether a larger budget would speed-up deployment. Although Shope replies that doubling their budget "could reduce the amount of time for that full deployment," he did not specify by how much (pp. 13-14).

The evidence about CCS that emerges from both hearings suggests that there are many obstacles to be removed before CCS can be deployed at a scale that will significantly reduce CO_2 emissions. In its May 2008 report on CCS, "False Hope," Greenpeace lead-author Emily Rochon writes, "The urgency of the climate crisis means solutions must be ready for large-scale deployment in the short-term. CCS simply cannot deliver in time. The technology is highly speculative, risky and unlikely to be technically feasible in the next twenty years. Letting CCS be used as a smokescreen for building new coal-fired power stations is unacceptable and irresponsible. 'Capture ready' coal plants pose a significant threat to the climate" (p. 8). Further, "While it is not even certain that we have the ability to capture and store the carbon dioxide necessary to implement wide-scale CCS technology, leakage remains a risk. If continuous leakage were to occur at rates as low as 1% per year, it could completely negate climate mitigation efforts," says Rochon.

Rather than the CCS early deployment act being a "first step" toward cap and trade climate change legislation, it is a wrong step. The billion dollar a year price tag is money down a rat hole that could be better spent on developing renewable energies. Congressman Rick Boucher's stated goal to represent the coal industry might be justified by some as the best way to protect jobs in the traditional coal counties in his district. Yet as the coal industry has become increasingly mechanized and has turned to the environmentally devastating practice of wide-spread mountain top removal mining, the number of jobs it creates has fallen dramatically. "In the United States alone, coal industry employment has fallen by half in the last 20 years, despite a one-third increase in production," according to a World Watch Institute report (2008). Instead of continuing his support for an industry that is inherently dirty and polluting and has extracted great wealth from the region, while investing little of its profits in improving the well-being of the people who live there, Boucher and other elected officials should support renewable energy development. According to Worldwatch Senior Researcher Michael Renner, "renewables are poised to tackle our energy crisis and create millions of new jobs worldwide. Meanwhile, fossil fuel jobs are increasingly becoming fossils themselves, as coal mining communities and others worry about their livelihoods" (World Watch Institute).

Citizens should be aware of Boucher's fear-inducing framing techniques that use words and metaphors such as "dislocating," "unbearable," "deep economic pain," "suffer," "severe detriment," "economic disruption," and "severely stressing." They should heed the mounting evidence on the folly of CCS that is emerging from scientific studies. Rather than take Boucher's "necessary first step" to invest in CCS technologies, citizens should proceed with caution and heed the words of Representative Hastert, who in the March 6 hearing said, "We cannot ask the American people to pay a heavy price in jobs and consumer costs in the name of solving global warming only to discover there is almost no environmental benefit" (p. 3). Congressman Boucher's efforts to link CCS to cap and trade legislation reflect the current political economy of the United States that privileges the power of corporations over the power of citizens, enabling entrenched politicians and their lobbyists to protect carbon-emitting industries to the ultimate ruination of the environment.

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Challenges of *E Pluribus Unum*:
Ethnic and Racial Diversity and Public Policy

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. . . America is God's Crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming! Here you stand, good folk, I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries, but you won't be long like that brothers, for these are the fires of God you've come to – these are the fires of God. A fig for your feuds and vendettas! German and Frenchman, Irishman, Jews and Russians – into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.

- *The Melting Pot* by Israel Zangwill as cited in Glazer & Moynihan, 1963, p. 289.

The dream of America as the great melting pot has not been realized for the Negro; because of his skin color he never even made it into the pot.

- On the ruling on *University of California Regents v. Bakke,* US Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, 1978.

E pluribus unum. Out of many, one. Since its inception, the United States has always been a nation made up of different ethnicities and nationalities. But there are many ways to create "one." The social histories of various ethnic groups suggest that the dominant approach to accommodating diverse populations was a combination of assimilation and exclusion. Assimilation is perhaps most represented by the idea of "melting pot." First being made famous by Israel Zangwill's 1908 play, "melting pot" became a potent metaphor for managing differences. Individuals of different cultural, ethnic, and national backgrounds leave their pasts behind as they jump into a crucible called "America" and come out as "American." The reality did not quite follow the play, however. Groups maintained their traditions, languages, and identities (Glazer & Moynihan, 1963). Some groups were forced to melt more than others. More importantly, not everyone had access to the pot as Justice Marshall remarked, and federal policies and laws made sure that the access was kept out of reach of unwanted groups. To name some, Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Gentleman's Agreement of 1907, California Alien Land Law of 1913, the Supreme Court rulings on *Ozawa v. United States* (1922) and *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* (1923), Immigration Act of 1924, and internment of Japanese Americans without due process during World War II all served to keep undesirable groups from reaching the pot.

The latter half of the 20th century brought drastic changes to legal and policy discourses about diversity. Racial and ethnic minorities gained political voices and challenged the national leaders to abandon the assimilationist and overtly racist approaches to diversity. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) declared the unconstitutionality of racially segregated public schools. The passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964 meant desegregation and equal rights in voting, service in public facilities, government funding, employment, and all significant aspects of public life. Affirmative action, a poster child policy of the civil rights movement, first appeared in President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order 10925 of 1961. To correct for a lack of opportunities and representations in public institutions resulting from past discriminations, Kennedy obliged government contractors to take affirmative action to ensure equal opportunities and equal employment regardless of national origin, race, or religion. President Lyndon Johnson's Executive Order 11246 (1965) further solidified equal employment opportunity as a federal policy. Three decades later, several states – California (1996), Washington (1998), Michigan (2006), and most recently Nebraska (2008) – determined that affirmative action is no longer necessary.

On the immigration front, the Immigration Reform Acts in 1965 replaced the national origin quota set by the Immigration Act of 1924 and opened the door to an unprecedented and unanticipated flow of previously excluded immigrants from Asia and Latin America (Hirschman, 2001; Kim, 2004). In

1960, Europeans made up 80% of total immigrants, but in Census 2000, immigrants from Latin America made up a half of all immigrants (King, 2005). Latinos surpassed African Americans in 2003 to constitute the largest racial minority in the United States. The geographical settlement patterns changed over the years, too. In the past, immigrants and refugees tended to settle in large cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York, but this is no longer the case today. Many medium and small size cities became the settlement destinations for refugees, and migrants are found in all states, creating opportunities for interracial, interethnic, and intercultural interactions.

All these changes in civil rights and immigration appear to indicate that we have reached a point where race and ethnicity are obsolete in public policies. However, evidence suggests otherwise. Elimination of affirmative action, for example, has drastically reduced the opportunities and representations of African American and Latino students in elite universities and law schools (Barrios, 2006; Chambers et al., 2005; Espenshade & Chung, 2005). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 established a federal policy that holds schools and districts accountable for test-based achievement. Studies show that this test-driven accountability has increased drop-out and push-out rates of lower achieving students rather than motivating schools to help them succeed (Orfield, 2004). California's Proposition 227, in combination with NCLB, has been found to further marginalize English language learners by forcing them to take tests without adequate language proficiency (Gándara & Baca, 2008; Wright & Li, 2008). These examples suggest that race and ethnicity are very much relevant to public policies today. Moreover, just because people of diverse races and ethnicities live and work in close proximity, it does not mean that they engage in meaningful interactions nor does it mean inequalities based on race and ethnicity have been eliminated. In this paper, I problematize current praxes of policy-driven diversity initiatives and dominant discourses of racial and ethnic diversity and suggest some ways by which Communication Studies can contribute to more inclusive, social justice-based policy processes.

**Policies on Difference
that Do Not Make Difference**

Since the publication of *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam's theory of social capital has been influential in policy initiatives in the United States and abroad. He theorized that, as voluntary associations increase, people develop a norm of reciprocity and trust,

eventually creating a cohesive community. In his recent work, Putnam (2007) reported that ethnic diversity negatively affects social solidarity and social capital in a short/medium run, because U.S. Americans are uncomfortable with diversity, but that, in the long run, diversity is desirable and will produce a new kind of solidarity. He concluded that "the central challenge for modern, diversifying societies is to create a new, broader sense of 'we'" (p. 139). According to Putnam, this goal is achieved by "bridging" social capital where associations are formed across diverse populations (as opposed to "bonding" social capital that occurs between people of similar backgrounds). Eventually, people transcend differences and come together to form a trusting, unified community.

Putnam, however, does not suggest any concrete way to realize this goal. So, the question remains. If diversity is the reality whether U.S. Americans are comfortable with it or not, how can social capital be built across diverse populations? What are the obstacles to building cohesion? What policies are likely to help here? Some may say that, since groups are still segregated, more integration is necessary so that members of diverse groups interact and get to know each other better toward improved intergroup relations. This logic, originally based on the contact theory (Allport, 1956), served as an impetus for most integration efforts. However, just because people are brought into a close proximity, it does not mean that they interact with each other, let alone form positive relationships. Using an example from England, Robinson (2005) discussed the difficulty of actualizing this theory. In England, a community cohesion agenda emerged after the street disturbances in three cities in 2001. The government identified housing as a key theme in the agenda; they diagnosed that residential segregation as to blame for different populations living, working, and socializing separately. The community cohesion policy was developed to intervene in the problematic housing patterns. By promoting residential integration, more interactions between previously segregated groups occur, which, in turn, leads to increased understanding, tolerance, and harmony between the groups. Even in integration, however, there was little interaction between people of different social backgrounds. Moreover, Robinson noted that the frequent contact could engender animosities between groups. This example showed the difficulty of creating a truly integrated community based on a top-down policy; collaborative local structure and communication network must be created so the integration does produce more understanding and appreciation.

In addition to top-down, artificial integration, integration is problematic when it is used synonymously with assimilation. Grillo (2007) told a story that vividly illustrates this point. In 2005, the UK government launched an initiative called *Improving opportunity, strengthening society* at a conference attended by some 500 delegates. During a panel of distinguished leaders, an audience member asked a question about integration. He wanted to know, as a Muslim, what he should do to show that he had integrated. The panel responded that he should be proud of being both British and Muslim, but this did not satisfy this man:

> I would like to know how I can prove that I'm a Muslim and I have integrated into society. Look at me, I wear British clothes. I speak broken English but, still, I speak English and I have got a beard. That gives away my identity. Some people would recognise who I am. Now, people ask me "Why don't you integrate?" and I say, "How do you mean?" I go to schools, give talks about how to deal with racist incidents and very often the teachers ask me, "Why don't Muslims integrate?" I say, "What do you mean?" I pay tax. I obey the law of the land. (cited in Grillo, 2007, p. 983)

Grillo shared this episode to demonstrate the fuzziness of the word, "integration." The episode, however, illuminates more than that; it reveals the public's assimilationist expectation that, if people want to be considered citizens (in this case English), they must shed anything that suggest otherwise (such as broken English and beard). Unless the expectation is changed, those who embody differences, like the man in the above example, will be always constructed as the other. A lesson from the above two examples from England is that, for a genuine integration to occur, policy should not be simply designed to bring groups together artificially; efforts need to be made to make it a participatory, collaborative process through which plurality is embraced and assimilation is challenged.

In this collaborative process, addressing the issue of power and structural limitations is critical but is often missing. The difficulty of (or rather reluctance to) addressing structural problems can be seen in an example of one southern city. In 2004-2006, Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Project (GTCRP) took place in Greensboro, North Carolina, through grassroots effort to establish healing relations between the opposing parties in a 1979 shooting that resulted from conflicts over racial and socioeconomic inequalities.[1]

Throughout the GTCRP, city leaders refused to acknowledge the city's participation in the tragedy, despite the fatal role that its police force played in the shooting. They concluded that the 1979 shooting was a conflict between two extreme groups that are outsiders to the city and saw the GTCRP as unnecessary and detrimental to the city's progress. The Commission made policy and initiative recommendations for institutional changes and requested the city council to consider the recommendations, but the city council voted down the request.

While the city leaders were reluctant to engage the GTCRP, they were willing to promote interracial dialogue on a personal sphere. Then mayor Keith Holliday launched an interracial dialogue program called Mosaic Partnerships in September, 2004 – around the same time the GTCRP began. Mosaic Partnership was "designed to increase communication, trust, and cooperation among the city's racial and ethnic groups."[2] The program was a response to a nationwide social capital survey that found Greensboro low on interracial trust. Over the course of one year, 144 participants from different races met in pairs as well as in small groups.[3] Following Robert Putnam's theory, it was believed that, as individuals get to know each other, they develop personal relationships that allow them to improve communication, trust, and cooperation across racial lines. The personalized approach of the project framed interracial (dis)trust as an individual matter that can be solved through personal relationships without examining the role of institutions. While on a personal level, the project might have been "rich and rewarding" as one participant commented (Johnson, 2006), no community wide benefit to interracial relationships has resulted from this project. The city's contrasting approaches to the two projects reveals the continuing presence of progressive mystique (Chafe, 1981) in which the city presents itself as racially progressive while disengaging itself from unresolved social injustice that remains at the core of interracial distrust. Policies and initiatives that promote diversity without addressing structural inequalities are easier but are not likely to be transformative.

But even when dialogue is designed to address racial inequalities, policy-driven dialogue is difficult. During his presidency, Bill Clinton launched Initiative on Race, which he called "a great and unprecedented conversation about race." The initiative aimed to address complex issues related to racial oppressions experienced by people of color, the growing racial and ethnic diversity, and possible role

of federal policy in reforming the existing problems. According to one analyst, the initiative accomplished several things, including research, dialogue, and action (Goering, 2001). The initiative did not result in policy but produced some research findings useful for engaging Americans toward reconciliation. About 18,000 people participated in 1,400 conversations about race over a period of one year. The conversations resulted in a publication called "One America Dialogue Guide" in spring 1998. The guide included suggestions for racial dialogue, which Department of Justice still uses for assisting communities. According to Goering (2001), through research and dialogue, the Initiative helped to expose the depth of racial and socioeconomic gaps in the U.S. society and the need for long-term federal and local programs to narrow the gaps. Nonetheless, it failed to achieve its overarching goal of articulating a vision of racial reconciliation. Goering concluded that "[t]he American people, in late 1990s, were unready and unprepared for serious racial dialogue, reconciliation, or for major new Federal policies that would meaningfully transform the racial status quo" (p. 481). Other more pessimistic critics observed that the failure of Clinton's Initiative is no surprise because no initiative or commission in the past was able to significantly transform the racist structure that is deeply etched into the dominant culture (Reed, 2000).

Dominant Discourse of Racial and Ethnic Diversity

If people are unready for genuine integration, serious racial dialogue, or transformative policies, the larger discursive context in which people are located must be examined. Consciousness and attitudes do not arise in vacuum but are formed and informed by dominant narratives. In this section, I discuss ideologies of celebration, race-neutrality, and civility as contributors to the narrative of racial and ethnic diversity in today's U.S. society. First, racial and ethnic diversity is acknowledged as cultural differences to be celebrated. For example, listen to Berkowitz's (2008), a mother and feeding interventionist, living in New York City:

> I sat with my teenage son and daughter as we enjoyed a Pakistani meal in New York City. When I commented on the stainless-steel dinnerware, they looked at me quizzically. "It's common in South Asian cultures to use stainless steel drinking cups," my daughter said. To her, this was a piece of knowledge acquired at an early age, and as natural as knowing that apples come from trees. "Some of my Korean and Chinese friends use coffee mugs for hot and cold drinks at home. They don't make a distinction," added my son. . . . Here our cultures bump up against each other every day. Imagine my chagrin when I advised a mother that perhaps it was time to discontinue breast feeding, only to be interrupted by the co-treating gastroenterologist who informed me that mothers from this ethnic group are under a religious obligation to nurse their babies until 2 years of age. I had just told a mom to go against her upbringing. As I back-pedaled red-faced, I realized that this multicultural adventure never ends – there are always new people to meet, whose experiences and habits and mores are different from mine. (p. 55)

Her description of multicultural experience represents a prevailing way in which racial and ethnic diversity is understood and accepted in the United States; affirming diversity is about celebrating differences. This discourse is everywhere. Most of the racial minority groups, for example, are given designated heritage and history months when their historical contributions are noted and their cultural heritages embraced. Businesses, educational institutions, and communities often include in their promotional materials statements of support for racial and ethnic diversity. University homepages typically use photos of students from every major racial group regardless of how these groups are indeed represented statistically and substantially. In the business world, "diversity training" (or "sensitivity training") is given to employees so they become aware of differences and avoid offending others.

Celebration of diversity often appears in remarks by nation's leaders as well. This is, for example, exemplified by Bill Clinton, whom Toni Morrison, called "first black president." In his commencement speech at the University of California at San Diego in 1997, Clinton noted that America is special because it has people from all over the world. He further demonstrated his affirmation of diversity by personalizing its value:

> I am a Scotch-Irish Southern Baptist, and I'm proud of it. But my life has been immeasurably enriched by the power of the Torah, the beauty of the Koran, the piercing wisdom of the religions of East and South Asia – all embraced by my fellow Americans. I have felt indescribable joy and peace in black and Pentecostal churches. I have come to love the intensity and selflessness of my Hispanic fellow Americans toward la familia. As a Southerner, I grew up on country music and county fairs and I

still like them (Laughter). But I have also reveled in the festivals and the food, the music and the art and the culture of Native Americans and Americans from every region in the world.[4]

The presence of diverse groups is not just personal but great for the nation. In his speech at the NAACP national convention a month after the commencement speech, Clinton remarked that the presence of diverse groups gives America a competitive edge in the world economy (Kim, 2003).

This celebratory tone continued into the next presidency despite the two presidents' contrasting politics. While he opposed affirmative action, George W. Bush emphasized that he was not anti-diversity. In discussing the University of Michigan Affirmative Action Case, for example, one of his first remarks was that "I strongly support diversity of all kinds, including racial diversity in higher education."[5] In this short, 7-minute speech, he repeated his support for diversity several times while at the same time expressing his intention to intervene in the Supreme Court decision process on the university's admission policy. Bush has expressed his support for diversity in numerous other occasions. In his 2002 speech on Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, he opened his remarks by noting that "I'm so proud to be the President of a diverse nation, a nation with 13 million Americans of Asian or Pacific Island heritage. What a great country, to welcome such diversity."[6] Similar remarks are repeated in his other heritage month speeches dedicated to Latinos and Native Americans.

There is of course nothing wrong with celebrating cultural differences in food, customs and traditions and acknowledging the fact that U.S. Americans have different cultural heritages. These are important practices of affirming multiculturality of the nation and its citizens. The presidents' remarks must be celebratory, because these events are after all designed to celebrate the contributions of various racial groups. However, the celebration discourse becomes a problem if that is all there is to the understanding of diversity, which often is the case in the widely embraced version of multiculturalism. If diversity is to be affirmed, the struggles and challenges that diverse groups face due to structural inequalities must be also acknowledged. When this acknowledgement is lacking, celebration becomes no more than a self-serving practice for the dominant group. In a groundbreaking film, *Color of Fear* (1995), one of the white males, David, frustrates participants of color and the other white male participant by being excited about race talk but refusing to acknowledge institutionalized racism that

people of color face. For him, "the world is wide open" and it is the racial minorities themselves who place limitations to their possibilities. A more recent film, *What's Race Got to Do With It?* (2006), also illuminates the problematic of the reluctance to face the issue of structural inequality. In this film, students at University California, Berkeley engaged in a semester-long interracial dialogue. In one session, Latino students shared their struggles with identity and discrimination. At one point in the session, Mark (a white male) comments that the stories shared are only about the harsh experiences of being Latino in America and that he was disappointed because the rich culture of Latino lives were not shared. Latina student, Myra, responds that that's because "social justice is what's important for brown people." In a later interview, Myra elaborates this response: "I think celebrating cultures and social justice are very different things. Yeah, I can tell you what I eat and what's my family's like. I don't think that helps with social justice. . . . The class isn't about what I eat. The class is about how my life is." Both films illustrate that race talks that only celebrate diversity without addressing social justice is not likely transformative.

It is not only the celebratory tone that characterizes the dominant discourse of ethnic and racial diversity; it is complemented by another ideology – race-neutrality or colorblindness advocated by many influential conservatives like Dinesh D'Souza who served as a policy advisor for the Regan Administration. In his numerous publications, D'Souza has repeatedly argued that public policy must be strictly colorblind so the government maintains its fairness. Race-neutrality was perhaps most clearly expressed by President Bush in his two remarks on the University of Michigan affirmative action case. In the first statement made in January, 2003, he called the university's admission policy divisive, unfair, and unconstitutional and called for a race-neutral approach.[7] In the second brief statement in June, 2003, he expressed his satisfaction with the Court ruling that supported the law school admission policy but ruled against the undergraduate admission policy that used a point system. The Court decision meant that "colleges and universities must engage in a serious, good faith consideration of workable race-neutral alternatives. I agree that we must look first to these race-neutral approaches to make campuses more welcoming for all students."[8]

But how can racial and ethnic differences be recognized and celebrated while at the same time being muted? The dominant discourse of diversity

appears contradictory. Oregon attorney Elisa Dozono (2008) commented recently in a weekly newspaper, *Asian Reporter,* that, "diversity" became a buzz word and yet "diversity initiatives" have not achieved the same status. If diversity is something to be embraced, why are initiatives and policies discouraged? According to Angela Davis (1996), this is because the words, "diversity" and "difference" depoliticize race and lets institutions off the hook of responsibility for racial justice:

> "Difference" and "diversity" are descriptive: people are different; cultures are diverse. In this context, we must be aware of the fact that multiculturalism can easily become a way to guarantee that these differences and diversities are retained superficially while becoming homogenized and harmonized politically. (p. 45)

Political scientist Clair Jean Kim (2004) echoes Davis. Multiculturalism can theoretically disrupt the "triumphalist" narratives that represent America as a uniquely great nation that overcame past obstacles and is marching toward greater justice, freedom, and equality. However, what Kim calls "official multiculturalism" relegates racial and ethnic differences to private sphere where racial and ethnic heritages are inspirations for individuals, while it adheres to colorblind laws and policies so difference supposedly does not make a difference in public sphere (Kim, 2004). Framed as anti-discriminatory and fair, colorblindness rhetorically serves as a powerful "American" principle that not only opponents of affirmative action stand by but all Americans should embrace.

The dominant discourse of diversity is also often characterized by the idea of civility. In his speech at National Prayer Breakfast in February 2001, President Bush defined civility as "essential to democracy" because "it teaches us not merely to tolerate one another, but to respect one another – to show a regard for different views and the courtesy."[9] Civility may indeed help to establish a safe climate for the expressions of diverse points of view and prevent people from becoming antagonistic, but it can also discourage honest engagement of racial and ethnic diversity. In her study of community building dialogue project, Simpson (2008) provides accounts of the detrimental role civility can play in dialogue. People of color participants in her study expressed that, at a young age, they were taught to avoid saying things that would make the people in the dominant group uncomfortable. In this case, Simpson observed, civility functions not as an interactional norm that ensures equal participation but as a tool for further silencing the marginalize voices. Though Simpson presents civility as a form of whiteness (thus a benefit for whites), civility can also hurt whites. As Beverly Tatum (1997), psychologist and now president of Spellman College, powerfully argued, whites, too, are afraid of engaging in interracial dialogue due to fear of being inadequate, uninformed about the reality of racism (though this is a result of white privilege), and possibly offending people of color.

Civility can negatively affect community building. In his brilliant analysis into the city of Greensboro, historian William Chafe (1981) explained that the gap between the city's progressive appearance and actual progress in race relations exists because of "progressive mystique." This myth reflects the belief among the progressive whites that "conflict is inherently bad, that disagreement means personal dislike, and that consensus offers the only way to preserve a genteel and civilized way of life" (Chafe, 1981, p. 7). According to Chafe, Greensboro is not unique on this point; it mirrored the working of the progressive myth that pervaded the country. As discussed in the earlier section, this myth continues to live today and manifests itself in the way the city (and the nation as a whole) tries to promote interracial dialogue without challenging the structure itself that keeps the racial divisions intact.

Thus far, I discussed that the dominant discourse of racial and ethnic diversity is characterized by celebration, colorblindness, and civility. None of these characteristics is of course inherently problematic. As Berkowitz, the mother living in New York City, said, people come from all walks of life, and our learning should never ends when our communities are increasingly becoming heterogeneous. We should be accepting and celebrating our rich differences. Colorblindness, too, is a noble concept; it was, after all, Martin Luther King, Jr. who famously declared that we should be judging each other based on the content of character and not by the skin color. But in society where power is still unevenly distributed across racial lines, being celebratory, colorblind, and civil is not likely to bring racially and ethnically diverse populations together. Celebration and civility must occur along with critical examination of and challenge to structural flaws that marginalize some groups and privilege others. Only when such flaws are eliminated, will colorblindness be possible.

Contributions of Communication Studies to the Promotion of Inclusive Diversity Policy Process

Many examples discussed in this paper seem to only point to the difficulty, if not impossibility, of public polices and initiatives in creating communities that affirm racial and ethnic diversity. However, this difficulty is even more a reason that existing policies must be scrutinized and better policies must be developed. Transformative policy must be based on what McLaren (1994) called "resistance multiculturalism" where diversity is "affirmed within the politics of cultural criticism and a commitment to social justice" and where differences are recognized as "a product of history, culture, power, and ideology" (p. 53). There are number of ways in which communication scholarship can contribute toward this end.

First, communication scholars can demonstrate the value of more participatory policy process. Most of the policy initiatives and government-led projects on ethnic and racial diversity are developed without significant input from the people who are affected by the very initiatives and projects. As Cheong et al. (2007) argued, policy initiatives too often are based on the belief that community cohesion is possible by applying the majority agenda to the minority groups. However, a top-down, exclusive policy development and implementation is unlikely to produce transformative effects (Goering, 2001) nor does it create ownership of the policy. Worse yet, it can reinforce the very problem that the policy aims to alleviate. Participatory policy process is critical in creating ownership, particularly among those who are excluded from social citizenship (Vertovec, 1999). Working from social constructionism, communication scholarships recognize the constructive and creative nature of communication; it is through communication that reality is created, negotiated, and transformed. If we take this simple yet powerful idea seriously, it should be also apparent that participation is imperative. Participation, as Jürgen Habermas (1990) made it quite clear, means that people who are affected by the policy are given opportunities to be seriously heard and are required to listen to each other for a common good. Here, Habermans's claims about dialogue situation must be understood as principles for regulating participatory policy process, and not as unattainable ideals. While people enter into conversations with differential power statuses, the inclusive participatory process serves as a very tool for challenging the unequal power dynamics and institutional praxes that shape the reality that policy aims to transform.

Second, communication scholars can study and demonstrate critical roles that language and other symbolic representations play in the creation, practice, and outcomes of public policy. There are many communicative practices that need critical analyses. For example, as shown in this paper, examining the ways in which ethnic and racial diversity is discoursed is important because they frame how such diversity is engaged. Another area is racial and ethnic labels. Take Census 2000, for example. This Census is widely understood as a drastic improvement from the previous ones by allowing individuals multiracial responses. However, it was also problematic. One apparent problem was the conflation of the terms race and ethnicity; race is used to generate categories that are based on ethnicity or country of origin. These categories are artificial constructions created to lump together a divergent set of individuals, and yet they have substantial significance in policy and administrative practice (Yanow, 2003).

Communication research can also scrutinize the language that is adopted in the policy-making process. A compelling example comes from Houston, Texas. In 1997, opponents of affirmative action wrote Proposition A based on the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The proposition stated whether the city "shall not discriminate against or grant preferential treatment" to anyone "on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin."[10] But the mayor of the city, Bob Lanier – a proponent of affirmative action – revised the wording to ask the voters if the city should "end the use of affirmative action for women and minorities" in employment and contracting, "including ending the current program and any similar programs in the future." The joint poll conducted by the University of Houston and Rice University showed that the proposition would likely pass with 70% majority with the original wording, while only 47.5% of the voters would support it with the revised one. The election result, which favored the continuation of affirmative action, was later nullified because of the change in the wording (Tummala, 1999). Nonetheless, this example clearly shows that wording determines the passage of initiative. Communication research can show how symbolic representations can have profound material consequences and advocate more voter education and transparency in the whole process of initiatives.

Third, another important communication research program may center on the relationship between policy-making and media. After all, we live in a media saturated culture where our reality is almost always a mediated construction. How we understand various policies on immigration,

employment, education, welfare, and so forth cannot be divorced from how these policies are portrayed and debated in the media. Schwartz-DuPre (2007) provides interesting and timely insights into the relationship between media and policy. In her analysis of *National Geographic's* 2002 film, *The search for the Afghan girl,* Schwartz-DuPre shows how the film's use of biometric technology rhetorically positions the audience as a consenting public. In the film, biometric technology was used to identify an Afghan woman who was the cover of *National Geographic* 15 years ago, while at the same time Congress and the Department of Homeland Security were writing the technology into policy. By using a short segment of video footage from the events of 9/11, the film encourages the audience to see the identification technology as useful and necessary in hunting terrorists; if it can confirm the identity of the Afghan girl from 15 years ago, it is surely helpful in finding terrorists. The issue is not really about whether biometric is good or bad but is about media's ability to reposition the audience who rejected the idea of a biometric-based national ID card as a violation of civil rights and privacy not too long ago. Communication research can illuminate significant ways by which our understanding is shaped by major media and suggest how we may become critical consumers of mediated knowledge.

Conclusion: Future for *e pluribus unum*

Now I come back to the idea with which I began this essay. *E pluribus unum*. Out of many, one. Some 220 years after the motto's birth, the nation still struggles to create oneness across differences. On March 28, 2008, then U.S. senator, Barack Obama gave a speech entitled, "A More Perfect Union," in response to the national controversy over the remarks made by his former pastor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright. Throughout his speech, Obama promoted *e pluribus unum* as a fundamental national character for which the United States must continue to strive. In fact, throughout his campaign, he called for unity based on recognizing commonalties across differences. Whether his vision of unity will be realized is yet to be seen. One thing is clear, however; unity cannot be created at the expense of ignoring unequal differences. Toward the unity, policies that affirm racial and ethnic diversity are necessary as long as structural inequalities exist between racial and ethnic groups. Such policies must not unwittingly support the ideologies of assimilationism, color-blindness, uncritical civility, superficial integration, or dialogue inattentive to larger structural contexts. For the policies to be transformative, the ideologies must be challenged and

inclusive policy development and implementation must be sought. Inclusive of those who are affected by the policy, and inclusive of structural changes. Inclusive policy process is extremely difficult, but the process in itself represents a necessary path toward *e pluribus unum,* and communication plays a fundamental role in this path both as a scholarship that question the existing policy praxes and as a critical tool for inclusiveness.

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Notes

[1] On November 3, 1979, white supremacists killed five demonstrators who were part of the "Death to the Klan" rally. The shooters, some of whom were filmed by news cameras as they fired into the crowd, claimed self-defense and were acquitted of all charges by all white-juries. The police was informed about the rally as well as the Klan's intention to confront the demonstrators with physical violence but failed to provide protection. See Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Commission (www.greensborotrc.org/index.php) for details.

[2] Mayor Holliday announces launch of Mosaic Program, September, 13, 2004. www.ci.greensboro.nc.us/mosaic/press/Mosaic091304.pdf

[3] The project was initially designed to engage a wide range of community members over several phases, but it ended after this first phase that involved invited 144 community leaders.

[4] Remarks by the President at University of California at San Diego commencement, June, 1997. www.ed.gov/PressReleases/06-1997/970614.html

[5] President Bush Discusses Michigan Affirmative Action Case, January 15, 2003. www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030115-7.html

[6] Remarks by the President on Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, May 17, 2002. www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/05/20020517-10.html

[7] President Bush Discusses Michigan Affirmative Action Case, January 15, 2003. georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030115-7.html

[8] President Applauds Supreme Court for Recognizing Value of Diversity, June 23, 2003. www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/06/20030623.html

[9] Remarks by the President at National Prayer Breakfast, February 1, 2001 www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/20010201.html

[10] Verhovek, S. H. 1997, November 2. Houston to Vote on Repeal of Affirmative Action, *New York*

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Putting Policy in its Place through Cultural Discourse Analysis

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A key problem confronting service agencies of all kinds today is bridging a potential gap between the agency's ways of operating, and a local community – and its ways of operating - that the agency serves. This gap may appear when an environmental agency serves a local community, when family services are provided, when health practitioners serve specific communities, when governments address citizens' problems, NGOs address local affairs, international bodies address various needs for food or security, when municipalities address land-use controversies, and so on. Each participant in this type of process, in one way or another, would benefit from being sensitive to the potential of a gap between the providers and recipients of services. If reflectively scrutinized, each can help the other by developing ways of bridging the potential divide between an agency and a local community, or between the agency and various local communities in need of, or desiring their service.

Policy is often designed, however, precisely not to understand, but to stand over these gaps, for policy is by definition, typically, an abstract statement for generic actions above various local circumstances. As a result, policy can become blind to these gaps. This paper addresses problems that arise in this process at two levels, in the gaps between agencies and local communities, and in policies which stand too far above particular peoples and places. It begins by introducing three general problems, by introducing a research methodology designed to address those problems, by reviewing research which employs this methodology, by detailing an exemplary global project, and by discussing some of the implications of this general research program as it is being done by an international network of scholars.

Potential Problems between Agencies and Local Communities: Concepts, Conduct, and Cooperative Action

The potential problems confronted in these gap-making processes are many, and multiply quickly when the scale of efforts is enlarged. Here I will focus on only three very general kinds of problems. The three involve potential gaps in concepts, conduct, and cooperative action. I will return in the end to discuss briefly issues of policy, and how the approach discussed below may help particularize policy procedures.

The first problem has to do with concepts, premises, symbols, or terms people use to think and speak. More specifically, what I draw attention to are potential differences in peoples' conceptions of what is in the world, or what is being worked on, addressed, or redressed in specific situations. Differences as these can create gaps between a local community's ideas about itself, and the agency's conception of itself, its service, purposes, or products. As a result, we discover that basic definitions, concepts, premises, assumptions pertaining to ways of living generally, or more specifically to a particular social situation, service or product may not be widely shared by both. While a shared problem may be agreed upon, for example "too much violence," what violence indeed is, how it is done, for what reasons, and so on may not be held in common, or local conceptions about such things may not even be publicly available to an agency. As another example, a health agency may have its own sense of "health," "disease," "diagnosis," and "treatment," which may be unlike that of a local community's (e.g., Duchan and Kovarsky, 2005). Similarly, a legal service, as well as a local community, may have its own sense of a "violation" as well as its "defense," the differences of each creating gaps between service providers and local members of a community (e.g., Carbaugh and Wolf, 1999; Liberman, 1990). Gaps in understanding as these must somehow be understood and bridged, if people are to work more effectively, or cooperatively together. A similar set of problems could be described regarding differences in the conceptions of "democracy," "proper care of children" for a social agency, "security" for Homeland Security or the United Nations, and so on, some of which we will get to in what follows (see e.g., Naess, 1951; Miller and Rudnick, 2008).

To clarify this initial point, it is crucial to emphasize that this potential problem in understanding is complex, for it is located between conceptions which are grounded within two social sites, typically through different discourses. One is the local community's and its understandings. Typically, this local distinctiveness has been widely recognized as for example means of reducing teen pregnancy must be designed with some knowledge of a local community and its views of teen sexual activity. But the point is realized only as this site is considered relative to, and as different from another, the providing agency's. A reflective eye must be turned also to the agency's conceptions of the service, including, for example, its ideas about "pregnancy," "teens," "sex," and "contraception" for example. Without locating this problem as one between both sites' discourses - the agency's and the local community's - we risk running the one over the other. And more often than we might like to admit, this imposition of the one over the other is indeed what is happening.

A second type of problem is a particular part of the first. It has to do with what is deemed good practice, proper conduct, or best as practical action. Every human group has its own ways of doing things, its own ways of doing things properly, and of what is improper. The point applies again not only to local communities, but also to institutions and agencies. A problem can occur when there is a gap in the expectations for proper conduct, one group violating the other's sense of the good. Easy examples have to do with ways of identifying what indeed is a problem, ways of diagnosing "it" as such, then in ways of treating that problem. The same point applies not only to biological problems, but to social and cultural ones as well.

Agencies are notorious for developing deep histories which corroborate their sense of the world, of what is wrong with it, and how it can be made better. These are often virtuous and well-intentioned. A potential problem occurs as the agency's rather robust premises and practices confront a local community's which differs from it. One can forge forward with one's own mind about the matters, but one could also stop and reflect upon the other's sense of proper action (and also one's own). It is this problem, a failure to develop the capacity to reflect not only on one's own but other's ways of going about things, and doing them properly, which I draw

attention to here, and which we seek to address in the works reviewed below.

Finally, given the above possibilities of gaps between group's conceptions and conduct, between premises and practices, it is little surprise that here are problems in designing cooperative actions between agencies and local communities. It is not a simple matter how to work with those who conceive of things differently, or conduct their affairs differently. Procedures for such design will necessarily vary by community and agency, and this is a reason such practices have been difficult to develop, just as good policy statements are most difficult to create.

These three problems in concepts, conduct, and cooperative action must be addressed in ways which bring into view, reflect upon, and productively engage both the agency's ideas, and those of local communities. Cultural discourse analysis provides a way of doing this.

Cultural Discourse Analysis as a Way of Addressing these Problems

The approach advanced here is a version of the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1972; Carbaugh, 2008). As such it is committed to understanding human groups as formed through their ways of speaking, their ways of structuring communication conduct, their ways of creating particular discursive dynamics. The idea is that people, in agencies or local communities, are involved in cultural forms of communication, or distinctive discourses, and these both presume, and create their taken-for-granted concepts about, and conduct of social life. Recent developments in the ethnography of communication have understood this dynamic as involving generic forms of cultural communication such as rituals, myths, and social dramas (Philipsen, 1987, 2002), as enacting communication codes (Philipsen, 1997; Carbaugh, 2005), with these forms and codes immanent in the socially situated practice of cultural discourses (Carbaugh, Milburn, and Gibson, 1997; Carbaugh, 1988, 2007).

The idea of a cultural discourse is, as a result, a complicated one; it is a large construct which brings into view historically transmitted systems of expression, key cultural terms, cultural forms or sequences, practical norms or rules for conduct, and

the conventionally codified meanings participants associate with the use of this expressive system, this system of terms, sequences, and rules. The meanings in cultural discourses are understood to grandly and creatively structure how people understand being a person, how the person as such is related to others, forms for proper action or organization, ways of feeling, and how to dwell in places (Carbaugh, 2005, 2007). Analyzing communication with this range of features in mind is demanding, for it involves a variety of investigative procedures. In addition to theorizing communication as cultural discourses, the modes of inquiry are several: descriptive analyses of specific communication practices, interpretive analyses of the meanings of those practices to participants, comparative analyses of communication practices in different communities, and possibly critical analyses which assess the practice from the ethical stances participants bring to their social lives. These investigative procedures will not be discussed further here, but are presented in more detail elsewhere (Carbaugh, 2005, 2007).

What will be presented next is a review of literature in which ethnographic studies of communication have helped address the problems discussed above thereby providing knowledge which helps bridge the gaps between different human communities. Each study was conducted by a scholar in the tradition of the ethnography of communication generally, and cultural discourse analysis specifically; each completed a dissertation at the Department of Communication at the University of Massachusetts or is in the process of doing so.[1]

Ethnography as Building Bases for Cooperative Actions

Ethnographic studies of communication have provided ways of understanding people in diverse communities, and as a result should be of some use in productively engaging dynamics between different speech communities. In terms of the above discussion, such studies should be helpful in bridging gaps, for example, between human agencies and local communities. In what follows, I will review four types of studies which will prove instructive for the tasks outlined above. All involve the study of the relationship between discursive systems, with several exploring the relationship between an agency's discourse and another one active in a local community. The first examines the discourses of nonprofit organizations and their links to local

communities; a second examines health as a relationship between official medical discourse and those discourses used by patients in local communities; a third explores environmental discourses used by agencies and social factions in local communities; a fourth explores political processes through the cultural discourses of governing groups, local political factions, and their interrelationships. Each creates knowledge about agencies and about local communities through their cultural discourses; all suggest ways of creating necessary bases of knowledge which can be used not only to understand local concepts and conduct, but also to build cooperative links between cultural discourses, between agencies and local communities.

A recent monograph by Trudy Milburn (2009) has examined in detail the discourses of "non-profit organizations." The study focused on two such organizations, a Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and a Family Center (see also Milburn, 1998). While each is in an urban area of the eastern US, and while each fulfills a legal definition of a "non-profit," each is also designed in its own ways through the discourse used by its members. Milburn highlights in her studies issues of membership, which demonstrates several important points. First, according to Milburn, devices for demonstrating membership are various including organizationally specific terms, sequences, and their symbolic meanings; second, members express a sense of membership in the nonprofit in ways which are unique and distinctive to its local purposes; third, the process whereby this is done is different in each organization, as each has its own discursive way of speaking; fourth, the discourse members use has its own history, and that history is used today with its own mission in view; and finally, the discourse one uses as a member of such an organization is intimately tied to the "community context" in which the organization operates (Milburn, 2009, pp. 25-35). How an organization is locally inscribed, how it changes itself, and how it projects its future actions, all can be understood as a communication process, according to Milburn, yet each needs to be discovered, described, and interpreted through its own terms to be understood, especially the particular links between an organization and its local community(ies).

Understanding the relationship between organizations and communities in this cultural and ethnographic way allows Milburn to understand the world each has created, what membership in it means

to those who work, or volunteer there. This type of knowledge helps bridge potential gaps described above by drawing attention to the particular ways agencies do their work. Cultivated and suggested in Milburn's studies is an ability to identify, then to reflect upon the discourse members use from the inside, which makes them members of that organization, and also to reflect upon the other, from the outside, those with whom the organizational members want to work cooperatively. One way Milburn (2009, p. 101) addresses this learning is as a "reflexive" ability, recommending that one should be able to consider one's and other's stances, what is being said, but also what is left unsaid, what is deemed credible with one's agency, yes, but also what is credible in local community(ies), keeping both in view in order to move cooperatively ahead.

A second group of studies has examined health communication in ways that has bridged medical and local communities. Lauren Mackenzie (2005, 2007) conducted a detailed and rich study examining the discourses of people with "Williams Syndrome" (WS) and compared it to the medical discourse about it. She discovered the medical discourse defined people with WS according to "disabilities" such as a "disease," a "medical condition," or as a "rare genetic condition." A detailed definition is stated as follows: WS is "a rare congenital (present at birth) disorder characterized by physical and developmental problems including an impulsive and outgoing (excessively social) personality, limited spatial skills and motor control, and intellectual disability." This is a medical definition about a people which health agencies serve. However, when listening to WS people who lived together at the Berkshire Hills Music Academy, Mackenzie discovered a different, richly textured and detailed discourse. Through it, WS people themselves expressed a sense of their being differently, along three radiants of meaning. One was as "normal," as "just people," as "human beings." Mackenzie helps us understand the world from the view of WS people as, to them, a normal and everyday way to be. But furthermore, this way is discussed by them as quite "positive," as focused on "the warm, friendly, outgoing, smart, and [musically] talented" people they are, who are living together at the Berkshire Academy. A third expression focused on "feeling," especially a gifted ability to feel music, and a general style of life guided perhaps more by emotional feel than by traditional thought. And so, Mackenzie helps us understand how a person like this is differently conceived, and conducted, within these two different cultural discourses. Her findings are of use not only to medical providers who seek to understand WS, but also to families, friends, and community members who are connected to this "positively feeling-full" (WS) community of people.

A study with a similar ethnographic design was conducted by Cynthia Suopis (2002). She focused on the ways women struggle with a medical discourse about menopause, and how that medical discourse is related to another they create about it in order to negotiate their health care options (Suopis, 2002; Suopis and Carbaugh, 2005). Suopis found that the medical industry conceives of menopause as a "medicalized" condition, and as such, understands this life stage as "unnatural," sub-optimal, or in some sense flawed, abnormal, and in need of some remedy. It is this conception of menopause that is used prominently and cultivated by the medical community and some women. As a result, a diagnosis of that condition is called for, although in any one case this diagnosis may be inexact and uncertain, for one may not know exactly when menopause begins and ends, and of what it consists for any one woman. As a result, when presented with this medical discourse, a physical condition deemed sub-optimal, women discuss possible pharmaceutical treatments from hormone replacement to ingestion of tea, and so on which are varied and of variable use. The women's discourse, then, must grapple with the various concepts and definitions from medical experts concerning "menopause" and its treatment. A woman's own subsequent discourse variously appropriates this medical discourse through an elaborate process of decision-making which may lead some to adopt a pharmaceutical treatment. Others are led to conceive of this life stage differently, denying that menopause is a "medical condition" at all, and conceive of it simply as a "stage-of-life," "anti-puberty," indeed as a natural part of being, in their words, being a "baby boomer" today. It is this holding in view both the "official" medical discourse, and that used by women at this stage of life, which makes Suopis' study so important. It allows a better understanding of the medical community, a better understanding of the women it is designed to serve, and thus provides useful knowledge – for the medical community and the women - for bridging gaps between the two.

A third study of health practices has examined how campaigns operate through culturally distinctive assumptions, especially in the US and in Russia

(Carbaugh and Khatskevich, 2008). In this study, we demonstrated the utility of cultural research by examining public health campaigns which were employed to improve specific health outcomes such as a decrease in alcohol use, or in the incidences of sexually transmitted infections. Designed for North American communities and by North American public health specialists, one campaign conceived of "health" as a matter of reasoned judgment, individual choice geared towards rationality, an outcome of personal actions, with a focus on biological well-being. Sub-optimal health outcomes were (and are) understood through medical diagnoses. The campaigns were (and are) based on the idea of changing the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) of the "target populations." These practices and premises about reproductive health, these concepts and their meanings, were widely intelligible and taken-for-granted in the designing agency; they were also largely effective in various local communities of North America.

When this discourse of "health" was applied, however, in some East European and Asian communities, however, the campaign did not demonstrate as effective results or any actual health improvements. Why is this so? In these communities, "health" was conceived and conducted differently. At its cultural discursive base, health was deemed a matter of good relations with others, of emotional well-being, and of overall moral health. In these local communities, in other words, the basic premises for health were grounded in situated practices of social living more than in individual actions, moral rather than physical matters, and proper emotional living with others more than biological well-being. Diagnoses of good health, as a result, in these local settings, revolved around how well one lives with others, rather than diagnoses of one's personal physical being.

This type of analysis demonstrates how agency conceptions and conduct can render health in its own way on the bases of presumed reasons, individual choice, personal matters, and medical diagnoses. These premises can ground a set of cooperative relations which are relatively alien to other local communities, and is relatively ineffective when used there. If matters of health are understood in other local terms, as focused on emotional well-being, proper morality, and positive social relations, more effective, cooperative practices can be designed and delivered when working there.

A third type of study has examined relationships between environmental agencies and local communities. These studies have given detailed attention to ways each conceives of "nature" or "the environment," how each conducts oneself in relation to a specific physical place, and to identifying gaps between environmental discourses used in agencies and in local communities, as well as between factions of local communities.

Eric Morgan (2002, 2003) has comparatively examined cultural discourses pertaining to water and the landscape in four local communities of western Massachusetts, including a governmental "watershed initiative." He was able to show how local conceptions of "water" varied, not only between communities, but also between communities and an environmental agency. His findings help us understand the nature of gaps between discourses about "water" and other natural resources. They also provide crucial knowledge that should help cooperatively bridge gaps between agency initiatives and local communities. How? Understanding each discourse on its own helps us work knowingly and productively with various local conceptions about, and conduct regarding "water," including those in use by government agencies and scientific communities generally.

An earlier study examined landscapes similarly, through contesting discourses about the nature and use of land in western Massachusetts (Carbaugh, 1996). This study discovered that a parcel of land adjacent to Mount Greylock, Massachusetts' highest peak, was being discoursed very differently, and thus being acted upon with divergent and discordant objectives. One discourse in the drama championed "development," as another advocated "preservation." The former made the land a resource for economic development, targeting the goals of financial advantages, job creation, and employment for the region's people and children; the latter made the land a valued natural preserve, targeting the deep literary tradition of the area, the aesthetic value of the land, and the intrinsic worth of the natural site. The detailed analyses of the two discourses was presented to, then used by the state's Department of Environmental Management. At one point during a public hearing, the Director of the DEM presented a "new plan," effectively using the discourses of both groups in an effort to move beyond the deadlocked tension of the public drama, and beyond the state's

earlier "development" proposals. Knowing both discourses, and working them together, helped the community move beyond intractable conflicts to more cooperative work together.

Issues of "land," homeland, environment, and security can be particularly vexing for people, especially when new immigrants disregard Native people. Pua Aiu (1997) studied how the Hawaiian government's sense of its land, particularly Kohoolawe Island, was deeply different from Native Hawaiians' discourse about the same land. The difference could not have been more dramatically demonstrated when that island, a site of traditional native sacred ceremonies, was adopted by the Navy as a site for its military practices. A public outcry about the matter resulted in a public hearing on the matter. At times, during those public meetings, the deep Native Hawaiian discourse about their land was incoherent to government and naval officials who spoke differently about it, leading to a frustrated ideal of democratic deliberation, and showing what education was indeed needed to enhance understanding and to advance more cooperatively toward justice.

Dynamics as these are apparent in many other places, including other sites in the United States where a people's homeland is claimed, discussed and narrated by members of different nations, Native and non-native people alike (Carbaugh and Rudnick, 2006). Each shows how the discourse cultivated by government agencies can differ dramatically from its local peoples, as can the government discourse with the one(s) active not only in local communities, but also of other nations as well.

Cultural discourse analyses about the links between local governments and their constituencies have found the crucial importance to democratic agencies and institutions of understanding constituents' local discourses. This is not only the case when the government is at odds with a local community, but also is particularly the case when considering more socially aligned political and democratic processes. Rebecca Townsend (2006, 2009) has discussed the importance of understanding local strategies for the conduct of democracy, for these are distinctively different from, or particular realizations of broad ideals of democratic action. Related studies by David Boromisza-Habashi (2007a, 2007b, 2008) have systematically and in a highly refined way analyzed "hate speech" in Hungary. His

studies show how different political groups utilize "hate" with a different understanding of their rights, their polity, and their responsibilities as members. Each of these studies has demonstrated how government discourses and legal codes are differently used by different political groups, creating gaps in the conception of free expression, the conduct of political life, and the challenge each presents to future cooperative political actions.

**An Exemplary Program of Work:
The SNAP Project**

In the past few years an important global project has been designed by Derek Miller, Project Manager, and Lisa Rudnick, Lead Researcher (see Miller and Rudnick, 2008); I have served on the Advisory Group of this project. The Security Needs Assessment Protocol, or SNAP, is housed within the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDR) in Geneva, Switzerland. The purposes of the project are many, chief among them being the development of an analytic procedure which applies uniquely and creatively to concerns of "security." The SNAP project brings into view an agency's discourse, and that of a local community, then designs ways the two can work effectively together in order to understand "security" and to advance it in local field sites. Miller as Project Manager, and Rudnick as its Lead Researcher, along with an international alliance of scholars, has worked this procedure through with innovation, precision and care. I provide a brief and very general overview of only one general part of this procedure in which follows. The more detailed applications to security assessments, peace operations, international development, and/or humanitarian action are available in Miller and Rudnick (2008).

A SNAP project starts when an agency has need of local, cultural knowledge in order to conduct its work; and when the agency contacts the SNAP team for assistance in doing that work, that is, in understanding the local culture of a community. The SNAP procedure is designed generally to consult with an agency in order to reflect upon its needs through its discourse, then to examine deeply a local community and its discourse, and finally to bridge potential gaps between that agency, and that local community which an agency seeks to serve.

A first phase of research involves developing a familiarity with an agency's discourse including its

sense of its primary domain, and its sense of its tasks for a specific field project. For example, in 2009, Miller and Rudnick are leading the SNAP team in a project with UNICEF, an agency devoted to the welfare of children. One objective is to seek ways to decrease children's involvement in violent activities in eastern Nepal. A first phase of research, then, is dedicated to understanding an agency's general sense of its mission, and of the specific objectives it needs to accomplish in a particular field site. This phase of investigation is crucial for it generates knowledge about the agency and the way it conceives of its work, its conduct pertaining to that work, and its ways of working with communities as it carries its work forward.

A second phase of research is a complicated one for it involves pre-field work activities concerning a specific field site, the assembly of a complex field research team, and analyses based upon the work of the team members in the field. A general methodology for this type of work has been described elsewhere (Carbaugh and Hastings, 1992, 2005, 2007; Miller and Rudnick, 2008; Philipsen, 1997, 2002). Here, note that a considerable amount of time and effort is given to generating knowledge of a particular local community, by understanding the discourses of those who are active there. The team of researchers involves not only specialists in cultural research, but also specialists of the area, and lay-folk in the area, all of whom work together to formulate an understanding of the local community. This work involves, for example in the case of eastern Nepal, understanding local premises and practices of Tharu people including their sense of good living, as well as sources of conflict and violence in their home region. A deep understanding of a local community's ways of living are essential to working with each community, and the second phase of research is devoted precisely to understanding those ways.

A third phase of research involves assessing the relationship between the agency's discourse about its mission and the local community's discourse(s) about is current circumstances. This involves detailed work with the agency itself, and with the community in which the agency is working. In the process, investigators develop strategies for working in that local community which are effective to the agency, and sustainable within the community. The design is of course a plan for cooperative action among agency and local community members. When effectively done, this helps not only the agency, but the

community move in ways it deems appropriately sustainable, given its own sense of its history, present, and future.

The procedure, only briefly described here, has to date focused on issues of security in Ghana and Nepal (see Miller and Rudnick, 2008). As a general methodology and theory, it has applicability to many issues including environmental, health, political and any other concern as reviewed above. The analytic procedure, then, does not rely on only one topical concern, but on a way of developing cultural knowledge through local communication practices of any human group. As such, it can serve potentially any human occasion where one group of people is working with another, both needing to be understood in order to work cooperatively together. A way of addressing this need is to understand each group, an agency and a local community, as a cultural discourse, deeply embedded in its own circumstances, its own local conceptions (or premises), its ideas about proper conduct (or practices), and its means of cooperative action. The general purpose is to keep each such discourse in view, in order to design ways to work both cooperatively together.

Particularizing Policy through Cultural Discourse Analysis

The research projects reviewed and discussed above are designed to address existing gaps between groups who conceive of their worlds, and act within them, in distinctive and particular ways. A complex procedure is employed which systematically examines institutional discourse, in addition to those at work in a local community. As a result of employing that procedure, better practices can be developed in each situation, better because each is more effective for an agency, and better because each is more sustainable for a local community. At least that is our idea.

The methodology of cultural discourse analysis also has radical implications for developing policy. As is well known, policy statements often hover at a rather abstract level, above the social and cultural grounds where people live their everyday lives. The procedure we employ is radical as it requires, as a matter of policy itself, a "particularizing" thrust which socially situates such statements in the contexts of local discourses, prior to the conduct of advancing an agency's work there. It offers a

methodology also for creating parity between groups, each given its due, being understood on its own terms, being sensitized to local dynamics, of an agency, community, or communities, all providing bases for conducting cooperative action among those involved. All efforts at designing local strategies will certainly not be totally effective, but our belief and our hope is that more efforts will be.

Policy is defined as a "course of action" which is often coupled with notions of "influence" and "expediency." Our general proposal brings together policy and its implementation. One cannot be done without the other. Our specific proposals for policy development suggest building a course of action in ways that insist upon knowing the particulars of context and community, that is, in designing local practices in ways that investigate deeply the particularities of peoples in places, then work with those local understandings of specific situations and communities. Some criteria for such policy-making, to the extent such policy involves action in field sites, could be formulated as follows, as a tentative set of particularizing elements:

1) Treat an agency or organization as you treat a local community, both as distinctive localized discourses, each in need of careful study and reflection;
2) Treat the discourse of each as an historically based expressive system of concepts and conduct, as a communication system of local premises as well as practices (i.e., even global statements are localized);
3) Observe those concepts in conduct, exploring each discourse in its situated details, coming to know not only its typical ways, but its preferred ideals as well;
4) Give deep and detailed attention to the relations between the discourses noting points of overlap in premises and practices, as well as points of difference;
5) Design cooperative linkages among the discourses in ways which exploit the similarities, and productively address the differences;
6) Caution: A point of similarity may be a deeper difference under cover of a presumed similarity (i.e., an "invisible misunderstanding" as in Carbaugh, 2005, p.);
7) A point of difference requires careful care in its interpretation, translation, and in understanding the range of actions associated with it.

Our recommendations suggest a course of action in the design and implementation of policy. The set, tentatively formulated here, may not sound like policy based recommendations to many as they are formulated from an approach unlike those typically used for example in development communication. In other words, they are unlike typical strategies for social change as in diffusion based models, and participatory models (e.g., see the review by Servaes, 2008). In fact, perhaps what we offer is more of a prolegomenon to policy, a necessary set of cultural conditions for understanding indeed what pertains to any policy and what it indeed is, if particularized in places. On the basis of these understandings, local, cooperative strategies for action can be effectively built, sustainable practices promoted.

The idea of localizing policy and cultural research is of course not new, but this methodology for implementing the idea is. Designing better practices in these ways may take a bit longer, but the efforts so far seem promising, with much work yet to be done![2]

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[1] The body of work behind this exposition is extensive. A review complementary to this one can be found in Philipsen, 2009, where the literature reviewed also includes some of our colleagues at, or from the University of Washington. The two programs share commitments to the ethnography of communication, work cooperatively in some of their projects, and have created cumulatively a large and deep body of work.

[2] The author thanks David Boromisza-Habashi, Elena Khatskevich, Lauren Mackenzie, Trudy Milburn, Cynthia Suopis, and Rebecca Townsend for comments on an earlier draft of this paper. The work described here is being developed currently with Lisa Rudnick and Derek Miller.

The Politics of Communication:
An Essay on Theorizing Social Interaction

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Introduction

Let me start with a confession: When I submitted my abstract to the organizers of this conference I had some doubts if it really fits into the program because it deals with the topic of communication and politics in a very peculiar way. But now, after one and a half day, my own understanding of this topic has been so increased that I feel a little bit safer in my own presentation. The reason I had some doubts is that I approach the topic of communication and politics from a very abstract and theoretical point of view. So it does not deal with the topic as an empirical question but is concerned with a peculiar way of thinking in the practice of theorizing communication resp. social interaction.

So I see my contribution on the meta-theoretical level – or you may call it the level of the history of ideas or the level of ideology (Peters, Lucy, Carbaugh). In this it is related to questions of politics indeed.

I try to show that a peculiar way of theorizing social interaction is heavily but tacitly influenced by a political model of the actor and a political way of thinking, without stating that directly.

Leading Questions

Scholars, who aspire to develop a general theory of social interaction come to a point where they have to answer questions like the following:

- How do we conceive people who communicate?

- What features, aspects, or qualities of these people do we regard to be relevant?

- What is the prototype of man-in-interaction?

- What does the model of the actor we use in theories of social interaction looks like?

Being such a scholar I asked myself these questions too and looked for answers in relevant theories of social interaction. The result of my inquiry is that either theories of social interaction adopt a model of the actor which is obviously insufficient or the theories rely on a model which is implicitly introduced and taken for granted without clearly stating it.

In what follows I will shortly comment on some explicit but insufficient models of man-in-interaction. Then I will concentrate on a model of man-in-interaction which is tacitly presupposed in many theories of social interaction nowadays.

Some famous explicit models:

- The sender, imposed by the mathematical theory of communication (Shannon & Weaver), adopted from there by a lot of other communication theories without considering the original theoretical context, critized by Goffman as being insufficient in many ways.

- The ideal speaker, introduced by Chomsky in his linguistic writings, aimed at explaining linguistic competence (a kind of personified grammar) which is quite distinct from interactional performance a theory of social interaction should be oriented to.

- The craftsman, used by Bühler in his *Theory of Language*, a concept Bühler borrowed from Plato, which suggests an analogy between social interaction and the manufacturing of things.

So it seems to me that these models are not sufficient for understanding social interaction – but looking for alternative conceptions I do not see any explicit conception of what the actor in social interaction looks like or consists of.

Thesis: The Dominance of a Political Model of the Actor

It seems to me that scholars of social interaction implicitly rely on a model of the actor which is adopted from another discourse – a discourse which is related to another but distinct aspect of social reality – not social interaction but political action in a peculiar way.

So that's my thesis: In theories of social interaction scholars rely on a specific political model of the actor, i.e. a model which was developed in political thinking in the age of enlightenment and which holds good in the political system since then.

The reason for this adoption from the political discourse is the lack of a substantial theory of social interaction on the one hand and the attractiveness of this political discourse in our western intellectual culture on the other hand.

An Interesting Finding

To explicate my thesis I turn to the way the subject of understanding is conceptualized in communication theory. A classical conception of understanding in communication theories is based on the following model: Actor A has ideas which are somehow related to things. He puts these ideas into words and transmits them to Actor B who develops ideas on the basis of the words and relates them to things.

$$A \qquad\qquad B$$
things - ideas → words →   words → ideas - things

What I am interested in for my contribution is not so much the process of understanding as it is thought of in this model but the underlying conception of the actors A and B; that is, the individual who speaks or understands.

Talbot Taylor in his book Mutual Understanding has followed up this conception to its original formulation – and found it in the writings of John Locke, especially in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding. He stresses the specific relationship between the words and what they signify (ideas):

In the Essay the connection between words and what they signify (ideas in the mind of the speaker) is analyzed as having four primary characteristics: it is *arbitrary*, *voluntary, private*, and *individual*. By saying that the

connection between a word and its idea is arbitrary, Locke indicated that there is no a priori reason why any particular word should be the sign of a given idea. In using one word rather than another as the sign of a given idea, a speaker is not guided by any principle of nature. [...] In addition to arbitrariness, there is also the voluntariness of the connection between a word and the idea the speaker signifies by it. Signification [...] is an act of the speaker´s will. [...] In calling a given idea by a name, the act performed by the Lockean agent is not only voluntary and arbitrary, it is also an individual act performed in mental privacy. Clearly, the semiotic act must be individual, for it is directed by the agent´s own will. (Taylor, p. 31ff)

So these are the qualities of the Lockean actor:

He has private thoughts
He is an individual
He has a free will
He is not determined by nature.

This actor – or the stressed features of an actor – is in accord to the philosophical-political conception of man or the political vision and discourse of that time in which privacy, individuality, and voluntarism were key concepts (and of course Locke wanted it to be in accordance with that because his interest was a political one). So what we have here is a conception of man as it had been developed in the political discourse in the period of enlightenment and civil emancipation. Now what to do with this result?

How to Cope with this Finding?

I would like to distinguish different reactions to this result. You can take an affirmative position or a sceptical one. The affirmative position has a weak and a strong version:

- the weak version is: "Well, maybe it is an adoption from the political discourse – but why is that a problem? The adoption of concepts from other disciplines or discourses is normal business in science."

- the strong version is: "Yes, we agree that it is a political model of the actor, and that's perfectly right, because it is necessary to conceive social interaction as political action."

In both these affirmative positions social interaction is more or less identified with political processes or see through the glasses of political concepts. This can

be paraphrased as: "Social interaction is nothing but political action." Being interested in developing a genuine theory of social interaction it is obvious that I cannot agree with this position.

The sceptical version is: "Let's think about it. Are the concepts for understanding political phenomena suited for understanding social interaction? Is politics a productive model for interaction? Does it make sense to regard man-in-social-interaction as a political animal?" After all – the political discourse has been developed to solve political problems – not those of social interaction.

The Case of "Equality:" Is Equality a Relevant Dimension of Social Interaction?

My suspicion is that to confer the political model upon the subject of social interaction leads to conceptual confusion, and contributes to a misleading perspective on social interaction, with the effect that some features are unsuitably stressed and others which might be relevant for the understanding of social interaction are neglected.

One of the essential ideas of this political conception is the idea of equality ("liberty, equality, fraternity"). And indeed this idea shows up in thinking about social interaction too as one of the most important dimensions of the conception, description, and analysis of social interaction. This suspicion is strengthened if you regard the use of the concept of "equality" in theorizing communication. One prominent example is the conception of the "*Herrschaftsfreier Diskurs*" by Jürgen Habermas with its prominent position in his architecture of a democratic society.

Please, get me right: I do not say that scholars of social interaction assume that equality is realized in social interaction. I say that scholars assume that equality is a relevant dimension of social interaction and that they assume that inequality is something like a failure of communication. The French philosopher Tzvetan Todorov makes a similar point in his discussion of theories of social recognition. He notices that most of these theories assume that social recognition is the result of a struggle in which the participants are conceptualized as being equal (this idea originally was developed by Hegel of course). He asks: "Why are only relations of rivalry among equals taken into account?" And his answer is: "It's our linkage to equality as a political ideal which produces that we project this model onto the social reality. Thus we reduce [. . .] social relations to those

which presuppose equality. [. . .] Unconsciously we regard society through the film of democracy."

Open Questions and a Tentative Suggestion

Could it be that the big key words of the Western political discourse: liberty, equality, fraternity, do not fit with the logic of social interaction? Then it would be misleading to regard social interaction as a subject of political, especially democratic affairs, but the art of politics is to create - in the path of social interaction - political conditions with come close to the key concepts of our political self-understanding. These paths themselves however follow a logic which is not a political but an interactional one.

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Christian Telecasts and their Impact on Communal Life

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Much is said on radio and television about public matters, about politics, the economy, and education. The same holds true for churches. Their representatives hold religious services for their congregations, teach religion, speak at private ceremonies (baptism, wedding, funerals), and offer spiritual guidance. The churches sponsor nursery schools and hospitals and provide care and support for children and the elderly and ill – but always, their mission is to spread their religious views and messages. They perform social work, debate current problems, justify and defend their own positions. In these activities, they communicate their worldview and the different meaning it holds for a diversity of people. How do they succeed, are they being heard? Are they credible? Are their listeners changing anything, not only in their beliefs, but also in their own lives, their social interactions? The aim of Christian communication is to make a matter into a common cause in order be able to act on it together (cp. Geissner, 2000).

In some situations, church members hush up something and only talk when the media awakens the interest of the public; but will they then also take actions? In reality, even their silence is a form of communication. Each of their public comments requests a different attitude, different arguments, or at least different verbalizations of the arguments - different examples. The question should be, if they succeed. If they succeed - this relates to a specific situation where church representatives make public appearances on Swiss television in *Thoughts for Sunday*.

The churches also express themselves in the media radio and television. On television governed by public law[1] the *Thoughts for Sunday* is a four-to-five minute telecast with the mission of giving testimonials from today's Christians. Christian theologians address social topics and problems of daily life, while trying to affiliate their viewpoint with the Christian message. Drawing from their wealth of practiced spirituality, they aim to provide answers and meaning. The speakers are address a broad audience who takes notice of religious topics casually rather than in an engaged manner (Gysel/Meyer, 2003, p. 1).

The *Thoughts for Sunday* is broadcast on Saturday evenings on primetime television. During the program, the speaker is viewed in medium close shot (head, shoulders and chest), without having the benefit of a moving backdrop or a pulpit. This telecast is wedged in between the news, weather forecast, advertisements, and successive entertainment such as movies or music shows. This telecast receives high viewer ratings, but it is not clear if the viewers actually pay attention or if they use this time to provide themselves with drinks and snacks for the following shows. They often switch the channel. This happens after about one minute, when entertainment starts on commercial television. This likely indicates that there are certain topics or their development or depiction that simply do not appeal to people.

Who gives these speeches? Every eighteen months, a new group is selected to replace the previous one. The selected committee is composed of media delegates of the catholic and the reformed church, editorial staff from the TV station, and one speech teacher. In observance of the proportional representation election system, each committee must include two Catholics, two Protestants (Calvin, Zwingli), one man and one woman each. It is clear that the Protestants belong to the so-called Presbyterians. Dating back to the reformation in the 16th century, the Presbyterians - next to the Catholics - are dominant in Switzerland. They are ministers, religious education teachers, and members of protestant social services. It is easier to find suitable women here, as the Presbyterian Church has numerous female ministers. Regarding the Catholics, at first it is only certain that they are theologians and members of the Catholic Church. Their field of work, however, can be defined in different institutional contexts. There is, for instance, a male priest, a monk, and a male social worker. As choices among women, nuns, religious education teachers, congregation leaders, or theologians with therapeutic training could be considered.

Regardless of the composition of the respective group of speakers for the *Thoughts for Sunday*, I provide guidance to each of these groups with interventions on rhetorical communication. My aim is to enable them to clearly communicate their thoughts and convictions. The *Thoughts for Sunday* often focuses on current social problems (e.g., unemployment, poverty of women in their old age, exorbitant executive salaries). The subject matter can also be drawn from the meaning of special church holidays (e.g., Easter, Christmas, Lent). The topics are mostly interwoven with bible quotes and biblical parables in order to demonstrate how a comparable situation, was interpreted by Jesus or one of the evangelists 2,000 years ago. For one thing, this points out the continuity of their message: the problems of mankind are timeless, and the New Testament can serve to provide suggestions for solving them. For another thing, the comparison serves to stimulate listeners to think about their current lives, about their human relationships, about injustice in their environment. It is made clear that the messages of the Bible still are valid and can be applied to the living conditions of modern day people. It is also made clear, that the poor and under-privileged are being addressed. This leads to the question if they should really be the targeted audience, whenever change is called for. How can the "poor" be expected to change their circumstances? Or is this just an effort to pacify them? Should not these messages be addressed who have the power and the means to change social circumstances?

For Middle Europe, it holds true that numerous people have already left the church: some, because they no longer believe in God, some because they do no accept the dogmatic rules – especially those applied by the Catholic Church – and others because they do not want to pay money for the church taxes. For all these groups, it is imperative to note that they are an audience who is not particularly engaged in Christian topics. In other words, WHO lets WHO tell her or him WHAT via television? Who is ready to listen to whom?

So, how should a 5-minute speech be composed and presented? How can the speaker meet the target to speak in a manner that would appeal to anyone? Also, speeches with religious or ethical topics are always rhetorical in nature. The person who speaks wants to invite her/his listeners to really listen; s/he wants to engage their contemplation, to persuade them to perhaps try out a different course of action in the future. In other words, "the target lies with the listeners (Geissner 1998). If it is to be reached – whether this is even possible is left open – then the speech must be adapted to their living conditions. What does this mean for the planning?" (Slembek, 2007, p. 169)

All of this is difficult to achieve in television speeches. They are not sermons; if they were, then they would conform to all the knowledge they acquired in academic studies. There, and in hands-on training, future theologians learn above all that their mission is to preach. They learn to write down the exact wording for their sermons. To preach means speaking with the congregation present in the traditional House of the Lord. This address is not possible when a dispersed audience listens and watches a television program. Other rules come into play here; there are no familiar rites, no familiar rooms, no special clothing (robes), no mood-setting organ music. What holds value for those who preach during religious services is not valid for those who administer to other tasks. They conduct dialogues, for instance, or they work with small groups, but in any case they have real and present counterparts to whom they speak and with whom they are communicating. The speakers of both groups must be prepared step-by-step for the specific conditions of a telecast; they must also be willing to become open to it. This includes pondering questions such as:

- Who is watching me? Who is listening to me? Are they younger or older people, do they live in rural areas? What moves them, what worries them? What persona do I assume when talking to them? A minister, a mother of a sick child, a social worker working with drug addicts in back-alleys, a priest?

- What is my target, when I speak now? Do I want to comfort, to cheer up, or to encourage people into taking action?

- How do I have to phrase my words, when I want to appeal in particular to one or the other target audience?

- What does it mean altogether for the theologians, who are all scribes and writers by profession, when they have to phrase their words for listening?

At first, considerations of this sort are completely alien to this group. They had no place in their studies or in their subsequent training. This aspect is another hurdle when attempting to invite people to listen via a media that is as elusive as television. Not every theologian is capable of this task. That is why casting comes into play. Casting is followed by a lengthy project that includes working

on scripts, but even more important, working on adapting the speech and the performance to television.

But the professed objective remains to take a stand, to give answers, and to convey meaning affiliated with the Christian message. But if the *Thoughts for Sunday* provide answers to the listeners, if they find some meaning for themselves therein, remains unclear. There is very little feedback. Now and then a few emails come in, expressing either agreement or strong disagreement, but that is all. I will describe three examples.

Impact on Public Opinion

The Social Worker Urs

Urs used to be a monk, who was 'seduced' by a nun, in his own words. Both leave their convents, get married and have four children together. Consistent with the rules of the Catholic Church, he is expelled from his order. The small town where he is living now employs him as a social worker. Since then, his job is to get out into the streets and to work with drug addicts. He accepts to compose and to present the *Thoughts for Sunday* once a month for the duration of 18 months. He sticks to his role as a social worker in all of his television performances. He talks about the difficulties drug addicts face, and he campaigns for better understanding of their desolate circumstances. He mentions how he hesitates to hug a drug addict when she asks for it. Over the course of time, Urs has managed to convince the town administration to provide a meeting facility for his clients. This place features some sort of kitchen, a living room, and a play area. The drug addicts themselves are keeping it clean. This facility is threatened to be closed down now for financial reasons. Due to his television appearances, Urs has become a public person whose words are heard in town. The town administration - with the support of its citizens - at last gave up this plan, and the sanctuary and meeting place of the drug addicts will be preserved. This example of Urs shows that our work can actually bring about change. To be sure, the fact that a social worker who is initially only a small player, suddenly becomes a public figure plays a large role in this example. The question remains of how everything would have turned out, if he had only been viewed as a social worker in a small town of bourgeois character.

This question is related to my work with groups presenting the *Thoughts for Sunday*. At first, Urs appeared to me as a person who functions according to his own "chaos system." He knows what he wants, but he constantly mixes up "What's next?" with "How am I feeling?" "Whom am I speaking to?" "Do they even want to know about this?" "Do they value me?" Working with him made it necessary to stabilize his self-value above all and to lead him to precisely thinking out each step in drafting his speech, to develop his thoughts along an outline, and to re-think and re-formulate his presentation anew for his listeners in each setting. This process worked out, at least for Urs.

The Nun Beate

Beate's case is different. She is a nun, approximately 50 years of age, but she already has television experience when she is selected for the *Thoughts for Sunday*: she used to announce philosophical programs in another telecast. Beate was already well known to a television audience who views slot programs. During this time, she had learned how to handle a teleprompter. There, she was able to read what she had composed before and accordingly knew what she would say. But in the *Thoughts for Sunday*, a teleprompter is deliberately not used. The speakers rethink and develop their text anew in each setting by using key words as clues. This method increases the liveliness of the presentation and intensifies the relationship with the audience.

Beate's experience with the teleprompter had the effect that her announcements appeared to be read; her sentences were designed for reading and were therefore too long and complex for immediate comprehension. Her announcements were meant to appeal to an elite audience ready to follow a discussion between philosophers, social scientists or church staff on a Sunday morning. The type of audience who – shortly before eight p.m. on a Saturday evening is ready to listen to Christian thoughts and to relate them to their own lives – is totally different.

Perhaps this change is not to be expected from a nun, but Beate is a feminist. This difference comes across clearly in many of her *Thoughts for Sunday* telecasts. One of them caused strong reactions. In it, she refers to a few verses of John 8, 1-11. They concern a so-called adulteress.

> While Jesus is preaching, the scribes and Pharisees are bringing a woman to him who has committed adultery. They demand that this woman shall be stoned as bidden by Moses. Their intention is to challenge Jesus in order to gain a pretense to act against him. Jesus writes

on the ground: "He who is without sin among you let him cast the first stone at her." (Romans 2.1).

"He who is without sin among you let him cast the first stone at her." These words from the bible are quoted over and over again, although the context is often unknown. Beate cites this situation, where the woman is accused as an adulteress and concludes: It takes two people to commit adultery, a woman and a man. So how can men in the bible accuse an adulteress and demand that she be stoned? To apply this to modern day situations: How can adultery committed by a man be accepted but if committed by a woman be regarded as breaking the marriage vows and therefore condemnable?

Beate received plenty of feedback on this particular *Thoughts for Sunday* telecast. Adultery applies to both sexes, regardless of religious beliefs. But the reactions came from women. This might make sense. They are expected to remain faithful in marriage. Are not men expected to also remain faithful? Does not this expectation apply to men as well? Why should they not also comment?

My work with Beate mainly consisted of guiding her towards ways to improve the comprehension of spoken thoughts directed to a particular target audience. To do this, she had to learn to comment in short sentences, to rethink her ideas freshly in each setting instead of just reading them. She had to learn to use common every-day speech and phrases that could reach out to her audience. Finally she had to learn to show up as a nun wearing a habit, without conforming to the expectations caused by this appearance.

For Beate, the reactions to her *Thoughts for Sunday* initially fueled her plans for her activities after her time as television speaker was over. She remained in the town with the consent of her order and formed a discussion group. This group not only discusses religious questions but, even more, it focuses on educational and local affairs. The women talk about current matters and contemplate if they want to take action. Depending on the decision they have reached, they develop plans for where and how they will intervene.

The Communal Leader Monika

Some times ago, Pope Benedict paid his first visit to the USA. He said mass and visited Ground Zero in New York. In addition, he met with some of the many victims of pedophilic priests. I hesitate to use the word pedophilia in this context, as their Greek roots point to child (*paidi*) and friend (*philos*). The expression "friend," however, indicates the exact opposite of what is going on here. Anyone who approaches children with sexual intentions is not exactly their "friend." The pope talked with them for a long time and asked them in the name of the church for forgiveness for the crimes of the priests. The European media reports made much of the reactions of the people in question and of those who appreciated the pope's actions. Do they really have to be grateful for his actions? The American Catholic Church obviously has paid billions in compensation money to the victims. What happened to the priests? Were they judged by a secular court in the same way as other pedophiles whose actions come to light?

Europe has not been spared from pedophilic crimes committed by priests or monks. So far, the pope has not found words for them. Crimes of this nature are very well known in the European Catholic Church, but they are hushed up whenever possible. If a case really becomes public, the pedophilic priests or monks do not have to worry about penalties dealt out by the church – nor are they turned over to a secular court, as they have not broken a law in the church sense, as opposed to priests who get married. They repent, and those who repent can be forgiven. They might be transferred to a different location, provided that the case becomes public. A case of this kind has come to light again in Switzerland just a short while ago. In one *Thoughts for Sunday*, it serves as an example for the reactions of the church superiors of the Catholic Church.

The speaker Monika is a studied theologian and the communal leader in a Swiss congregation. In this function, she is responsible for many tasks that generally are carried out by the priesthood. She can, for instance, baptize children, perform pastoral work, and pass out communion to residents in senior citizens homes. What she cannot do, however, is to perform communion during mass. During these moments, she sits a bit apart, while the priest performs these rites. During the recordings for the program, *Women – no, thanks*?!, the priest comments on this situation: he finds it "shameful" (sf.tv 2005).

Monika calls the Catholic Church her religious home. She is a staunch Catholic. This is exactly what leads her to permit herself the freedom of thought (Slembek, 1996, p. 134) in her life and also in the *Thoughts for Sunday* telecast. She keeps broaching again and again the fossilization in the Catholic Church. She wants to change things, and she searches for change.

In these *Thoughts for Sunday*, she starts with stating the fact that a married priest holds the mass. According to the rules of the Catholic Church, this possibility can occur only in specific cases. There are married priests after all, for instance, when a married protestant converts to the Catholic faith and becomes a priest. Besides these are fairly rare cases, there are a number of priests in South America who were married with the blessings of Rome.

In her *Thoughts for Sunday*, Monika compares two cases: a priest, who lives in a mature relationship with a woman or a man and does not keep this a secret, is excommunicated. At the same time, a priest or a monk who gives way to his pedophilic desires is only transferred to a different locality provided this becomes known to his superiors and to the public.

As mentioned, the actual provocation was the case of a monk who is obviously a pedophile, who has abused a boy and was transferred to a different locality. The media took up this case which otherwise would not have surfaced and has been hushed up once again by the Catholic Church.

Monika's aim was not to denounce the offender. What she does want and always has wanted is for the Catholic Church to be credible, and she will fight for this goal. She wants clarity, transparence, and for the church to stand by the facts. Jesus and how he treated people sets the standard for her; she mentions the ability to relate to others, mercifulness, and clarity. For her, it is incomprehensible that the church maintains a one-sided interpretation of tradition and power and abandons good people who are living in mature relationships (cf. Wort zum Sonntag, 2.2.08). The church is in dire need of ministers who keep both feet on the ground (ibid). Would it not, then, make sense to let them get married? According to the psychological therapist Udo Rauchfleisch, who is familiar with the problems of priests and monks, the celibacy requirement is partly responsible for sexual assaults that occur within the Catholic Church. Churches that permit marriage are rarely confronted with pedophilic sexuality. In his opinion, priest and monks are satisfying their sexual needs on the weakest - the children (Der Club, Swiss TV, sf.tv 2/2/2008).

Monika receives hundreds of approving emails and letters. She obviously reaches a multitude of people with her doubts in the institutional church and her petrified structure. This is one side of the reactions.

On the part of the Catholic Church, the reactions are different. She is ordered before the bishop, who explains to her in a long conversation (which she experiences as a good conversation) the actions and reactions of the church – matters that she was already aware of before, according to her own words (cp. ‚The Club', sf.tv. 2008). In an article of the *Sunday News*, a church superior is quoted as saying that she supposedly caused a storm of protest; she is accused of having held a Boulevard Sermon and to have used it to distract from the real problems; "It showed disrespect for the victims and prevented fighting the true causes" (Ramspeck, 2008, p. 1). In a follow-up talk show featuring as guests two monks, a psychologist specializing in religion, another psychologist, and a married and consequently ex-communicated priest, she receives a two-page document from a church superior; the paper describes what she can and cannot say. She does not abide by it.

Did Monika achieve anything with her *Thoughts for Sunday*? This question cannot be confirmed off-hand. The numerous reactions do show that many people are dissatisfied with their church and that they find her credible. The people expect of their church what their church demands of them: namely, that they can believe in her because she is worthy of their common faith – this should give the church superiors some food for thought. The reactions of the church superiors reveal their views of these matters – do they need to change anything? In this talk show only church representatives who did not belong to the church elite were present. They can hardly change anything. Monika's central concern, her demand for a transparent, credible church, was barely discussed. This situation became not only clear in the newspaper articles; it was also the main topic of the TV talk show *Celibate and Pedophilia. The Catholic Church under Crossfire*. In it, a debate about pedophilic sexuality and especially about celibacy was ignited – while her demand for a transparent, credible church was not discussed. How could it even be discussed! The church members who were present did not occupy leading positions; they could speak only for themselves, but not in the name of their church superiors – and the church superiors were not present. Their absence could be interpreted as an opportunity to evade the discussion. Monika's speech had caused a flurry of actions and possibly permanently changed the awareness of the people who responded to her. Is this also the result of the Pope's visit in the U.S.A.? Is it really a sign of changed awareness, when nothing changes in the aftermath, when everything remains the same? A change in awareness must not

only bring about the demand for freedom of thought but also the willingness to work on changes.

Translation from German by Gisela Blevins

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[1] Television is governed by public law with federally subsidized broadcasting service stations. Their mission is to provide information; they must observe the proportional representation election system, and their opportunities for advertising are extremely limited.

Language Policy and Globalization

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In many areas of Miami, Spanish has become the predominate language, replacing English in everyday life. Anyone from Latin America could feel at home on the streets, without having to pronounce a single word in English. (Salomon, 31 May 2008, p. A5)

'No habla ingles? You're fired!' . . . Should we require new Americans to speak English with English-speaking Americans? The answer, of course, is yes." (Young, 20 July 2008, p. 2)

A fifty-six-year-old Turkish woman was refused a heart transplant by clinics in Hanover on the grounds that her lack of German (common among Gastarbeiter) made the recovery process dangerous. The clinic defended the decision: the patient might not understand the doctors' orders, might take the wrong medicine and might not be able to get help if there were complications." (reported in Spolsky, 2004, p. 1)

This paper is a brief treatment of some problems deriving from language policy and language planning in the context of globalization. The paper considers: (1) the distribution of languages and second languages, (2) an overview of several major geographical areas of language conflict, and (3) some suggestions for how language policy issues might be resolved.

There are three basic philosophies on language policy that tend to dominate the discussion (Schmidt, 2000). First is the philosophy of *assimilation*. Most of the history of the U.S. has been oriented toward assimilation in that people came as immigrants with their native language, but they quickly learned English and integrated into the culture where the spoken language was English, even if they kept some of the customs from their nations of origin. The assimilation approach is the dominant philosophy or language policy in both the U.S. and Germany today as expressed in the second and third examples that began this paper.

Second is the policy of *pluralism* or *bilingualism*. Canada, specifically Quebec, is an example of the pluralist position in that both English and French are official language and all official communication is in both languages, and both languages are taught in the schools (Ricento & Burnaby, 1998). If Puerto Rico were to become a state, the U.S., to some slight degree, would resemble linguistic pluralism since Spanish is the primary language of Puerto Rico, but English is widely spoken and taught (Schmidt, 2000, pp. 213-214). Another possible example in the U.S. are the geographical areas controlled by Native Americans (unfortunately called "reservations" throughout most of our history). In 1990 and 1992 the U.S. Congress passed legislation that gave power to tribal leaders to enact language policy that could make the native language the dominant language, but to date there has been little action beyond a standard bilingual policy (Schmidt, 2000, pp. 211-212).

Third is the philosophy of *confederation*. Clearly the best example of this policy is Switzerland where there are rather clear geographic regions. Lugano is Italian, Lausanne and Geneva are French, and Zurich is German. I recall some friends from many years ago who worked for Swiss Aluminum in Jackson, Tennessee. They had a daughter who was just learning to speak. On certain days of the week they spoke French, on others German, and on others English, or if there were guests in the home who spoke a specific language, that became the language of the day. There was one evening when we were dinner guests along with a couple who were primarily German-speakers. It was, however, a "French speaking day" so the child was mildly confused about what language to use. Her solution was perfect—she responded, politely, "Merci, Danke, thank you." It was then agreed that the language of the evening would be English since that was the only language in which all the guests were conversationally fluent.

In reality, of course, there seldom is a clear border between the three philosophies, and perhaps with the exception of the assimilation position, each

of the examples given above could be argued or conceptualized as a combination of pluralism and confederation.

Language Distribution and Use: Geographic and Virtual[1]

The ten languages spoken by the largest numbers of native speakers are, in order from most often spoken to least often spoken:

Language	Speakers (approximate)	Official (approximate)
Chinese	875 million	3 nations
Hindi	370 million	2 nations
Spanish	350 million	23 nations
English	340 million	67 nations
Arabic	206 million	28 nations
Portuguese	203 million	9 nations
Bengali	196 million	2 nations
Russian	145 million	6 nations
Japanese	126 million	2 nations
German	101 million	7 nations

Other European languages in the top 30 are French (67 million in 38 nations) and Italian (61 million in 4 nations).

When considering other aspects of world languages, English is unique in several categories. English is the language most spoken by *non-native speakers* (approximately 350 million). English also is the language with the most words, due primarily to its ability to both adopt words from other languages, and to add newly forged words, mainly in the area of technology. English also is the most published language and the most often studied second language.

Within the context of the European Union and the broader context of globalization, a major factor in the role of English as a "universal language" or *lingua franca* is the omnipresence of media-based popular culture.[2] A study by Margie Berns and colleagues representing several European nations (Berns, de Brot & Hasebrink, 2007) studied the presence and role of English in Europe. They began their report:

> In contemporary Europe, issues of language have taken on new urgency and importance. Two developments have contributed to current debates and discussions on linguistic matters. One is globalization of the world's economy and the accompanying increase in the spread of English. The other is the institutionalization of the 25-member European Union (EU); with its increasing multilingualism and multiculturalism as more countries gain entry over the coming years. (p. 1)

At the end of their study, they conclude:

> At the very beginning of this study, the main hypothesis was that the English language seems to be "omnipresent" in the lives of young Europeans. This means that young people do not encounter this language in language classes at school only, but have plenty of opportunities where they can have contact with English. The results of our study clearly emphasize this basic notion. Beyond school, there are at least three important factors contributing to the presence of English: the media, personal networks, and intercultural communication as it is exercised during vacations and travels abroad. (p. 112)

The results of this study ring true for me based on taking students from Virginia Tech on study abroad trips to Switzerland, Italy, Croatia, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic. The Virginia Tech students, none fluent in the languages of the nations they visited, have found a situation where they could not find students from that nation with whom to carry on a conversation. One observation in particular stands out. In Croatia, it was something of a surprise to find that even young children seemed able and wanting to carry on conversation in fairly colloquial U.S. English. As we visited the new private media companies and Internet services, the reason began to be clear. Most of the television they watched was either U.S. or UK produced with the spoken language in English and the subtitles in Croatian. Thus, they continually heard spoken English in conjunction with their native language. On the Internet much of the content they

accessed was in English, and finally, they listened to music primarily from the U.S. and UK.

Today, of course, the most significant factor in language globalization is the Internet. According to World Internet Statistics (http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm) the latest estimates (2008) of the percentage of people using major language groups online, based on native speakers of the language are English with approximately 450 million users, followed by Chinese with approximately 320 million, and Spanish with approximately 129 million. The remaining languages in the topic ten, in descending order, are Japanese (94 million), French (73 million), Portuguese (73 million), German (65 million), Arabic (41 million), Russian (38 million), and Korean (37 million). All the remaining languages account for approximately 250 million Internet users.

Language Conflicts: Local and Global

Even a cursory examination of language-based disputes around the globe makes it clear that there is a problem that is intensified by globalization. Coulmas (2005) breaks the nature of such conflicts down into two primary categories. Micro choices concern structural features of a language, such as the movement in Chinese toward a more phonetically based orthography. Macro choices concern larger issues such as status planning and language policy; issues of protection of minority languages and the promotion of specific languages for education, business, and international relations.

Belgium is an example of a nation divided by language (Miller, 19 July 2008). In Belgium there is a fairly clear geographic division between the Dutch-speaking north and the French-speaking south. Brussels, of course, is an exception since it is geographically a part of the north, but linguistically more closely aligned with the south.

After the June 2007 elections, Belgium was without a government for nine months because the political parties from the two major language groups, Flemish and French, could not agree on issues of representation. Prime Minister Yves Leterme offered his resignation, but King Albert refused to accept it and appointed three men from outside the political fray to come up with a compromise that would be acceptable to both the French-speaking Wallonian minority (40%) and the Dutch-speaking majority (60%).

The battle is not over—even the description of the new government appointed by King Albert on December 30, 2009 must be described in terms of whether the newly appointed officials are Flemish-speaking or French-speaking (Belgium has new government, 7 January 2009). Els Witte, a Belgian historian is quoted as saying "A language is a culture. In Belgium the two cultures know very little about each other because they speak different languages. There are singers known in one part, not in the other. Television is different, newspapers, books" (quoted in Kimmelman, 4 August 2008).

Several of the former Soviet republics are in the middle of language-based policy disputes. In Estonia (Alas, 2007) the problem is between the majority Estonian speakers and the minority Russian speakers (25%). During the half-century of Soviet occupation, hundreds of thousands of Russians relocated to Estonia to work in factories. After gaining its independence, Estonia offered citizenship, but on the condition that Russian speakers pass a language and culture test. Only 40% have taken the test; 20% cling to their Russian citizenship though living in Estonia; and 40% remain stateless. Estonian government data shows that 52% of Russian-identifying speakers are fluent in Estonian.

In 2006 Amnesty International called for Russian to be given recognition as an official minority language, but few primary and secondary schools offer instruction in Russian, and no college or university offers a program in Russian. A Council of Europe memorandum (July 2007) recommended that Estonia drop the citizenship language and culture test for older applicants. It further said, "A common language for all the citizens could co-exist with the perpetuation of regional or minority languages."

Uzbekistan, after gaining independence, replaced Russian as the official language in 1995 with Uzbek (Kozlova, 2008). Even with such changes, Alisher Ilkhamov, a research fellow at the University of London's Center for Contemporary Central Asia and the Caucasus, said that 70% of Uzbeks speak Russian fluently and Russian-language magazines and television still dominate the foreign media.

Kyrgyzstan has experienced significant departures by ethnic Russians following its independence (Toursunof, 2008). One result is that many young Kyrgyz had no significant exposure to Russian and therefore are shut out of universities that continue to use Russian rather than the Kyrgyz language because Russian is more adept at dealing with abstract or technical concepts. After dropping Russian as an official language following

independence, in 2003 Kyrgyzstan restored Russian as an official language, and most news and information is in Russian.

In other parts of the globe the problems may be different, but the conflict is similar. In East Timor the struggle between the colonial language, Portuguese, and the native Tetum language is the battleground (Taylor-Leech, 2008). Indonesian and English also are making significant inroads because of increased technology. The current approach to language planning is to encourage multilingualism, recognizing that within the nation there are multiple identities.

Africa, admittedly a vast area, is a chaotic brew of tribal languages, colonial languages, and the introduction of languages from migrations (Arabic) and technology (English, Russian and Chinese) with the accompanying tensions over language planning and policy (Djité, 2008). There has been no consistency in the process of change. Ghana reverted in 2001 to an English-only policy beginning with the first year of primary school. The Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003 moved from four official languages to only one, French. In Burundi, French no longer has official status, being replaced by Kirundi. At the same time, the Burundi government in 2006 instituted the introduction of English as a subject beginning in primary schools.

Other cases that could be discussed include, but are not limited to, Creole language in Jamaica (Brown-Blake, 2008), multiple marginal languages in the Philippines (Tupas, 2008), justice-based language issues over Quichua in Ecuador (Berk-Seligson, 2008), multilingual and minority languages in Luxembourg (Homer & Weber, 2008), multiple languages in Malaysia (Gill, 2007), language change and inclusion in Chinese education (Trent, 2008), and issues of public signage in Belarus (Brown, 2007). On an even broader scale, are language planning and policies that cover larger geographic regions that are increasingly more compact and in closer communication due to new technology such as Asia (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007) and Europe (Phillipson, 2004; Uysal, Plakans & Dembovskaya, 2007). Now, however, we turn to the United States and the European Union.

United States and European Union

Europe, of course, has always been a multiplicity of nations and national languages, and it was several of the European languages that were

carried by colonial hegemony around the globe, most notably English, French and Portuguese.

In some respects, the U.S. has been a multilingual society since its founding because throughout its history each new wave of explorers and immigrants brought with them their native language. The German heritage, for example, was strong in Pennsylvania and as the immigrants moved westward to Missouri and Nebraska, they took their language with them. My own religious denomination, the United Church of Christ, is a good example of this. A fellow church member, Allen Kroehler, who is a retired professor from Lancaster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, grew up in a German-speaking church in the U.S. Midwest that continued to use German until there were so few of the younger members who did not use German in everyday conversation that they did not understand the content of the worship liturgy and sermon. Through a number of unions, the United Church of Christ was formed in 1957 from two dominant factions—the New England Congregational churches that were English-speaking, and the German Evangelical Reformed churches that tended to be German-speaking. Another retired professor of engineering, Jim Wiggert, tells stories of growing up in a German-speaking Lutheran congregation where his father was pastor. Like Kroehler, Wiggert understood almost none of the language used in worship, and even after most people in the congregation spoke English, there was a German service for the few who preferred German to English in their religious worship.

In the U.S. when you call a government agency, local or federal, or your local pharmacy, or the cable company, you are immediately asked whether you want to use English or Spanish—press "1" for English, or "2" for Spanish.

Language policy in the U.S. has focused primarily on one of two issues: (1) justice and equality, or (2) national unity for the common good (Schmidt, 2000). The arguments around justice and equality have focused largely on minority group rights. There have been many variations on how this has taken shape.

There was a period of time, mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, when states with large Spanish-speaking populations required the public schools to provide bilingual education during the first years of primary school. After the first few years, bilingual education was not provided since it was assumed all the students spoke and read English. The effects of this were evident. After the death of my father-in-law

who lived in Texas, there was a yard sale to dispose of some of the belongings. There were several instances where children acted as interpreters for their non-English speaking parents or grandparents. If you wanted a job as a cashier in the local grocery in small farming towns, you had to be bilingual because many of the customers did not speak English.

The second issues, national unity for the common good, is inseparable from issues of national identity—are you "American" or not? Historically, the U.S. welcomed immigrants from many nations, but they were expected to learn English upon arrival if they did not already speak it. Most immigrant groups did this, but not all. Based on conversations with many Asian students, they were encouraged to learn and use English, even if their parents and grandparents spoke the native language at home. Some of them could carry on a basic conversation in their family language, but it was not the language with which they were most comfortable. The result was that within one generation English was the only language used in conversation.

Language policy, of course, is a contentious issue in the European Union. How do you form a union with so many unique and established nations, cultures, and languages? In some ways, admittedly a far stretch in thinking, the formation of the EU approximates over the course of several decades what the U.S. did over the course of several hundred years. Even today in the major cities, and even in smaller cities such as Roanoke, Virginia, you have significant immigrant populations and the need for education in English within a bilingual setting. The nations of the EU have experienced and are experiencing similar immigrations—the Turkish workers to German, North Africans to France, and Bulgarians and Romanians to Italy are but a few examples.

How do you say "junk food" around the globe?

The first response to this simple question might be "McDonald's." The implications, however, go far beyond commercial globalization. Robert Phillipson (2003), a professor of English at Copenhagen Business School, tells the following story:

> There is a story of the newly appointed female minister in the Danish government who had to go to Brussels and chair a meeting soon after she took up office. She started the meeting by apologizing, in English, for not being fully in command of things because she was just at the beginning of her period. She evidently did not know that for most speakers of English this would mean she was menstruating (p. 140).

Globalization is no longer theory—it is reality in both the lived and the virtual lives of a majority of the people who inhabit this little blue marble in the middle of a vast universe. Language and language planning is one of the major issues in the process that must be overcome.

In a discussion of the use of technology to translate language, Barbara Wallraff (2000) observed:

> . . . the globalization of English does not mean that if we who speak only English just sit back and wait, we'll soon be able to exchange ideas with anyone who has anything to say. We can't count on having much more around the world than a very basic ability to communicate. Outside certain professional fields, if English-speaking Americans hope to exchange ideas with people in a nuanced way, we may be well advised to do as people everywhere are doing: become bilingual. (n.p.)

And so we close with some translations from Yahoo's Babel Fish translation program:[3]

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a problem of major proportions!
Damen und Herren, haben wir ein Problem Hauptanteilen!
Mesdames et messieurs, nous avons un problème des proportions importantes !
Κυρίες και κύριοι, έχουμε ένα πρόβλημα σημαντικών αναλογιών!
Дамы и господа, мы имеем проблему главных пропорций!
أبعاد ذات مشكلة لدينا ، والسادة السيدات أيها خطيرة!
女士們，先生們，我們有一個問題，主要比例

Notes

[1] In any discussion involving global statistics, the exact numbers are only approximations and change very quickly. The data in this section is taken primarily from Vistawide World Languages & Cultures (available from http://www.vistawide.com/languages/) and Internet World Stats (available from http://www.internetworldstats.com).

² There has been considerable debate about what to call a "universal" or "global" language. *Lingua franca* is the most common term, but others include *lingua orbis terrarum* [language of the world] or *omnimodus lingua* [universal language]. Some might find it humorous to use a term from a "dead" language to discuss the constantly evolving role of languages in the contemporary environment of globalization.

3 Except for the English, each of these was "created" by the online translation program provided by Yahoo! Babel Fish at http://babelfish.yahoo.com/. The author takes no responsibility for the accuracy of any of the translations.

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The Search for the Afghan Girl as Response to 9/11: Critical Analysis of Implicit Content in Documentary Production

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"After September 11th, we scrambled to decide what kind of program we were going to put together to respond to the events that happened in New York and Washington."

Lawrence Cumbo, Producer of *The Search for the Afghan Girl* (Sight & Sound[1]).

An examination of what is included and excluded in a documentary invites readings of the producer's ideology and what values comprise their intended audience. What if a production company in Germany produced a documentary in Poland in the late 1930's and made no mention of the German invasion? What if an American company made a documentary in Vietnam in the 1960's and made no mention of American involvement? These examples would be indicative of questionable content since many people know of the socio-historical context. The sociohistorical context frames the relevancy of the story for an audience through a common denominator or shared experience. Establishing sociohistorical context provides a framework for discourses to flow. One of the means to examine the sociohistorical context of a film is to analyze its implicit content.

Implicit content is a communicated message implied through excluded or inarticulate information and for a recipient to infer a shared meaning. In the close textual analysis of a film, an examination of the text as separate from its sociohistorical or cultural context draw inferences from what is included as well as what is excluded. The purpose of this method is to establish what prior knowledge is required of the audience to carry the story sequentially. This in turn situates an audience for the discourses. Furthermore, implied content invites readings of the producer's ideology in framing the subject.

The National Geographic Society is a prominent producer of documentary content of the foreign world[234]. Founded in 1888, National Geographic is one of the world's largest scientific and education nonprofit institutions. A part of National Geographic's missions is documenting the natural world we live in through written, photograph, video, and interactive text. Employable as an education source, National Geographic is a common sight in most schools whether through its prominent magazine or other resources such as maps, books, and videos. Therefore, National Geographic productions are a prime source to examine their role in shaping a world-view.

National Geographic produced a documentary of their search for the anonymous *Afghan Girl* as a response to the events of September 11th, 2001[5]. However, this documentary is dependent on viewers' familiarity with sociohistoric events as it makes allusions to American involvement in Afghanistan. This essay argues that the *Search for the Afghan Girl* (2002)[6] is reliant on its audience's knowledge of sociohistorical context to engage in a reading of the documentary as a response to 9/11. The importance of such an argument establishes groundwork for further research on ethics in documentary productions.

In the following, I argue that National Geographic's 2002 documentary *Search for the Afghan Girl* invites a reading of a response to the events of 9/11 through the implicit content. The excluded information consists of the connection of Afghanistan to the events of 9/11, the American response to Afghanistan, and the change in public policy to include the liberation of oppressed women as part of the fight against terrorism. To better understand the role of the *Search for the Afghan Girl* as a discursive response I examine the representation of the events of 9/11 and Afghanistan, the use of the documentary to showcase new technology, and scenes that construct direct engagement with the Afghan Other.

9/11 and Afghanistan

The documentary *Search for the Afghan Girl* implies that there is a connection between the events of 9/11 and the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan. The story of the *Search for the Afghan Girl* opens with the event of 9/11 and bridges the event with the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan. Steve McCurry functions as a bridge to connect the two rather than address the fact that American forces invaded Afghanistan following the events of 9/11. Furthermore, throughout the documentary there is a striking lack of acknowledgement of any American engagement in Afghanistan. The opening scene addresses the events of 9/11 explicitly and never readdress again except through inference.

Following the exposition and the credit-titling sequence, the film's story opens with the events of 9/11 when a group of men attacked in Washington, D.C. and New York City on September 11, 2001. Hijacking commercial passenger jets, these men flew the jets as missiles targeting notable structures. The opening scene only addresses the attacks on New York City and images of the World Trade Center (WTC) towers. Although still and video images of the attacks exist, the opening sequence uses video of the aftermath cut from the various vantage points near the tower area to across the river.

The variety of vantage points in the *Search* constructs a unity of experience. Therefore, this unity of experience is symbolic for all Americans. Images of New York City, a metropolitan area with over 21 million inhabitants[7], provides an opportune variety of captured images that construct the event unfolding through different vantage points. Each of these shots, from a ground level, is tied together is cross-cut with an ominous grey cloud focal source. The shaky hand-held camcorders contrast with the film's mise-en-scene of gray clouds against a clear day sky. One shot shows a grey wall of dust erupting down a city street as another camera-operator is running to escape the fast approaching cloud. The film cuts to a different vantage-point as the same grey clouds bellow-out from the midst of high-rise buildings. The shot frames the image with the clear and sunny sky in the background. Following this shot is a different vantage-point; this time we are across the river via an establishing shot of the city engulfed in this enveloping gray cloud. Over the commentary of the narrator's voice we see the source of the grey cloud: one of the WTC towers collapses in a long-shot perspective as the camera tracks the downward motion of the building's fall. As the narrator states, this is "the most devastating terrorist attack on American soil."[8] Different vantage points thereby construct a context of multiple exposures to a single event, consolidating a narrative reading through unification of similar experiences to establish actuality.

The *Search* draws on the variety of perspectives to document the event, the narrator acknowledges Steve McCurry as a key figure who covered 9/11. Recreated scenes of McCurry in a grainy retarded-motion with high-contrast and over-exposed footage aid the scene's dream-like quality of establishing a past memory. The camera pans to frame him in close-up as he moves into position to capture a shot with his camera. After securing a light earth-toned New York Yankees baseball hat onto his head, McCurry is poised with his camera in what looks like a rooftop venue. Once again, contrasting the previous video shots from ground-based angles with McCurry's vantage to look horizontally or down at the day's event.

The recreated scene of McCurry looking through his camera is cross-cut with video stock footage and his own still images. We then see a video of the still standing WTC twin towers with smoke billowing out cut to a recreated shot of McCurry's profile in close-up poised looking through a camera's view-finder. Punctuating this recreation is a still image of the same video of the twin towers in brilliant color. This establishes the difference that the muted color of the recreation shots occurred after events, but more importantly the stark color of the still images are the same or better than the video footage thus establishing not only his presence but his perspective.

The *Search* situates McCurry as a significant authoritative source for the documented events because he is a renowned photojournalist covering many of the world's conflicts for over two decades and now engaging in similar events in his home town of New York City. The opening scene also establishes his "credibility" as a source and sets us up to assume his perspective as the investigator. Furthermore, the somber voice of actress Sigourney Weaver narrates, "many experienced that terrible day in New York … few share Steve's intimate knowledge of a country that was suddenly on the minds of many; Afghanistan"[9]. This is the first attempt in the film to construct an association of 9/11 to Afghanistan without prior set-up. Why would Afghanistan be "suddenly on the minds of many?" Without further assessment or explanation, the film continues to associate 9/11 and Afghanistan through its cinematography, editing, and narrative.

Simultaneously, the *Search* parallels McCurry's coverage of 9/11 to the ongoing conflicts of Afghanistan through cross-cuts. Video and still images of Afghan conflict and 9/11 are interwoven. The film cuts from still-images of firefighters working in the aftermath of 9/11 to stock video of a mobile multi-rocket-launcher firing rocket after rocket into the air. Interrupting this shot is a still image of a person with his arms up-stretched and an upward gaze with a limited light source shining down illuminating the person's hands and face as well as the surrounding rock enclosure, constructing the image in an act of supplication as the footage of the rocket-launchers resume. The juxtaposition of the supplicant and the firefighter's image contrasts with the action of rockets firing in rapid succession situates McCurry as having a vantage of documenting those affected by conflict. Similar video stock footage of tanks and other weapons or people engaged in a close-quarter combat in streets continues under the narrator's depiction of McCurry and the importance of his work. Following each segment of video are still-images of people affected by the conflict such as a boy missing a leg and a portrait of a man with blood dripping down his face. The *Search* establishes through the montage of video and still-image of McCurry not only as an authoritative source documenting the conflict, but as an advocate for those impacted by the conflict.

Capturing many images of people affected by violent conflict, McCurry's most renowned is his photograph of an anonymous Afghan girl living in a refugee camp in Pakistan during the Soviet-Afghan War of the 1980's. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this image is the young girl's sea-green eyes "that reflect the anguish of refugees world-wide."[10] She looks directly at the viewer. To emphasize the narrator's statement regarding "anguish", cross-cutting the still image with three separate close-ups. The sequence concludes with an extreme close-up of one of the eyes then dissolved into slow-motion video of a child and others walking and waving at the viewer. The film establishes this image, officially titled *The Afghan Girl*[11], as an icon of refugees or the victims of violent conflicts. However, many of the following video shots are of the image used in commercial or popular design; from postcards to posters with emphasis placed on the exotic-nature of the image with striking eyes rather than the subjective background story of a refugee.

Following the events of 9/11 and post-9/11, public interest in the *Afghan Girl* increased as did media exposure of the image. Popular interviewer's Larry King and Oprah Winfrey interview McCurry because of his *Afghan Girl* image. The sensationalism of Afghanistan as a choice topic following 9/11 situates the image of the *Afghan Girl* as current and refreshed. Thus, the *Search* continues an implicit connection the country Afghanistan to the image of the *Afghan Girl*.

The *Search* presents McCurry reconstructing the context of how he captured the image and its significance. Interjecting the video stock footage of a tent-city representing refugee camps are still shots of McCurry's images from the June 1985 National Geographic magazine article, *Along Afghanistan's War-torn Frontier (1985)*[12]. He retells the tale of the *Afghan Girl* as was told to him by her school teacher. Emphasizing her harrowing tale of escape and evasion from Soviet bombardment are recreation shots and stock-footage of Soviet gunships patrolling a mountain-range. Slow-moving footage of explosions to close-ups of feet walking through snow further this emphasis of hardship that this young girl and her family endured prior to arriving in a makeshift-school that McCurry was visiting. Although the *Afghan Girl* image was only the cover of National Geographic's June 1985 issue, the *Search* also presents other images of the same model from the same session in a different take, this time with her gaze averted. McCurry reflects on that event and its meaning as the camera frames him in an intimate close-up:"there are certain photographs which have struck a cord in people. I was very happy that several people have told me that they actually volunteered to go work in Pakistan refugee camps based on [*The Afghan Girl*] picture."[13] The *Afghan Girl* image has become iconic in the U.S. to the plight of refugees. Therefore, the *Search* establishes the significance of the *Afghan Girl* image as something more than just a photograph.

Although the *Afghan Girl* image accompanies a story situating the tribulations of the Afghan people in the path of Soviet-American Cold War, the *Search* fails to articulate America's involvement in Afghanistan. In one scene, a group of Afghan men agree to travel from Peshawar, Pakistan into the Tora Bora region of Afghanistan to follow up on a possible lead to the *Afghan Girl's* identity. As the narrator states, "the mission is not without its risks", the men pile into a bright-red compact car and the scene is cut to a long-shot of an explosion rocking a mountain-side. "War still rages in the area," the Narrator continues. "The region was one of Osama bin Laden's strongholds." Close-up shots of cave entrances and scattered munitions emphasize the fortification as well as grainy video stock footage of gunships flying across a mountain pass, to represent

the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan. However, this stock video only references conflict from the Soviet invasion or Afghan civil-war. The *Search* never mentions or indicates any current or previous American involvement in Afghanistan.

The *Search* makes reference to Osama bin Laden only twice. This is significant because his connection to the events of 9/11 and Afghanistan are arguably the reason why Americans are in Afghanistan in the first place. The references alludes to his fortitude whereas a prior scene refers to his allusiveness. McCurry's arrival in Peshawar begins with a meeting with the lead investigator of the documentary, Rahimullah Yousafzai, a journalist for Time Magazine and "one of the few men to ever interview Osama bin Laden."[14] Who is Osama bin Laden and what is his association with Afghanistan? Why reference Bin Laden out of context? Some may argue that the name and association with Afghanistan is well established in sociohistorical context with the 9/11 attacks. This may be especially relevant since the F.B.I. lists him as their most wanted fugitive.[15] However, the lack of association establishes that there is a general assumption on the producer's part that the audience already knows whom Osama bin Laden is and that the U.S. government is actively pursuing him. Therefore, because an assumption of prior knowledge of the context of Osama bin Laden is established, the mystery of the *Afghan Girl's* identity mirrors the mystery of Bin Laden's whereabouts and the two narratives merge.

The *Search* is a response to the events of 9/11 as omission of the producer Lawrence Cumbo on the National Geographic Society's website. The *Search* draws on a sociohistorical context and assumes the viewer's knowledge of this context. The narratives of 9/11, the search for Osama bin Laden, and the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan provide sociohistorical context for an American audience to establish the relevancy and obstacles in finding the *Afghan Girl*. The lack of any mention in the video of American involvement, engagement, and intervention in Afghanistan is suspect. This lack of transparency on the part of an American production coupled with the assumptions of an audience to have knowledge of Osama bin Laden and the Afghan connection to the 9/11 attacks establishes the intended audience for the documentary as American. Furthermore, the use of 9/11 to introduce the topic frames the larger narrative of the search by situating McCurry as a privileged perspective for an American audience rather than situating Yousafzai who is the actual investigator in the documentary.

Engaging the Afghan Other

The documentary frames the *Search for the Afghan Girl* as a means for National Geographic as well as their privileged audience to engage Afghan culture as a spectacle to scrutinize. As the narrator establishes the purpose of the documentary we see video shots of commercial posters utilizing the *Afghan Girl* image. One poster in particular has bright yellow text, "UNDERSTANDING OTHER CULTURES," (Cumbo, 2002) beneath the *Afghan Girl* image. Over the din of motor traffic passing by the poster, the narrator states, "Steve wants to share with her the hope that she has inspired in others. He wants to discover the story behind those eyes. What's happened to her? Is she still alive?"[16] It is here that we can associate the image of the *Afghan Girl* as an icon of the West's need to connect with other cultures. Yet, we are invited to read this connection as a homogenized representation. It is through National Geographic that the means to 'understanding other cultures' for Western spectators, in particular American spectators, is provided.

Various scenes in the *Search* establish McCurry, as figurative representative of National Geographic, engaging with Afghan or Other culture by negotiating the similarities and contrasts with American values. Two scenes in particular are most revealing of McCurry engaging the Afghan Other. The first scene shows McCurry following a promising lead to a woman known as Alim Bibi, yet he is not allowed to see her without her husband's consent due to cultural constraints. The second scene features McCurry wandering the streets of Peshawar, Pakistan and his interaction in a store selling copies of his *Afghan Girl* image. These scenes are significant in depicting cultural engagement because one of the ways we can understand other cultures is to look for representations of similarities and contrast.

Terms like "clue" or "mystery" in the *Search* support the notion that we are following McCurry's model and are asked to assume the position of "explorer" or "discoverer" of other cultures, a very Westernized experience of the gaze. "A clue emerges," states the narrator after a young girl recognizes the photo of the Afghan Girl as a former classmate. The young girl guides McCurry and his team to a home where a relative of the *Afghan Girl* resides. The relative appears cautious of the crowd looking for her till she is shown a picture of the *Afghan Girl* and she recognizes the girl in the picture. The film cuts to interior shot in a minivan framing the relative in a hajib and McCurry sitting in the row

behind her leaning onto her head-rest. McCurry addresses the camera as the woman averts her gaze.

> This woman we met in the camp is saying the girl in the picture is her daughter. We've gotten four different names today and four different leads, but I think this is the best one. Her daughter's name, she's saying, is Alim Bibi. It means 'girl of the world.' It couldn't be a more perfect name for this girl who has represented the plight of the Afghan people for the past twenty-years.

McCurry gestures with his finger at the woman seated as he expresses his excitement of this current lead. Although he addresses the fact that they have other names and leads, none of the other leads are in the video.

The *Search* presents Alim Bibi as the best lead and makes it major foci. Although she is not the actual woman in the *Afghan Girl* image which we learn later, she serves as a plot device or red-herring for the mystery narrative in the *Search*. However, the Alim Bibi scene also serves to support a critique of how the producer's engage the Afghan Other. The Alim Bibi scene continues with the van as the camera trucks away from the mother as she and the school teacher exit the van's side-door. Their exit shot cuts directly to Yousafzai who walks over to a small boy and shows him a photograph of the *Afghan Girl*. The camera frames Yousefzai leaning over the boy as other children gather around and he asks, in a non-English dialect, the boy if he knows who the person in the picture is. The boy, who looks about five years old, produces a wide smile as he looks at the picture and responds. Yousefzai translates what he asked the boy and replies, "He says it's his mother."[17] Yousafzai gestures with the photograph and tells the boy to take it and show his mother. Trailing the other children, the boy scampers through a wooden gateway and the door closes behind them. The camera frames McCurry and Yousafzai in a medium-shot as they look off to the side in the direction of the gate door. Yousafzai states that they must now wait and McCurry points out that there was a small space in the door that he was able to catch a glimpse of a woman in the courtyard. "I actually saw her through the door," McCurry states as a profile shot of McCurry intently leaning forward cuts to a direct shot of the door. "If that's not her, it would be some kind of miracle. Through the door I saw ... her." Twice, McCurry makes reference to some act of providence in this lead, either it being advantageous that the woman's name translates to a phrase that befits a Westernized reading of the *Afghan Girl* or

that an act of divine intervention would alter their chance encounter with the *Afghan Girl*.

The *Search* reiterates the difficulty or obstacles of locating and identifying the *Afghan Girl* because of the cultural restrictions that American's may not be accustomed to. A close-up of Yousafzai informs McCurry that "her husband is at work and without his permission; no man may see her unless he's family." McCurry is visibly uncomfortable with this situation. A medium-shot frames him as he chuckles uncomfortably into his hands, "Oh this is unbelievable. Man. Ah, we have to wait until tomorrow, huh? He-he, jeez." Yousafzai addresses McCurry's discomfort, and their dialogue represents their need to respect the cultural protocols and mumble assurances of understanding.

> YOUSAFZAI: I know you want to do it today.
> MCCURRY: (chuckling)
> YOUSAFZAI: Just now and there is, ah, so near and yet so far.
> MCCURRY: Yeah, I know.
> YOUSAFZAI: But, ah, unfortunately, you are not allowed.
> MCCURRY: Yeah, right.
> YOUSAFZAI: There are cultural constraints.
> MCCURRY: Yeah, okay. Well, let's, ah...
> YOUSAFZAI: You know... we have to work...
> MCCURRY: Yeah, with what we... you know...
> YOUSAFZAI: ...through the system.
> MCCURRY: ...through the culture...
> MCCURRY: We don't want to... spoil…
> YOUSAFZAI: Yes...
> MCCURRY: Yes, Lets be back here sharp at nine o'clock.
> YOUSAFZAI: Yes. I-I... I'm really hopeful now.
> MCCURRY: Yeah…
> YOUSAFZAI: Steve, don't be impatient. Just wait for one just more night. You've waited for seventeen years. Tomorrow morning, God willing, your wish will come true.

This exchange highlights one of the more unexamined challenges the investigation faces: cultural obstacles of female subjugation.

The narrator addresses most of the obstacles of locating and identifying the Afghan Girl in the opening scene of the *Search*. This includes the cultural obstacle of searching for a woman in a population that imposes the wearing of a burkha to obscure exposure thus hindering identification. However, the idea that a person would self-impose isolation until granted permission may seem alien to

an American audience as much as it appears to be a difficult concept for McCurry to grasp in this scene. This concept invites readings of the Search assuming its audience will identify with McCurry and not with the Afghan people as depicted. Furthermore, this exchange between Yousafzai and McCurry provides the needed contrast to establish McCurry as the obvious foreigner whose perspective the viewer is to assume. Whereas, the *Search* positions McCurry as an authoritative perspective, this exchange invites readings of him as a natural perspective or his viewer audience to adopt.

Various scenes depict McCurry engaging locals does nothing to support the theme of the investigation of the *Afghan Girl's* identity other than to establish him as an authority perspective of the Afghan Other. However, much of his interaction appears more on par with a tourist visiting an area on a subsequent visit. The following scene reflects McCurry's interaction in Peshawar nightlife as he waits for tomorrow's meeting with Alim Bibi. Using a montage-effect of B-roll footage to situate McCurry in a foreign and more specifically, Muslim, area, the documentary constructs an alien world for McCurry to navigate. This depiction in the *Search* continues to support a position for the audience to uncritically assume McCurry's gaze.

Various shots in the *Search* focus on visual and auditory cues to indicate the region as uniquely Middle Eastern and more important, Islamic. Opening with the a voice over a loudspeaker calling people to prayer, images of a mosque and a skeletal-tower structure hosting the loudspeakers, the scene is framed as taking place in a Muslim region. Video of McCurry walking through a crowd is cross-cut to B-roll snippets of various people wandering and venders working the narrow streets. Nondiegetic music using traditional Middle Eastern instruments accompanies these shots and ties them together. McCurry greets a man in front of a store-front with the customary Muslim salutation, Salaam Alaikum, and enters the brightly lit store. "I always like to get a shave when I come to Peshawar," McCurry says as the camera frames him in a close up as a boy of about thirteen applies shaving cream with a shaving brush. "Because they .... after the shave they will give you a wonderful head massage." Nondiegetic music, with synthetic beats and upbeat electric tune similar to pre-recorded stock-music used for commercial purposes, plays as the young boy is shaving McCurry and the room is full of men inside this shop watching the exchange. When the boy starts giving McCurry a head-massage his motions match the musical beat and sound effects that almost belies its nondiegetic

source. The use of synthetic up-beat stock music for the interior of the barbershop contrasts with the somber traditional sounds of an Oriental flare. These shots are explicit in positioning McCurry being a foreigner in a foreign albeit Muslim landscape.

The *Search* includes scenes of McCurry negotiating the cultural practices as a professional caught in a moment where another subjugates his property. McCurry leaves the barbershop and continues his walkabout through the Peshawar nightlife. As the narrator points out as McCurry walks by a souvenir shop display, "Despite the head massage, Steve is still anxious. He can not escape the image of the *Afghan Girl*." In the shop window is a painting of the *Afghan Girl*. Once inside the shop, he starts pulling different versions of the *Afghan Girl* image together such as some as posters and some as pencil drawings. He lines them standing up on a display counter and asks the shop clerk, "Can you give me a special price on that"? The shop clerk, appearing distinctly Western and different than the variety of locals that are portrayed in the documentary, with his clean shaven face, jean jacket, tucked in button-down shirt, and accented English. The clerk appears amused with the camera focusing on their exchange as he chuckles and tells McCurry that the price of the poster is fifty rupees. McCurry points out to the clerk and tells him why he wants a special price is because he is the photographer. The camera frames a close-up of McCurry's name at the bottom of the poster. Now the clerk is no longer chuckling and explains that the cost is a "local price" but for his find . . . eighty rupees." McCurry starts to laugh and tells the clerk, "Eighty rupees?!? Hoho-haha, you're gonna give me twenty rupees . . . discount because this is . . . that is very kind of you . . . very generous." Why include this exchange? What need would McCurry have with acquiring a souvenir poster of the *Afghan Girl* and to spend the time in lining up the variety of works for sale that incorporate his copy-written image? Speculation aside, he did line up the works together in a comparative collection and did take the time to point out to the clerk that he is the owner of the image. For much of the film, McCurry talks about how iconic the *Afghan Girl* image is for many people throughout the world and that it transcends boundaries. However, this exchange invites readings of his reassertion of ownership to the image.

Due to his extensive work in the regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the *Search* positions McCurry as an authority perspective of the Central Asia region. More importantly is his perspective in negotiating the cultures for the audience to set up a

hierarchical spectatorial relationship. Perhaps the audience can assume a position to ignore the fact that McCurry does not speak any of the foreign dialect he encounters in the *Search*. Albeit he appears aloof to the cultural constraints and local mores, his position may aid the viewer as a cultural guide. As evident in his determination to identify the *Afghan Girl*, he expresses his dismay and frustration of the cultural restrictions obstructing immediate access. The *Search* invites the viewer to share in the frustration. Furthermore, his interactions with various locals seems more akin to a bumbling tourist than a seasoned journalist with knowledge of the area that does not inspire confidence in his ability to engage with the Afghan Other. Much of the exchanges of McCurry with Afghan and Pakistani locals invite readings of constructing McCurry as a lead perspective for audience to relate to whereas Rahimullah Yousafzai is the lead investigator actually conducting the search. Therefore, the *Search for the Afghan Girl* is more about McCurry's relationship with the conflicts in Afghanistan and his iconic image, the *Afghan Girl*. The novelty of discovering her identity seems to be secondary to telling McCurry's story as well as inviting American viewers to gaze into a perspective of a region that their country is currently engaging with.

National Geographic takes the opportunity of the events of 9/11 to frame the sociohistorical context of the story of the *Afghan Girl* to an American audience. However, the *Search* never establishes a connection of Afghanistan and 9/11 beyond the common denominator of Steve McCurry's photojournalist work. Furthermore, the *Search* establishes Steve McCurry as an authoritative perspective for those suffering as collateral damage in times of conflict; American's during 9/11 and Afghan's during the Soviet-Afghan War and Afghan Civil War. Thus, the Search presents McCurry's image of *The Afghan Girl* as a reliable metonym connecting American interest in Afghanistan to the American experience of conflict survival.

The Search for the Afghan Girl is problematic due to the lack of transparency of its producers omitting or ignoring their privileged position in producing this story. Furthermore, their choice of medium belies a creative endeavor, yet constitutes a journalist production that escapes journalistic scrutiny and ethical practices. The medium of documentary film has played a part in shaping public perception of events in history since it first development in the late 19th century. Documentary is a socially constructed format used to distinguish media as based on nonfiction as opposed to a

fictional craft. Filmmaker and educator, John Grierson, coined the term documentary in the 1930's and defined it as the "creative treatment of actuality". Although the definition distinguishes a style of filmmaking, it is applicable to the larger field of documentary or narrative journalism that encompasses other media such as writing, photography, and radio. It is through the social construct of representation and mass dissemination which invites credibility in documentary craft similar to other journalistic endeavors and warrants reference as an educational source. However, documentary video/film productions do not follow the same ethical practices of professional journalism such as transparency. The feature format of documentary films tends to mirror the narrative "creative" treatment applied to fictional films as opposed to more controlled broadcast media like television and radio and thus avoiding scrutiny. Therefore, documentary as a source document re-presenting events or actualities becomes problematic due to editorial decisions of what to include and what to exclude.

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Fat America: A Historical Consideration of Diet and Weight Loss in the U.S.

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The United States is a nation obsessed with fat and, according to Fraser (1997), Americans are so wary of it that "two out of ten Americans now believe that all fat should be eliminated from the diet entirely" (p. 122). The popularity of this anti-fat movement becomes increasingly evident in the types of products available in U.S. supermarkets: almost every product has a no-fat, low-fat or reduced fat counterpart. Additionally, shoppers are constantly reminded of these options as they pass glossy magazines touting the latest diet foods and store displays promoting "healthy" (also known as low-calorie/low-fat) lifestyles. However, this obsession with "health" food is nothing new. Even though, as Kolata (2007) notes, "there is no real starting point for dieting, no date when it became clear that men and women were depriving themselves of food they craved because they wanted to look better or regain their health" (p. 34); it is clear that the United States government has long been invested in obesity, weight loss and the diet industry in general. In this chapter, first I map out some key historical threads that are especially linked to the phenomenon of reality TV weight loss programs and, then, I explicate obesity's reconceptualization as a medical disorder and interrogate the social implications as they pertain to the war on obesity.

U.S Weight Loss Policy in the 20th and 21st Century

For the purposes of this project I have identified the policies created in the 20th and 21st centuries as essential to the discussion of weight loss and RTV because this period brought about, "the formulation of the new bodily ideal" (Featherstone, 2001, p. 180). During this time U.S. beauty ideals became less obsessed with the molded/corseted body and began to favor a more slender aesthetic. Featherstone explains, "one of the most noticeable features of the twentieth century […] has been the triumph of the thin woman over the fat woman. It can be added that in the second half of the twentieth century this ideal is becoming firmly established for men too" (p. 184).

It is during this time period that the obsession with weight loss and thinness emerges as a dominant cultural ideal. Equally as important, new broadcast innovations made it easier to advertise and promote these new bodily ideals and, as Featherstone notes, "the Hollywood cinema helped to create new standards of appearance and bodily presentation, bringing home to a mass audience the importance of 'looking good'" (p. 179). Since then, "within consumer culture slimness has become associated with health and the health education message that being overweight is a health risk has become absorbed into the conventional wisdom" (Featherstone, 2001, p. 185).

In the last century the U.S. government has become increasingly involved in fitness promotion and has worked to develop a series of programs/institutions designed to reduce obesity rates across the nation. Around the time of World War II government interest in weight loss intensified while the need for fit/healthy soldiers was seen as essential to national security/defense. As a result, "in 1940, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences established a committee to advise the government about nutrition problems that might affect national defense; this committee became the Food and Nutrition Board in 1941" (Nestle, 2007, p. 35). As one of the first government committees specifically charged with examining fitness/nutrition the Food and Nutrition Board worked to raise public concern about rising obesity rates by linking these rates to a decline in national security. Following World War II this fear only intensified, and as early as the mid-1950s the issue was deemed a national obsession (Berrett, 1997). During this post-war period,

the discourse of diet evoked a society in which the problem was always too much rather than too little, a choice of focus that allowed dieters (an millions of their fellow Americans) to ignore the hunger afflicting what Michael Harrington would describe as 'the other America.' Governmental attempts to instill a

national spirit of fitness sharpened that vision (or blindness) by simultaneously describing such luxury as a source of weakness and calling on the public to defend it. (Berrett, 1997, p. 806)

Even President John F. Kennedy made his feelings about the importance of fitness public in saying "there are an increasingly large number of young Americans who are neglecting their bodies, whose physical fitness is not what is should be, who are getting soft […] Such softness […] can help to strip and destroy the vitality of a nation. This is a national problem" (Berrett, 1997, p. 806). As the government continued to increase its involvement in the nation's "health" problems, arguments promoting fitness as a "means by which individuals could improve America" (as quoted in Glassner, 1989, p. 182) increased in popularity. Furthermore:

> [t]hose advocating exercise and healthful diets spoke of 'regeneration' and preparing Americans for a bright new day. They also evoked notions – which had been deployed in health movements earlier in the 1800s – of citizenry that had recently been strong and virtuous but was going flabby as the result of too much affluence. (Glassner, 1989, p. 182)

Despite efforts to curb previous trends the rates of obesity only continued to climb and by the 1980s there was a documented "widespread and growing interest among middle and upper class Americans in the pursuit of fitness" (Glassner, 1989, p. 180). Capitalizing on this interest in fitness, in 1994 Surgeon General C. Everett Koop helped to create and promote "Shape Up America!" (hereafter SUA) (Herndon, 2005), which is still an active program today. According to SUA's website, its purpose is to "educate the public on the importance of the achievement and maintenance of a healthy body weight through the adoption of increased physical activity and healthy eating." The concept is simple: if the government can educate its citizens, than they will utilize that knowledge and lose weight. Unfortunately, despite governmental efforts, these educational programs have not been successful and by the year 2000 obesity rates reached their highest level yet, with "the number of overweight people in the world for the first time match[ing] the number of undernourished people – 1.1 billion each" (Nestle, 2007, p. 16). Although the premise of SUA is promising, its reliance on dieting is inevitably its downfall and, as I will explain later in this chapter, it signifies a trend that continually repeats itself.

Still determined to "solve" the problem of obesity, federal and state governments have created a range of programs aimed at promoting weight loss. The most notable of these arose in 2001. Surgeon general David Satcher "fired the first shot in the federal government's current war on obesity when he released the *Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity"* (Oliver, 2006, p. 177). While previous programs focused more heavily on the promotion of education about healthy living practices, the "war on obesity" relies on a more simplistic approach: eat less and exercise more. For example, people are directed to eat foods with reduced fat and calorie content, focus on portion control and spend more time being active. As Oliver (2006) puts it, "the country needs to go on a diet" (p. 177). In order to help promote the eat less, exercise more approach Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D. and Commissioner of Food and Drugs created the FDA's Obesity Working Group, designed to research the obesity epidemic and determine the best course of action (FDA, 2008). According to the FDA website,

> the agency released, on March 12, 2004, the final report of its Obesity Working Group. The group's long- and short-term proposals are based on the scientific fact that weight control is mainly a function of caloric balance. That is, calories in must equal calories out. So FDA is focusing on "calories count" as the basis of its actions and the message of its obesity campaign. (Report of the Working Group on Obesity, 2008)

Following suit, the United States Department of Health and Human Services launched the African American Anti-Obesity Initiative in 2005 and the Childhood Overweight and Obesity Prevention Initiative in 2007, which both rely on the "eat less, exercise more" model.

So how is it that with all the scientific evidence suggesting these programs should work, that obesity rates are continuing to increase? This, in part, can be attested to the fact that the definition of healthy foods changes on a regular basis and the foods people are made to believe are healthy one day are deemed unhealthy the next or vice versa (e.g. eggs, chocolate). Adding to the downfall of dietary success is the fact that serving sizes are also in a constant state of flux. According to Nestle (2007) the distinct variations in dietary advice lead individuals to "suffer from 'nutritional schizophrenia,' and [they] cannot figure out how to achieve 'nutritional utopia'" (Nestle, 2007, p. 91). The most notable culprit leading to this "nutritional schizophrenia" is the food pyramid.

In the 80s and 90s the food pyramid, with its flashy pictures, colors and numbers hung proudly on the majority of public school cafeteria walls acting as a stern reminder of the importance of a "well-balanced" meal. While the pyramid was presented to the masses as *the* key to healthy living, it was troubling to some food producers while it "appeared to favor vegetarian diets, to reinforce 'the myth that meat is not good for you' and to give the impression that meat, dairy and eggs are bad food" (Nestle, 2007, p. 70). While meat and dairy farmers (iconic figures of the American heartland) stood to lose money if people chose to closely follow the pyramid, "officials increased the number of servings in the guide and made other conciliatory changes. Industry-friendly food guides avoid controversy by omitting 'eat less' recommendations" (Nestle, 2007, p. 70). And so, despite the fact that the beloved food pyramid "does not adequately assign foods to groups, define serving sizes, or distinguish 'good' from 'bad' kinds of fat" (Nestle, 2007, p. 68) and even though it does not clarify "that some serving numbers are meant to be the upper limits (meat, dairy, and the fat/sweets groups), whereas others are meant to be lower limits (grains, fruits, and vegetables)" (p. 68) it is used to "educate" and promote fitness among the masses. This is highly problematic when considering that the vast majority of weight-loss programs rely on the pyramid as a foundational element. While the government is working to promote the eat less, exercise more method it is undermining people's success by being unclear as to what people should eat less/more of.

Although it may seem illogical for the government to undermine its citizens' ability to lose weight, upon further examination it is evident that this is a kind of strategic plan and a prime example of Bordo's discussion of the bulimic nature of U.S. consumer culture. In creating programs like SUA, the "war on obesity" and other such programs government organizations are working, under the guise of health promotion, to simultaneously reestablish the importance of consumption (in terms of food/binging) while avoiding the *appearance* of overconsumption (through diet/purging). Maintaining this balance is of particular importance to hegemonic U.S. society on a fundamental level while "the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjective body" (Foucault, 1984, p. 173). In this way people are not seen as just citizens, but as "biological citizens". As Rose (2007) explains, the term "biological citizenship describes "all those citizenship projects that have linked their conceptions of citizens to beliefs about the biological existence of human beings" (p. 132).

The formation of good biological citizens through the forces of biopower, according to Foucault (Foucault, Rabinow & Hurley, 2004), is accomplished through a consideration of the *disciplines* and the *regulatory controls* of the body. *Regulatory controls,* for Foucault, are "conceived of as the exercise of sovereign rights, of feudal rights, as the maintenance of customs, as effective procedures for enrichment [. . .] or for preventing urban revolt" (p. 18). As Hewitt (2001) notes, these regulatory controls are "a biopolitics of the population" (p. 233) and are in integral part of establishing "good" citizenship. Additionally, modern conceptualizations of an ideal citizen, according to Foucault, require "that we cease to imagine 'power' as the possession of individuals or groups – as something people 'have' – and instead as a dynamic or network of non-centralized forces" (Bordo, 1993, p. 191). In this way, the focus on fat and diet "may function as one of the most powerful normalizing mechanisms of our century, insuring the production of self-monitoring and self-disciplining 'docile bodies' sensitive to any departure from social norms and habituated to self-improvement and self-transformation in the service of those norms" (Bordo, 2003, p. 186). Moreover, "[fatness marks the individual as a failed citizen in a number of ways: as not of the dominant social class, as an inadequate worker and consumer" (LeBesco, 2004, p. 59), and those who actively/productively participate in this process are able to become successful/valuable cultural citizens.

The idea that a "good" cultural citizen is one that pursues weight loss is increasingly problematic when considering the disparities between whites and non-whites in the United States and the social institutions that encourage these differences. Of course all individuals are encouraged to participate in cyclical dieting, but ethnic minority groups and poor people face different challenges than better earning white U.S. citizens. Moreover, as Nestle (2007) explains, "In the United States, low-income groups seem to have about the same nutrient intake as people who are better off, but they choose diets higher in calories, fat, meat, and sugar, and they display higher rates of obesity and chronic diseases" (p. 27). While this one of the dominant ideologies circulating about food and nutrition today, it is important to recognize that this "choice" to eat higher calorie foods is more often based on economic status than on personal choice. Nestle (2007) explains: "the gaps in diet and health are economically based, but they also derive in part from the social status attached to certain kinds of food – meat for the poor and health foods for the rich, for example" (p. 27). Because hegemonic U.S. society works to promote the idea that minority

groups have all the same weight loss opportunities as dominant groups, they are posited as victims of self-induced circumstance rather than as victims of a society that hinders their ability to succeed.

No matter what social group a person belongs to the expectation is that everyone will participate in this cyclical process. Thus, "diet has become a four-letter word in the commercial weight-loss business" (Fraser, 1997, p. 140). While people are growing more averse to participation in diet programs, the food/nutrition industries have had to reinvent the way people talk about weight loss and fitness. Instead of diets there are "food plans" and "lifestyle programs" (Fraser, 1997, p. 140). Instead of being overweight/obese/different, people are ill and in need of treatment. This move, from biological variance to disease, is part of medicalization, "a process by which nonmedical problems become defined and treated as medical problems, usually in terms of illnesses or disorders" (Conrad, 1992, p. 209). In the following section I will describe the medicalization process and clarify its importance within the context of the war on obesity.

The Medicalization of Obesity

Obesity, "a condition caused by an excessive amount of adipose tissue" (Gard & Wright, 2005, p. 19) has a complex history in the United States. According to the World Health Organization, "overweight" is when a person has a "BMI [body mass index] equal to or more than 25, and 'obesity' as a BMI equal to or more than 30." Unfortunately, BMI, an accepted method of measuring overweight/obesity for decades, does not account for muscle density, bone structure or other factors that affect a person's physical weight. What seems to be a clear-cut and well-tested method of identifying obesity (and therefore health risks) is actually just another ambiguous variable in the discussion of obesity with ranges that have fluctuated significantly over the years (Cutler, et al, 2003, p. 96). Furthermore, although body weights are an inherent variable for all persons, it is only in recent years that society has moved create labels and standardized measurements for these variations. As Fraser (1997) explains, "as we have seen, a hundred years ago, except in extreme cases, fatness was considered a simple physical trait, a natural variation in human size" (p. 171) and not a medical condition. Positioning fat as abnormal/unnatural grounds the discourse that fat bodies are medically deficient and thus in need of medical attention.

As previously noted, obesity does have an understood and agreed upon definition with regard to who qualifies as obese. However, although excessive weight gain is commonly accepted as a detriment to one's health, "the disease status of this 'undesirable weight gain' seems to depend on its association with various illnesses not because fatness or weight gain itself is a disease" (Gard & Wright, 2005, p. 94). Furthermore, Levitsky reports "nobody ever dies of obesity […] it is often a marker for other health problems caused by a sedentary lifestyle, but is itself not necessarily dangerous" (as cited in Fraser, 1997, p. 176). Despite these discrepancies obesity is currently conceptualized as a medical issue while, as Conrad (1992) explains, the medicalization process does not lie solely in the hands of the medical community but rather is a "sociocultural process that may or may not involve the medical profession, lead to medical social control or medical treatment, or be the result of intentional expansion by the medical profession" (p. 210). In adopting a medicalized notion of obesity hegemonic U.S. society can further encourage citizens to participate the cyclical process of weight-gain and diet in two ways. First, when people are labeled "sick" they are more likely to participate in regiments to improve their health. Second, framing obesity as a disease insinuates that there *is* a "cure" and therefore a permanent and obtainable weight-loss solution.

Additionally, medicalization serves a more general purpose in this society. As Fraser (1997) explains, during times of mass immigration, those of European descent "wanted to be able to distinguish themselves, physically and racially, from stockier immigrants" (p. 18) and "most efforts at measurement [of obesity] were meant to identify miscreants and justify racial and economic prerogatives among a white, aristocratic elite" (Oliver, 2006, p. 18). Generally speaking, medicalization helps dominant social groups to further distinguish obesity as a disease of the "other" and increases U.S. citizens' fear of fat. As Kelly Brownell suggests, obesity is "a condition that is unacceptable in our society" (as cited in Kolata, 2007, p. 70). This is because obesity is most often attributed to a person's lifestyle (whether that lifestyle is self-selected or not) and "unlike people who are blind or deaf, fat people are told that they could be thin if they really wanted to" (Kolata, 2007, p. 70). Therefore, those who remain obese are so because they choose to be. This line of thinking is problematic while "the constant blame-the-victim message … [is] not only demoralizing fat people but leading to a society in which prejudice against the overweight and obese has become the last remaining

socially acceptable one" (Kolata, 2007, p. 18). This is particularly interesting when considering that the number of obese people in the United States is increasing and, if current trends continue, the vast majority of U.S. citizens will become obese in the coming years.

While it is somewhat simple to identify what social groups benefit from medicalization, an examination of whom this hurts is more complex. Some obvious problems worth identifying are the misconception that the cause of obesity is an unexplainable bodily condition and the delusion that heart/respiratory/etc. ailments inevitably result from obesity. Although, these issues are certainly causes for concern and investigation, there are more dire consequences of the medicalization process that I investigate.

As LeBesco (2001) notes, "inarguably, current discourse surrounding body size and shape has worked to incorporate the protests of fat people against their own bodies; when civil rights are being demanded on the basis of genetic subjection of fat people, the fat body is effectively rendered uninhabitable" (p. 76). Therefore, medicalized obesity is highly problematic for fat advocacy groups like the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA), a group that aims to de-normalize thin as the socially acceptable standard. Elaborating on this issue Kirkland (2003) explains, "establishing obesity as a disability [or disease] would contradict NAAFA's identity concept by setting fatness apart from thinness or normalcy and acknowledging that it is an affliction rather than simply par to the variation of healthy bodies" (p. 27). In this way, rather than working to de-stigmatize obesity, medicalization merely bolsters negative feelings towards overweight and obesity.

The goal of debunking the convolution of health and thinness has been the focus of many feminist scholars (e.g., Bordo, Spitzack, LeBesco) who have also critiqued medicalization. As Carole Spitzack (1990) argues, "a primary component in female socialization, then, requires teaching women to make 'objects' or spectacles of themselves. In learning to prepare herself for the active gazes of others, a woman becomes adept at seeing herself as others see her; she sees herself as an other" (p. 34). Throughout her discussion of the female body Spitzack explains that women are socialized to practice self-surveillance and that, in a Foucaultian sense, "a woman must identify herself as the principle of her own subjection, playing the roles of tower guard and

prisoner simultaneously" (p. 45). Similarly, Bordo (2003) argues:

> culture not only has taught women to be insecure bodies, constantly monitoring themselves for signs of imperfection, constantly engaged in physical 'improvement'; it also is constantly teaching women (and, let us not forget, men as well) how to *see* bodies." (p. 57)

This idea of creating the ideal body image is, as Grosz (1994) discusses, an integral part of history for both men and women. She writes, "Freud had predicted that all 'man' would become a 'prosthetic god' through the supplementary use of tools and the instruments of civilization to compensate for 'his' biological defects and limits of 'his' facticity" (p. 79). When considering gender and the body it becomes clear that bodily maintenance is not only an aesthetic issue, but an issue of dominance and control as well because, while women are supposed to remain slender/small/submissive, men are to be hard/muscular/dominant. In her discussion of gender, the body, and medicalization Bordo (2003) notes, "what is obscured by the medicalization … is an adequate understanding of the ubiquitous and thoroughly routine grip that culture has had and continues to have on the female body" (p. 66). She suggests that "biology may protect men from eating disorders is not to be open to possibilities; it is to close one's eyes to the obvious" (p. 53). Through this medicalization process "medical labels have come into common parlance to give credibility to the aesthetic and moral evaluations" (Gard & Wright, 2005, p. 181) and today, "moral judgments are now bolstered by assumptions about the kinds of health practices that individuals engage in, that they have put themselves at risk and, furthermore, they are a cost to the nation that could be prevented" (p. 181). Furthermore, "these associations are possible only in a culture of overabundance – that is, in a society in which those who control the production of 'culture' have more than enough to eat" (Bordo, 2003, p. 192). While the U.S. is a prime example of a "culture of overabundance" it is important to consider the implications of this, as they relate to current ideologies regarding bodies and health.

There is no question that the U.S. population holds a prejudice against obese people because of this idea. Kolata (2007) acknowledges that there are distinct disparities between how obese and non-obese people are treated by the general public and reports that obese and overweight individuals "are less likely to be admitted to elite colleges, are less likely to be hired for a job, make less money when they are hired,

and are less likely to be promoted. One study found that businessmen sacrifice $1,000 in salary for every pound they are overweight" (p. 67). Taking this a step further, the war on obesity links to a "war on minorities" because there is a direct correlation between obese populations and minority populations. Nestle (2007) explains that rates of obesity among African-America and Hispanic children are increasing faster than those of white children and reports, "by the early 1990s, for example, 23% of white girls aged 6-11 were overweight, compared to 29% of Mexican-American girls and 31% of black girls" (p. 175). The disparities in body shape and size between whites and non-whites has been a long been an issue in the United States in particular. Even today minority groups unwilling to change their habits (refuse to participate in the diet industry game) are not merely shunned for having "wrong" bodies, but face an even more intense punishment in that they are permitted from being upwardly mobile. Take for example black and Latina women in the U.S. According to Fraser (1997) they "tend to be much less obsessed about their weight than white women" (p. 142). Instead of commending them for having an apparently heightened level of self-confidence "diet company advertisers are especially targeting upwardly aspiring minority women with the message that they're not going to make it in the professional world unless they lose weight" (Fraser, 1997, p. 143).

Conclusion

Turning again to the link between cultural citizenship and thinness I argue that the labeling of obesity as "disease" functions as a rhetorical device that works to reaffirm the binary oppositions between "thin"/healthy/productive and the "obese"/unhealthy/idle. The reinforcement of these binary oppositions works to ensure individuals remain aware of their status and remain focused on the end goal: thinness. The overarching theory behind this is that the adoption of a medicalized notion of obesity will generate a heightened sense of urgency, and as individuals become aware of their "illness" they will work harder and be able to achieve a state of healthiness/thinness. They can then be welcome as "normal" members of society. Unfortunately, even if this theory sounds promising, it is entirely implausible, because no matter how strong a desire some people have to achieve a state of thinness/health (think Hollywood movie-star thin) it is simply not an option for the majority. The only aspect of the theory that holds true is that the medicalized notion of obesity does generate more intense feelings of anxiety/fear of becoming obese.

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