EDUCATING TOWARD DIRECT DEMOCRACY AND ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY: THEORY OF SOCIAL ECOLOGY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICAL, DEMOCRATIC, AND COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATING TOWARD DIRECT DEMOCRACY AND ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY:
THEORY OF SOCIAL ECOLOGY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICAL, DEMOCRATIC,
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The aim of this dissertation project was to explore and extrapolate the work of the left-libertarian social theorist, Murray Bookchin (1921-2006), paying particular attention to his theory of social ecology and to examine its implications for and use as a comprehensive philosophical/theoretical framework for alternative secondary education that has as its central aim direct democracy, a new conception of citizenship premised upon such an aim, and a more balanced, less destructive relationship between humans and non-human nature. The dissertation attempts to answer two fundamental questions through both a theoretical examination and an empirical study. First, what ideal of citizenship is established within the theory of social ecology? Second, what outcomes would indicate that a school using the theory of social ecology as a curricular centerpiece is successful in creating or fostering this ideal of citizenship within students? In attempting to answer these questions, I first engage in a close reading and critical examination of the theory of social ecology and its underlying philosophy as articulated and developed in the work of the late Murray Bookchin. I mine the literature in order to draw out its central concepts related to citizenship and democracy, shed light upon the political philosophy that acts as its foundation, and extend these findings in order to deduce their implications for education. Secondly, I conduct an empirical study at a small charter high school in a large metropolitan area whose explicit aim is to empower students "to engage in critical thinking and social transformation, from the classroom to the Puerto Rican community" (*Mission and Vision*

Statement, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School homepage,

http://www.pedroalbizucamposhs.org/about/dr-pedro-albizu-campos-high-school/ retrieved

January 4, 2012) through the use of social ecology, social-emotional learning, and critical

pedagogy as guiding theoretical frameworks. The aim of this empirical study was to gain an

understanding of how social ecology is used within a school to foster a particular ideal of

citizenship and the degree to which it is successful in attempting to do so.

I outline the distinctions between anarchism as a political philosophy and that of liberal

democratic theory upon which much of educational philosophy is based. As social ecology is

largely rooted in the social anarchist tradition, I sketch out the principles upon which the social

anarchist position (on the state, on authority, on human beings' way of interacting with and

relating to one another) rests and identify some of its major tenets as they are specific

articulations of anarchist principles within the realms of philosophy, politics, and social relations

that I feel have particular relevance for an educational model aimed toward direct democracy and

ecological sustainability. I then move into a theoretical discussion of dialectical naturalism - the

philosophy of social ecology - and its attempt to formulate an objective ecological ethics. I

examine and explore libertarian municipalism – the politics of social ecology – paying particular

attention to its goal of re-orienting the modern western definitions of *democracy*, *politics*, and

citizenship. Next, I report my findings from the empirical study of a school that utilizes social

ecology and community-based education to move its students toward enhanced self-actualization

through active participation in nurturing greater community autonomy and self-sufficiency.

Finally, through creative imagining, I consider the implications of the philosophy and politics of

social ecology for the structure, form, and content of an alternative small-school movement

rooted in place and aimed at ameliorating social and ecological crises at the grassroots level.

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None of this would have been remotely possible without the love, patience, and support of my family. Dad, Al, Mary, and grandparents -this was truly a collective effort and I deeply appreciate your support. Josie, Mary, and Colin, you are the reasons I want to be part of creating a better world. Mindy, my rock, through your partnership and strength of character, you have helped me to find my part in working toward a more just world by making me a better person.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my late mother, Carmen Natalie Holohan (1947-2011). Your lifelong drive to question and understand the world around you and to develop deep and supportive relationships with others has shaped me in countless ways and has been a wonderful model for all those that had the privilege of knowing you. I only wish you could be here to see me complete this stage of my journey.

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Introduction

> Some of us remember the infamous old Communist tirades against merely
>
> 'formal' bourgeois freedom – absurd as they were, there is a pinch of truth in the
>
> distinction between 'formal' and 'actual' freedom: 'formal freedom is that
>
> freedom to choose within the coordinates of the existing power relations, while
>
> 'actual' freedom grows when we can change the very coordinates of our choices.
>
> (Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the end times*, 2011, 358)

The aim of this dissertation project is to explore and extrapolate the work of the left-libertarian social theorist, Murray Bookchin (1921-2006), paying particular attention to his theory of social ecology and to examine its implications for and use as a comprehensive philosophical/theoretical framework for alternative secondary education that has as its central aim direct democracy, a new conception of citizenship premised upon such an aim, and a more balanced, less destructive relationship between humans and non-human nature. More specifically, the dissertation attempts to answer two fundamental questions through both a theoretical examination and an empirical study. First, what ideal of citizenship is established within the theory of social ecology? Second, what outcomes would indicate that a school using the theory of social ecology as a curricular centerpiece is successful in creating or fostering this ideal of citizenship within students? In attempting to answer these questions, I first engaged in a close reading and critical examination of the theory of social ecology and its underlying philosophy as articulated and developed in the work of the late Murray Bookchin. I mined the literature of social ecology (and related fields) in order to draw out its central concepts related to

citizenship and democracy, shed light upon the political philosophy that acts as its foundation, and extend these findings in order to deduce their implications for education. Secondly, I moved from theory to practice by conducting an empirical study at a small charter high school in a large metropolitan area in the Midwest whose explicit aim is to empower students "to engage in critical thinking and social transformation, from the classroom to the Puerto Rican community" (*Mission and Vision Statement*, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School homepage, http://www.pedroalbizucamposhs.org/about/dr-pedro-albizu-campos-high-school/) through the use of social ecology, social-emotional learning, and critical pedagogy as guiding theoretical frameworks. The aim of this empirical study was to gain an understanding of how social ecology is used within a school to foster a particular ideal of citizenship and the degree to which it is successful in attempting to do so.

Throughout the dissertation, I use a number of different terms that possess distinct meanings but that also overlap with one another in a variety of important ways. In Chapter One, I introduce *anarchism* as a unique political theory and philosophy with both historical and contemporary iterations and examine its implications for education. Philosophically, anarchism stands in opposition to all forms of hierarchy and domination and demands rational justification for any form of authority. As a political theory, anarchism holds all forms of governmental authority as unnecessary and advocates for a society based upon voluntary cooperation and free association between individuals and groups. The radical left anarchist movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth century had a profound influence upon Bookchin's development of the theory of social ecology and many of its foundational principles come out of the thought and work of early European anarchists. My exploration of anarchist thought, principles, and practice allowed me to better understand the development of social ecology and to begin to

articulate an ideal of citizenship that does not take for granted the necessity of centralized government and the state itself. While anarchism helps to provide a set of principles for social relations within this ideal of citizenship, I feel it does not sufficiently theorize or provide a way of understanding the relationship between humans and the non-human natural world nor an ethical basis for the interaction between the two.

In Chapters Three and Four, I move into a detailed examination of the theory and philosophy of *social ecology* as well as its political corollary, *libertarian municipalism*. The primary claim around which the theory revolves is that domination and hierarchy within human social relations and within the human psyche itself emerged slowly and unevenly over time and eventually led to a hierarchical mentality regarding the relationship between human beings and the natural world out of which they evolved and within which they are still irrevocably embedded. Utilizing some of the fundamental principles of anarchism including resistance to hierarchy, horizontal decision making, cooperation, and mutual aid, social ecology advances the idea that directly democratic, face-to-face decision making within municipalities by the individuals that inhabit them can help eliminate some of the feelings of alienation and disempowerment that have given rise to the disconnection between humans and the natural environment and the resulting disregard for the biosphere. In short, directly democratic social relations on the level of the municipality (i.e. libertarian municipalism) can foster recognition of the circular and mutualistic relationship between humans and the non-human natural world and make for more ecologically sustainable human activity.

In Chapter Five, I present the findings of an empirical study conducted at a small charter high school that uses social ecology as its curricular centerpiece. That is, social ecology as a coherent framework for understanding the interrelationship between the individual and the

social-ecological environments in which he/she is situated is utilized to support the school's aim to promote greater community self-sufficiency and self-determination. As is highlighted in the study, there is an obvious link between direct democratic control of the community by its inhabitants and the pursuit of more ecologically sustainable relationships and development. This link is evidenced within the school's curriculum, practice, and organization. Finally, all of these aspects of the school are firmly rooted in the history, culture, and geography of the community within which it is situated.

Chapter Six considers the implications of these distinct yet interrelated concepts for the development of educational endeavors that aim toward promoting direct democracy and ecological sustainability. More specifically, I turn to *place-based education* and the *small schools movement* as containing the seeds for developing this project. What social ecology and its roots in traditional and contemporary anarchism suggest is that in order to provide an experience that fosters students' active investment in and work toward the common good and this particular ideal of citizenship, a school would be small and locally constituted; democratically run and managed by school-community stakeholders; utilize place-based curriculum centered upon local, cultural, historical and ecological contexts; and would develop strong and integrated school-community partnerships. Ideally, small schools possess faculties that are cohesive, self-selected, and that share an educational philosophy. Place-based education is intended to immerse young people in the culture, history, and ecology of the communities in which they live and promote a commitment to the common good over individual self-interest. Overall, I feel social ecology can act as an overarching and comprehensive framework for bringing these educational discourses together and for promoting a particular ideal of citizenship.

Anarchism, as both a theoretical and practical foundation for social ecology, is rarely taken seriously within the academy. It exists on the margins of political and educational philosophy. Over the course of the dissertation (specifically Chapter Two), I explore what political and educational philosophers have disavowed in the process of marginalizing anarchism. While most political and educational philosophy is rooted in the liberal tradition, Judith Suissa (2001) explains,

> The anarchist perspective is different in that it does not take any existing social or political framework for granted. Instead, it has as its focal point a vision of what an ideal such framework could be like – a vision that has often been described as utopian. (629)

I, myself, have felt the burdensome weight of history in contemplating the use of anarchism as one of *the* central concepts in my dissertation. There are fears of not being taken seriously by other academics for some of the reasons mentioned above. There are fears of limited job opportunities at institutions of higher learning due to the marginalization of discourse centered upon anarchist theory and practice. There are fears of spending an inordinate amount of time overcoming the initial misinterpretations or misconceptions of those with whom I engage in conversation about 'my' dissertation work. And, of course, there are less well-defined, more amorphous fears related to dealing with such 'dangerous' ideas. Despite these fears, my attraction to the ideas, history, and underlying principles of anarchism and its long and rich relationship with education have made a deep and sustained engagement with the topic irresistible. In short, my beliefs around decentralism, local self-reliance, self-determination,

participatory or direct democracy, cooperativism, and community find their finest articulation in the classical anarchist stance and, more specifically, in the contemporary theory of social ecology and its political corollary, libertarian municipalism, put forward by the late Murray Bookchin.

I should note that the perspective described above is far from the utopian dreaming as many in academia and beyond have labeled it. Real men and women, situated in diverse geographies and locales, have managed to be self-sufficient and self-managed in community for the greater part of human history. Even with the rise of the nation-state and, later, the advent of the Industrial Revolution, most people identified with and struggled to maintain the autonomy of the specific places in which they lived and worked to provide for their needs (Bookchin, 1995). Despite the dominant discourse of 'globalization', global citizenship, or global interconnectivity, these struggles for local self-reliance and self-determination continue up through the present, particularly amongst the world's "social majorities" who have wound up suffering the most destructive consequences of the Western notions of 'progress' and 'development' (Esteva & Prakash, 1998).

Without providing an exhaustive autobiographical account of the development of my thinking or my activism, I would like to offer some personal context for why I chose to pursue this collection of ideas and theoretical framework. Undoubtedly, my experiences teaching in a Chicago public high school and in a west Michigan juvenile detention facility had the most formative impact on my thinking and work both as a social activist and academic. During those years, I came to recognize that educational endeavors approached as one-size-fits-all would inevitably privilege some and severely disadvantage others. Related to this, I also recognized that young people are entirely willing and capable of critically examining the world around them,

understanding the intricate relationship between history, culture, and power and drawing from their own lived experiences to imagine and work toward creating a more just and equitable society. I entered graduate school to more fully understand the relationship between school and society, how the current configuration of primary and secondary schooling came into being, and the underlying assumptions and philosophical perspectives that shape the purposes of schooling in the contemporary United States that are rarely engaged in public discourse.

In other words, what has really driven my studies is the fact that I do not feel there is enough discussion about the *ends of education* – whether this discussion is with one another as academics, with individuals interested in becoming part of the educational process as teachers or administrators, or as a general public - each member of which has different levels of investment in this thing we call school. *Toward what ends are we doing what we are doing?* It is not that there are not a multitude of answers to this question; but it seems that only a minority, of those who, in one way or another, are invested in this thing called education, give the question any sustained attention. My conception of what this end could or should be is only one of many and can certainly be proven no more right than any other. However, I believe without attempting to articulate a response to the question and (this is the important part!) bringing it into dialogue and discussion with others, we all run the risk of falling into entropy, apathy or both.

With those thoughts in mind, I have spent the greater part of my teaching and graduate school career exploring critical theories in education. More specifically, I have been interested in theory that takes into consideration the role of culture and historical context as forces that drive individual meaning-making, motivation, and behavior and the relationship between these forces and this relatively new institution known as school. For the shape and purposes of the

school – how learning is regarded and toward what ends it is directed - could be viewed as a mirror of the broader ideals and shape of the society in which it is situated.

Additionally, I have always been attracted to 'big theory' – that is, theory that does not confine itself to a specific sphere of human experience but that attempts to explain why things are the way they are and how they have been or could be otherwise. Obviously, I feel the education of the young - whether at home, through popular culture, or within the institution of the school – plays a significant role in shaping, maintaining or changing the type of society we live in.

Lastly, I would like to note that some would most certainly have an aversion to the notion of anarchy or anarchism as something toward which some of us (myself included) choose to strive. However, it is one word and one movement amongst dozens of others - others with which it shares much in common - that aims to empower groups and individuals to reclaim control over their lives. I used direct democracy as a central concept because I feel it encompasses the best of many traditions and *–ism's* - containing socialism's drive toward equality, anarchism's push against unjustified authority and toward freedom, and social ecology's call for the diminishment of domination and hierarchy.

Having made this statement regarding what I find to be some compelling and vitally important 'ends' of education, my real work lies in sharing these ideas with others, presenting them for discussion, critique, and debate and hopefully, along the way, finding others that may share similar visions with whom I can continue to engage in creative exploration.

As the dissertation contains both theoretical and empirical elements and aims to develop an educational framework intended to foster a particular ideal of citizenship, it has the potential to speak to a broad audience. First and foremost, teachers, administrators, and teacher educators

interested in pursuing educational alternatives that draw a focus upon promoting social and

ecological justice will find much of value within these pages. Secondly, I hope that this work

can contribute to broadening the parameters of our discussions and debates around citizenship

education within the university and, more specifically, departments of teacher education. In its

consideration of the philosophical foundations of education and theorization of curriculum, I

invite the discussion and critique of scholars in those fields. Finally, I intend for this exploration

to be a work of public scholarship. That is, I want nothing more than for these ideas to be

engaged within the public sphere by lay and scholarly audiences alike who recognize the grave

social and ecological crises we face and who view education as a vital arena for beginning to

address them on the grassroots level.

Chapter One
Educating Toward Direct Democracy

I. Framing the Study

Since the late 18th century, philosophers and politicians, revolutionaries and reformists

have held as their primary purpose or goal the preservation, enlargement, and/or extension of

democracy, democratic institutions, and democratic participation within their respective social,

historical, and geographical contexts. As Gert Biesta (2007) explains,

> Questions about democracy have always been closely intertwined with questions
>
> about education. Ever since its inception in the *polis* of Athens, political and
>
> educational thinkers alike have asked what kind of education would best prepare
>
> the people (*demos*) for their participation in the ruling (*kratos*) of their society.
>
> Although our complex global world bears little or no resemblance to the *polis* of
>
> Athens, the question of the relationship between education and democracy is as
>
> important and urgent today as it was then. (743)

As evidenced most recently by the Arab Spring and the Occupy Wall Street movement, everyday

citizens from all walks of life continue to show a willingness for personal sacrifice and risks to

their physical safety and well-being in the name of asserting more personal and collective control

over the political and economic decisions that most directly impact their lives. For as long as

humans have been engaged in the struggle against the concentration of power in the hands of the

few, the justification of authority based upon custom, tradition, or divine right and for more

meaningful and direct participation in the decision-making process, they have turned to

education as a primary site in/for this struggle. As a result, according to Luis Miron and Pradeep Dhillon (2004), "the disciplinary fields of political science and political philosophy deeply intertwine with educational theory, research, and practice" (32).

While schools and the forms of education that have been enacted therein have always been fundamental arenas in which democracy has been tested, deliberated, and cultivated, the ways in which 'democracy' has been defined and, thus, the methods of education that have been employed in its pursuit have varied greatly. In contemporary times, the connection between democracy/democratic societies and the education of the young has certainly not waned but the competing discourses of accountability, curricular standardization, and the economic imperatives attached to the education of the young have overshadowed much meaningful discussion regarding schools as democratic and democratizing institutions. Additionally, when the relationship between education and democracy is discussed, this discussion is most often premised upon and framed within liberal democratic theory and one historically specific form of democracy – that is, representative or parliamentary.

In his *Declarations of Independence: Cross-examining American ideology*, Howard Zinn (1990) makes clear both the historical imperatives and gross inadequacies of representative government for securing the basic human rights of liberty *and* equality. According to Zinn (1990), theories of representative government began to take rise in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and grew out of the desire of the new middle class for more power in government. It was during this time that John Locke put forth the idea of the social contract under which, Zinn explains, "the community – wanting more order, less trouble, and more safeguards for life, liberty, and property – agrees to choose representatives who would accomplish these purposes" (233). Additionally, Locke proposed, if the elected government

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violated the contract, rebellion might be justified. While the theory of the social contract appears sound and rational upon first glance, Zinn claims the primary problem with it is that,

> It pretends that there is some nice unified community that agrees to set up this constitutional government. In reality, there was not such unity. There were rich and poor, and the poor are never in a position to sign a contract on equal terms with the rich. Indeed, they are not usually consulted when a contract is drawn up. So while it may sound good that property and liberty will be protected by representative government, in reality it is the property and liberty of the wealthy and powerful that is most likely to be protected. (234)

Continuing his incisive yet simple and direct critique, Zinn draws from *The Federalist Papers* to argue that "while it [representative government] indeed is an improvement over monarchy, and may be used to bring about some reforms, it is chiefly used by those holding power in society as a democratic façade for a controlled society and a barrier against demands that threaten their interests" (235).

Zinn (1990) ends his appraisal with a brief mention of some of the alternatives that have been offered to replace representative forms of government. Primary among these is the notion of direct democracy. As Zinn (1990) points out, history is replete with examples of the successful functioning of direct democracy: ancient Athens (despite the exclusion of slaves, women, and foreigners); the Paris Commune of 1871; and the Soviet (councils) of workers, peasants, and soldiers on the eve of the Russian revolution, to name just a few. Outside of these historical examples, have we no models or frameworks upon which to anchor our efforts at

creating something similar in the present and with which to guide our thinking about how education and schooling might be altered to support this project?

That liberalism and notions of representative democracy are the foundations upon which discussions of democracy and education rest is generally taken for granted and are presumptions that, I concur with Zinn, require re-examination. In particular, this project attempted to undertake a reconsideration of the relationship between education and democracy through a re-definition of its most fundamental categories – that is, *politics*, *citizen/citizenship*, and *democracy* itself. In undertaking this project, I relied primarily upon Murray Bookchin's theory of *social ecology* and its political corollary, *libertarian municipalism*, to offer an educational framework based upon and intended to create, promote, and preserve a direct popular citizens' democracy.

A. Contemporary Discourses on the Relationship between Education, Democracy, and
   Citizenship

Historically, considerations of the role of education in preserving and furthering a political democracy and democratic institutions have been within the purview of philosophers, policymakers, educational theorists, teachers, students, and common citizens alike. In other words, the topic has not been relegated to any one set of professionals or experts but rightly has remained open to debate and differing conceptions articulated by the diverse sets of ideological commitments and social and cultural backgrounds brought together within a democratic society. That said, within the contemporary field of education, discussions of competing conceptions of democracy, politics, and citizenship have most often found their home in the area of social studies. I, on the other hand, have approached the topic of democracy and education from a

primarily philosophical, generalist, and/or theoretical perspective and not situated it within a specific subject area. Neither have I considered literature that is strictly situated within a particular subject area but rather comes out of this more generalist perspective. I would like to argue that the preparation of citizens for democracy, in its truest sense (*demos* 'the people' + *kratia* 'power, rule') is the responsibility not only of the entire school community but also of the concentric communities in which the school is situated.

While there continue to be fierce debates around the meaning and practice of citizenship in the contemporary western world, most of these debates fall within the spectrum between civic republicanism and liberal individualism. The liberal-individualist conception of citizenship has as its primary concern the individual's rights and responsibilities within the nation-state and the government's role in safe-guarding while also not impinging upon those individual rights. The liberal perspective is rooted in a language of "needs" and "entitlements" necessary for *individual* human dignity and is based on reason for the pursuit of *individual* self-interest. This primarily western notion of citizenship suggests a focus on humans' propensity for the *individual* pursuit of material well-being and the guarantee of civil rights under shared law. From this view, citizens are sovereign, morally autonomous beings with duties to pay taxes and obey the law and rights to freely engage in economic activities, but are often passive politically outside of their right to vote. In this view, essentially passive citizens are most concerned with their private interests, and the management of society and formulation of law is left to a body of elected representatives. While contemporary theorists of liberalism such as John Rawls do include within the purview of liberalism the responsibility of society to try to benefit its least advantaged members, this conception of citizenship, which I will eventually contrast with a more communal sense of citizenship rooted in place, has given rise to what has been termed *homo economicus*,

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almost entirely focused on individual autonomy and material production and consumption – a notion almost totally foreign to many cultures of the world, but one that has gained increasing hegemony (Esteva & Prakash, 1998). It is within this framework of liberal citizenship that much of the educational literature on the topic is situated.

In "Participatory Citizenship: Civics in the Strong Sense", Walter C. Parker (1989) claims the deterioration of civic life in recent times is obvious and he largely attributes this to the rampant individualism that pervades contemporary American society and that has begun to divert the public mission and vision of schools. At the same time, Parker acknowledges that schools, by themselves, cannot be expected to reverse this crisis in civic life. However, he argues, schools can have a significant influence through stronger emphasis in three areas: 1) helping students acquire in-depth knowledge of history and politics; 2) conducting themselves as communities and exploring what community entails; and 3) providing students with ample opportunities to participate in democratic practices (353).

Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2004) attempt to examine the wide range of ideas about what good citizenship is and what good citizens do that are embedded in democratic education programs. In short, there are a variety of perspectives on citizenship and each has equally varied implications for curriculum (238). Rather than focusing on these curricular implications, the authors develop a framework that is intended to "highlight several important political dimensions of efforts to educate citizens for democracy" (239). Their framework emerges out of three answers to the question, "*What kind of citizen do we need to support an effective democratic society?*" (239, italics in original) and these answers suggest three distinct visions of citizenship: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen, and the justice-oriented citizen.

The personally responsible citizen adheres to the norms and standards of the existing society and acts responsibly within his/her community. Within this conception of citizenship, acting responsibly entails working and paying taxes, obeying laws, and volunteering in times of crisis. The core assumptions embedded within this conception, according to the authors, suggest that solving social problems and improving society are dependent upon citizens having sound individual character.

The participatory citizen is an active member of community organizations and takes an active role in organizing community efforts to care for those in need. Additionally, the participatory citizen has knowledge of how government works and is aware of strategies for accomplishing collective tasks. Embedded within this conception of citizenship, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) explain, is the assumption that solving social problems and improving society involves the active participation and leadership of citizens in established systems and community structures.

Finally, the authors explain the characteristics and core assumptions underlying the notion of the justice-oriented citizen. The justice-oriented citizen critically assesses social, political, and economic structures to see beyond surface causes; seeks out and addresses areas of injustice; and knows about democratic social movements and how to effect systemic change. This vision of citizenship implicitly assumes that to solve social problems and improve society, "citizens must question, debate, and change established systems and structures that reproduce patterns of injustice over time" (240).

In "Teaching democracy: What schools need to do", Kahne and Westheimer (2003) attempt to address what they call "an important gap in our education agenda: preparing students to be effective democratic citizens" (35). They draw from a study in which they examine 10

educational programs that make central educating for democratic citizenship. In doing so, the

authors identify specific goals and curricular components that, if given appropriate attention, can

help schools "fulfill their historic ideal of laying the foundations for a democratic society" (35).

Primary among these goals, the authors argue, is teaching young people to engage civically,

socially, and politically, to draw their attention to the issues that most directly affect their lives,

and to provide opportunities for them to develop opinions about and act upon them.

Kahne and Westheimer (2003) lay out in clear and accessible terms the competing

notions of what a commitment to democracy and, thus, citizenship, entails. They explain that,

> For some, a commitment to democracy is a promise to protect liberal notions of
> freedom, while for others democracy is primarily about equality. For some, civil
> society is the key, while for others, free markets are the great hope for a
> democratic society. For some, good citizens in a democracy volunteer, while for
> others, they take active parts in political processes by voting, protesting, and
> working on political campaigns. (36)

They go on to identify a number of school-based programs that are intended to promote

particular conceptions of democratic citizenship. Community service and character education

programs aim to develop individual character traits but are largely lacking in focus on social

transformation, collective action, and systemic change. Following from this, the authors claim,

"If democracy is to be effective at improving society, people need to exert power over issues that

affect their lives" (39). This can best be accomplished, they explain, through opportunities to

connect academic knowledge to analysis of social issues, knowledge of democratic processes,

and by instilling democratic values such as tolerance, respect for individual and group identities, concern for the greater good, and the ability to communicate across differences while also promoting one's own goals in political arenas.

Through an examination of three programs that the authors define as successfully teaching democracy, they identify three broad priorities: promoting democratic commitments, capacities, and connections to others with similar goals. Teaching *Commitment* involves showing students that society needs improving and providing positive experiences seeking solutions. *Capacity* is related to helping students understand how they can engage issues, offering students opportunities to participate in real-world projects, and providing students with the skills, knowledge, and networks to feel they could be effective agents of change in their communities and beyond. Finally, *connections* consist primarily of providing students with a supportive community of peers and connections to role models that have been successful in promoting social change.

One of the primary shortcomings of Kahne and Westheimer's consideration of teaching democracy and forms of citizenship are the normative assumptions that underlie *what form of democracy* their explorations are intended to promote. In other words, they seem to take for granted the liberal democratic state itself and, with it, its centralized bureaucracy, strong ties to dominant economic interests, the obstacles it poses to community self-management, and the hierarchical relationships embedded within it. In "Education and the Democratic Person: Towards a Political Conception of Democratic Education", Gert Biesta (2007) goes considerably further in uncovering and unpacking some of the normative assumptions that Kahne and Westheimer take for granted.

In this article, Biesta (2007) seeks to revisit fundamental questions regarding how we should understand the relationship between democracy and education and what the role of schools is in a democratic society. His conclusion, briefly, is that the answers to these questions depend on "our views about the democratic person…on our ideas about the kind of subjectivity that is considered to be desirable or necessary for a democratic society" (743-744). Whereas Westheimer and Kahne attempt to delineate certain types of *behavior* that constitute democratic citizenship and the organizational structures that promote the development of such behaviors, Biesta's (2007) aim is to uncover the conceptions of subjectivity that are implicitly assumed as necessary for a democratic society.

Biesta (2007) draws distinctions between some of the dominant conceptions of what type of person is seen as necessary. These include the rational individual capable of free and independent judgment in which case schools are expected to "make children 'ready for democracy' by instilling in them the knowledge, skills and dispositions that will turn them into democratic citizens" (742). The author views this perspective as extremely problematic in that it is overly "*instrumentalistic*" and requires an "*individualistic* approach to democratic education…focused on equipping individuals with the proper set of democratic knowledge, skills, and dispositions, without asking questions about individuals' relationships with others and about the social and political context in which they learn and act" (742). This conception of the democratic person and, thus, democratic education rests upon an "*individualistic view of democracy*, one in which it is assumed that the success of democracy depends on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of individuals and on their willingness as individuals to act democratically" (742).

We are reminded by Biesta (2007) that there have been a variety of interpretations put forth regarding what democracy might mean and that each of these interpretations carries with it certain implications regarding what ruling (*kratos*) means (i.e. direct participation vs. indirect representation) and who, exactly, constitutes the people (*demos*) (745). Biesta draws from Beetham and Boyle's (1995) definition of democracy as "'the twin principles of *popular control* over collective decision-making and *equality of rights* in the exercise of that control'" and reinforces that with Dewey's (1916/1966) notion of democracy as "'primarily a mode of associated living'" to come up with his own definition of democracy as "inclusive ways of social and political action" (746).

He goes on to argue that the two most common ways of viewing the relationship between education and democracy is as "education for democracy" and "education through democracy". "Education *For* Democracy" privileges the idea of schools *providing* the knowledge, skills, and dispositions or values necessary for participation in democracy. "Education *Through* Democracy", on the other hand, puts forward the view that the best way to educate for democracy is through establishing and enacting democratic structures and processes within schools themselves; that is, providing young people with the opportunity to experience participatory democracy first-hand, as it were. According to Biesta, both of these approaches are problematic in that they both conceive of democracy "*as a problem for education*" for which educators, schools and other educational institutions are to provide a solution (748).

The crux of Biesta's (2007) argument revolves around three different conceptions of the democratic person based upon the writing of Immanuel Kant, John Dewey, and Hannah Arendt, respectively. In short, Kant tends to promote an individualistic conception of the democratic person, Dewey a social conception, and Arendt a political conception. Kant's conception,

according to Biesta, is focused upon the Enlightenment notion that the individuals necessary for a democracy are those that can exercise their ability to reason without direction from another or the capacity for rational autonomy. Dewey's conception, on the other hand, views the individual's ability to think and reflect not as an inherent capacity of the individual subject but as a quality that has a social origin and develops through social interaction. As Biesta (2007) explains, "The idea of the subject as a shaper of the conditions that shape one's subjectivity is the central idea in Dewey's notion of the democratic person" (752).

As an answer to the equally individualistic notions of the democratic person put forward by Kant and Dewey, Biesta offers Hannah Arendt's conception of subjectivity, rooted as it is in "the active human life" (753). Arendt's notion of subjectivity finds its expression in labor, focused upon the maintenance of life; work, which takes form in the ways human beings actively change their environments; and action, within which the human subject, in either word or deed, brings something new into existence. It is within the realm of action that the individual brings his/her uniqueness into the world and therefore assumes subjectivity, but this cannot be done in isolation. In other words, this process is dependent upon our sharing this with others and "how others…respond to our initiatives" (755). In this sense, action, and subjectivity itself, is dependent upon the plurality of and interaction with the action of others. Arendt's conception of subjectivity has important implications for how we think about the democratic person. According to Biesta, "individuals may have democratic knowledge, skills, and dispositions; but it is only in action – which means action which is taken up by others in unpredictable and uncontrollable ways – that the individual can *be* a democratic subject" (757). Following from this, Biesta argues, "this means that the first question to ask about schools and other educational institutions is not how they can make students into democratic citizens. The question to ask

rather is: *What kind of schools do we need so that children and students can act?*" (758). And, because schools are not isolated entities but are embedded within the broader social milieu, it is only necessary to ask: "*What kind of society do we need so that people can act?*" In exploring Arendt's conception of democratic subjectivity and drawing from it these important questions about the relationship between education and democracy, Biesta makes space for us to move beyond the individualistic Enlightenment notion of education as the production of rational subjects and into a consideration of whether or not and to what degree schools and, more importantly, the broader society prioritize and nurture the conditions for *action*.

Drawing a different focus on the effects of globalization, Kathy Hytten (2008) highlights some of its more deleterious effects. As a result of globalization – a word for which there is no agreed upon definition, she admits – we see

> growing gaps between the wealthy and the poor, loss of job security, exploitation
> of workers, privatization of public goods and services, environmental destruction,
> diminishment of biodiversity, disruption of indigenous cultures, loss of
> community, increased global homogenization, and ultimately, the almost
> complete subordination of the developing world to the needs and desires of
> transnational corporations. (333)

In addition to recognizing this dire situation, the author does concede that globalization may offer some more progressive possibilities – namely, that it allows for the spread of a "robust" vision of democracy in which "citizens work together to address social problems, challenge inequities, provide equality of opportunity, and cultivate economic justice" (337). Much like the

authors I have previously discussed, Hytten (2008) views this justice-oriented, participatory vision of democratic citizenship as ideal yet one rarely emphasized and cultivated within schools. While I agree with Hytten's call for a more robust conception of democracy, I have trouble with the viability of her call for students to "learn to be active and critical thinkers, to hold those in power accountable and responsible to common goods, and to engage in ongoing efforts to create and sustain social justice around world" (338). This appears to be a tall order for both students and those who educate them. If we are to accept this call, there must be a more concrete and definable place to start.

James A. Banks (2008) also theorizes new conceptions of citizenship and citizenship education in light of social and political shifts occurring as a result of globalization. In "Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship in a Global Age", Banks (2008) provides a representative example of the way in which educational and political theorists alike conceive of citizens and citizenship. That is, Banks (2008) uses as the foundation for his exploration the assumption that there is a direct relationship between a citizen's rights, privileges, duties, and identities and the nation-state. He does complicate this conception of citizenship by considering the way in which the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960's and 1970's demanded "the right to maintain important aspects of their [respective ethnic] cultures and languages while participating fully in the national civic culture and community" (130) rather than be fully assimilated into the dominant national culture. Through this consideration, Banks (2008) argues, "conceptions of citizenship in a modern democratic nation-state should be expanded to include cultural rights and group rights in a democratic framework" (130). In essence, Banks (2008) argues that we must go beyond a universal notion of citizenship based upon the liberal assimilationist view, in which the rights of the individual are paramount, and move toward a

multicultural citizenship in which "immigrant and minority groups can retain important aspects of their languages and cultures while exercising full citizenship rights" (132).

Banks (2008) appears to critique the fact that, "nationalists and assimilationists around the world worry that if citizens are allowed to retain identifications with their cultural communities they will not acquire sufficiently strong attachments to their nation-states" (133). He argues that nation-states, in order to maintain a sufficient degree of cohesion as well as respect for and incorporation of different cultures, need to strike a balance between unity and diversity. In this effort, schools need to implement both multicultural and global citizenship which, according to Banks (2008), supports and enhances students' understanding of and commitment to their cultural communities, transnational community, and to the nation-state in which they are legal citizens (133).

Banks (2008) concludes his article with a typology of citizens that includes: 1) Legal citizen – a citizen who has rights and obligations to the nation-state but does not participate in the political process; 2) Minimal citizen – a citizen who votes in local and national elections on conventional candidates and conventional issues; 3) Active citizen – a citizen who takes action beyond voting to actualize existing laws and conventions; and 3) Transformative citizen – a citizen who takes action to actualize values and moral principles beyond those of conventional authority. In his conception of the transformative citizen, Banks begins to move beyond the implicit connection between a citizen and the nation-state. In fact, he claims "students experience democracy in classrooms and schools when transformative citizenship education is implemented" (137). However, like most other contemporary theorists of citizenship and democracy, he does not offer an alternative theoretical or philosophical framework upon which to base transformative citizenship education and remains bound by the hegemonic construction

of democracy as finding its greatest fulfillment in republican and representative forms of government. In other words, he claims the most desirable form of citizenship and citizenship education is *beyond* or *above* the state and its authority yet implicitly assumes the necessity of a centralized state for providing a system of education, amongst other things, that is intended to move people beyond the necessity of the state.

Finally, in considering the relationship between education, democracy, and citizenship education, it is important to consider how the meaning of these concepts change over time and within different social contexts based upon the discourses used to describe, define, and regulate them. Obviously, shifts in the discourses of citizenship will determine how we understand this concept and, in turn, how we view its relationship to education and democracy. In their article, "Contemporary Discourses of Citizenship", Kathleen Knight Abowitz and Jason Harnish (2006) aim to identify the multiple discourses of citizenship circulating in contemporary Western democracies through a Foucaultian discourse analysis of a wide variety of K-12 curricular and policy texts. They conclude that contemporary notions of citizenship and citizenship education continue to be dominated by the citizenship discourses of civic republicanism and liberalism. However, they also found that there are a variety of competing and often oppositional discourses of citizenship that have recently emerged which critique and challenge the dominant discourses of citizenship in public schools. These multiple discourses - those rooted in civic republicanism and liberalism and those that challenge them - the authors claim, offer "diverse ideological orientations that are shaping our thinking about civic life and political participation" (656).

Abowitz and Harnish (2006) identify and discuss in detail what they call critical citizenship discourses that have emerged from but also challenge the civic republican and liberal discourses that tend to dominate formal school curricula. Not surprisingly, these critical

discourses (i.e. feminist, cultural, queer, and reconstructionist), which offer critiques of and raise

questions about traditional meanings of citizenship and of the nation-state itself, are marginalized

in curricular texts. Therefore, the authors argue, the civic republican and liberal discourses of

citizenship go relatively unquestioned and unchallenged within K-12 education. "The

diminution of [critical] discourses in the taught curriculum", the authors explain, "means that

much of our schooling in citizenship fails to reflect the continual struggles of democratic

politics," forecloses the "multiple forms of democratic engagement", and ultimately reduces,

confines, diminishes, and depletes citizenship meanings within schools (657). In other words,

most students in most schools are left with a very limited notion of what constitutes citizenship

and politics, and therefore, leave schools with a rather static and narrow vision of what

democracy looks like in practice.

The authors go on to define the contours of each of the critical discourses of citizenship

that they identify and explain how they differ from or stand in opposition to those of civic

republicanism and/or liberalism. Most importantly for my purposes is the discourse of

reconstructionism which the authors define as being composed of two threads: the progressive,

populist thread that emphasizes "more inclusive, involved, active, participatory democracy that

engages in public (often local) problem solving and work" and the Marxist or critical thread

which "employs a more revolutionary rhetoric and practice in constructing notions of civic

identity, as well as a more hegemonic analysis of government and corporate power" (671).

Within these broad strands, reconstructionist discourses of citizenship attempt to address a

variety of pertinent social, economic, and political issues such as the unresponsiveness of US

institutions to the needs of marginalized groups, the increasing influence of multinational

corporations on government policy and public life, and the deleterious effects of consumer

culture. As Abowitz and Harnish (2006) explain, some theorists participating in this particular discourse go so far as to say that state-run schooling, in as much as it is about order and loyalty, is antithetical to notions of reconstructionist visions of citizenship.

Most of the claims put forward within reconstructionist discourses of citizenship mesh quite well with the notions of citizenship, politics, and direct, participatory democracy advanced by social ecology. However, as the label suggests, reconstructionism (so named, the authors explain, to capture the vision of George Counts and other early 20th century progressives and Marxists) was intended to advance a radical reconstruction of "U.S. political, economic, and social institutions and systems" as the only means to see true democracy achieved (671). Having largely disavowed any direct connection with Marxism proper and having embraced the identity-focused issues raised by postmodernism, many of the educational thinkers and theorists participating in this discourse lack a broader social and political theory in which they can anchor their ideas and unify their vision. In other words, while Marxism and other left-leaning critical discourses within education have failed to provide us with a coherent conception of citizenship and citizenship education that *both* directly challenge and move beyond civic republicanism and liberalism and are firmly rooted in a broader vision of revolutionary social transformation, social ecology seems well-poised to do both and, in the process, to expand rather than foreclose the multiple forms of *direct democratic engagement* that are possible for our students.

B. Re-Imagining Education, Democracy, and Citizenship: Social Ecology and Libertarian Municipalism

Within anarchism and, more specifically, social ecology/libertarian municipalism, there is a wholly different framework for thinking about democracy, citizenship, and, thus, education.

While liberalism holds as its irreducible unit the self-determining, autonomous individual and the state as guarantor of individual liberty and freedom, social ecology maintains as its foundation the *social interdependence* of individuals and an unswerving faith in the ability of people to work together to manage their own lives. As Janet Biehl and Murray Bookchin (1998) explain,

> Libertarian municipalism [the political dimension of social ecology] proposes that passive dependence on an elite State is not, after all, the final condition of human political existence. A more active way of being is possible, it maintains, precisely because of some of the features that distinguish human beings as social, especially their capacity for reason, their mutual dependence, and their need for solidarity. Their independence and solidarity, in particular, can become the psychological, indeed moral groundwork for citizenship – and thus for the recreation of the political realm and direct democracy. (85)

In other words, liberalism, with its primary focus on the self-determining, autonomous individual, has been progressively distorted (by the State, urbanization, atomization, hierarchy, and capitalism) and has resulted in equating a 'citizen' with being a voter, a taxpayer, a consumer, and in rare instances, one who is able to actively participate in the shaping of community life *within the parameters the State itself has defined*.

The notion of direct democracy and the formulation of a type of citizenship and citizenship education that it requires which are explicitly called for by the philosophy of social ecology and the politics of libertarian municipalism raise a whole host of questions and require a detailed examination. The bulk of the dissertation engages just such an exploration and attempts

to answer some of those questions. I will now move into a description of the forthcoming theoretical and empirical portions of the study.

II. Methodological Design

A. Humanities-Oriented Research

Methodologically, I have situated the conceptual portion of the dissertation within what has come to be called Humanities-Oriented Research. As explained in the 2009 "Standards for Reporting on Humanities-Oriented Research in AERA Publications", Humanities-oriented research includes, but is not limited to, "studies of education that have a relatively heavy interpretive-theoretical emphasis" (482). As this dissertation project has attempted to examine a body of social theory and philosophy that is not directly related to education but that may have important implications for the field, it certainly meets the criteria of having a "heavy interpretive-theoretical emphasis". The AERA document also explains that Humanities-oriented research "undertakes investigations into the relationship among…the ethical life, the good life, the just society, the characteristics of the good citizen" and "is often intended to foster dissonance and discomfort with conventional practices and, in some cases, to suggest alternatives" (482). As has hopefully been made obvious, my intention has been to use social ecology and libertarian municipalism as a lens through which to not only re-examine the relationship between education and democracy but also to re-define such fundamental concepts as *citizen, politics,* and *citizenship education*. In that the project aims to question some of the normative assumptions in existing approaches to citizenship education and to offer concrete alternatives to these approaches, my work fits nicely into the area of Humanities-oriented research.

Murray Bookchin had set out for himself the project of re-examining and re-defining such fundamental social and political concepts such as *democracy*, *politics*, *citizen*, and *city* and of moving the Left away from the Marxist focus on economic exploitation to focus more squarely upon broader notions of hierarchy and domination. He undertook this project through a historical and anthropological examination of the multiple origins of these ideas and the lived realities to which they gave rise. That said, a significant portion of my work is devoted to mapping the exact contours of Bookchin's thought, the influences upon his thinking, the lineage of social theorists of which he is a part, and the gaps, oversights, and/or contradictions that may exist in his work. Having gained an understanding of Bookchin's work that has both breadth and depth, I attempt to draw out the implications for education generally and citizenship and ecological sustainability education more specifically.

This portion of the study involved engaging in a close philosophical reading of a number of Bookchin's seminal texts including but not limited to *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism* (1990), *The Ecology of Freedom: The emergence and dissolution of hierarchy* (1982/2005), *From Urbanization to Cities: Toward a New Politics of Citizenship* (1995), *The Politics of Social Ecology* (1998), and *Social Ecology and Communalism* (2007). More specifically, I engaged with these texts to delineate Bookchin's conceptions of the relationship between the social and the ecological; his anthropological and historical tracing of the origins of domination and hierarchy within human societies; his unique definitions of politics, democracy, and citizenship as viewed through an ecological and libertarian lens; and, finally, a close examination and explanation of his libertarian municipalist agenda and the implications for a form of citizenship education that might help move toward its realization.

B. Project Description of Empirical Study

The Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School's use of social ecology as the conceptual centerpiece of the curriculum across subjects is the aspect of the school upon which my research was focused. My investigation and exploration of the use of social ecology as a curricular framework in this small, urban alternative high school provided an opportunity to observe the real-life application of some of the central ideas in my dissertation. Much of the dissertation is devoted to exploring, explicating, and drawing out the educational implications of the philosophy of social ecology particularly as it relates to preparing students for participatory democracy and ecological sustainability within the life of their communities and beyond. As PACHS is the only secondary school I have discovered that explicitly utilizes social ecology as a curricular framework, I believe an overview of the school's mission and vision, unique approach to curriculum and pedagogy, close ties to other organizations within the immediate community, academic success of its students, and commitment to education for self- and social transformation provide vital empirical insight into the real-life application of social ecology in an educational setting.

The Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) was founded in 1972 in order to serve the Latino youth of the area who, for a variety of reasons, were not finding success in the large, comprehensive high schools of the Chicago Public Schools system. According to 2009 data from Chicago Public Schools, the dropout rate among Latino students in the city has hovered around forty percent

. PACHS was established with the goal of attempting to remedy this situation by providing students with what John W. Fritsche (2008) describes as a "standards-based multicultural curriculum of intensive academic and community-oriented learning experiences in

the context of Puerto Rican and Latino life"

(http://www.successinhighneedschools.org/journal/article/illinois-college-and-dr-pedro-albizu-campos-high-school-collaboration-type-9-certifi, *np*).

The central questions guiding the empirical portion of this study were as follows:

- How has the philosophy of social ecology come to be understood and utilized as the framework for educational practice, curriculum, pedagogy, and school organization in an alternative urban secondary school setting?

- How do the faculty and staff at PACHS understand social ecology and its relationship to the education of largely disenfranchised urban youth?

- How is social ecology related to the mission and vision of PACHS based as it is upon "the philosophical foundation of self-determination, a methodology of self-actualization, and an ethics of self-reliance"?

C. Methods and Data Collection

Data-generation involved observations of classrooms within the school to learn about the direct implications of social ecology for curriculum and instruction. I collected and analyzed historical and archival materials (i.e. brochures, newspaper articles, curricular documents, course syllabi, etc.) to learn more about the development of the school's philosophical vision, funding and accreditation, and operation within institutional and community-based contexts and their relationship to social ecology. I also documented students' work and the school environment through photographs and audio recordings. Finally, I conducted informal, semi-structured interviews with one of the school's founders, the school principal and teachers, and students

regarding the conceptualization, implementation, and outcomes (i.e. students' experiences and understanding) of social ecology as a curricular centerpiece. I audio recorded each of the nine interviews I conducted and transcribed each for analysis.

I spent approximately four months visiting the school on a bi-weekly basis. During each of my visits, I sat in and observed classes in nearly all of the subject areas and took field notes on topics discussed, teachers' pedagogical methods, classroom settings, and student interaction. Each of the teachers I observed was comfortable not only with having me in the classroom as an observer but also with inviting me to participate in classroom discussions and activities and to ask questions of students. In addition to observing in classrooms, I attended meetings of the entire staff that occurred on a weekly basis as well as meetings of staff subcommittees such as those of the social-emotional learning team and curriculum and instruction team. Each week, the entire school community (teachers, students, administrators, and support staff) came together for what they call *Large Group Unity*. This time was utilized for discussion of important issues to the school community such as upcoming community events in which the school was involved or issues of concern to staff or students within the school itself (i.e. disruptive behavior or lack of clarity on policy issues); to recognize students for individual achievement; and for student performance and self-expression. At *Large Group Unity*, I observed cultural traditions such as the singing of the traditional Puerto Rican national anthem and students' performance of spoken word poetry, hip-hop, and dance.[1] Finally, over the course of my time at the school, I had the opportunity to attend a city-wide spoken word competition at Columbia College in which a team of PACHS students participated and the opening of a new art exhibit at the Institute for Puerto Rican Arts and Culture (IPRAC) attended by various members of the Humboldt Park

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[1] See Part VI of Chapter 5 for further description of Large Group Unity.

community. In short, I was able to involve myself and directly participate in both life inside the school and within the broader community in which it is situated.

Due to PACHS strong emphasis upon student involvement in local community organizations and the intentional overlapping of school-based learning and community development, I provide overviews of the community organizations with which PACHS is directly involved. In doing so, I offer a description of the organization, the interaction between students/faculty and the organization, and the relationship between involvement with the organization and the theory of social ecology.   These organizations include an HIV/AIDS awareness project, a diabetes screening and prevention agency, and a year-round storefront farmer's market in which produce grown by students is sold back into the community. Overall, I collected data and conducted observations at the research site on a bi-weekly basis over the course of the second semester of the 2011-2012 school year (10 visits over the course of a 20-week semester). After completing my scheduled visits, I devoted my time primarily to data transcription and analysis, write-up of the results, and member checking.

According to the schools *Mission and Vision statement*,

Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School's mission is to provide a quality educational experience needed to empower students to engage in critical thinking and social transformation, from the classroom to the Puerto Rican community, based on the philosophical foundation of self-determination, a methodology of self-actualization, and an ethics of self-reliance.

It is specifically this *Mission and Vision Statement* upon which my interviews with PACHS faculty, students, and community members were focused. In other words, I sought to glean a representative understanding of how faculty make sense of what is necessary for empowering "students to engage in critical thinking and social transformation" (PACH *Mission and Vision Statement*). I wanted to understand both how faculty make meaning of this mission and vision and how they attempt to realize or manifest this meaning with students through their classroom practice, choice of materials, choice of activities, and pedagogy. Additionally, I sought to develop a definition of the ideal of citizenship held by the faculty of school, whether or not and to what degree this ideal was aligned with that put forward within the theory of social ecology, and how faculty went about pursuing the realization of this ideal with students.

After three initial observations at the school and in classrooms across subject areas, I identified three teachers with which to conduct individual interviews. There are approximately 11 total classroom teachers at the school, 8 support faculty (assistant principal, dean of student affairs, student mentors, urban agriculture coordinator). The teachers I interviewed taught Urban Agriculture, Integrated Science, and Social Studies, respectively. Additionally, I had the opportunity to interview one of the school's founders who is still actively engaged in the school and the surrounding community. Finally, throughout my time at PACHS I had frequent and informal conversations as well as more structured interviews with the school principal that were indispensable to developing an thorough understanding of the schools history, development, mission and vision, and current organization and practice.[2]

D. Goals

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[2] I provide a more detailed description of my methods for data analysis in Chapter Five which focuses exclusively on the study I conducted at the school.

As my broader dissertation project aimed to provide a comprehensive examination of the philosophy of social ecology and its implications for educating toward and through direct democracy and ecological sustainability, the empirical research study provided a bridge between what is primarily theoretical and the concrete, empirical reality within a school. The study also provided insight into the obstacles to and possibilities for nurturing strong school-community connections, methods for teaching critical thought regarding social and ecological interrelationship, and students' academic and self-development through the marrying of social ecology to alternative secondary education. Finally, I gained an in-depth understanding of how the faculty and staff of PACHS have come to understand social ecology and how they have worked to incorporate it as the centerpiece of their curriculum. Ultimately, I believe the philosophy has the potential to act as a foundation for similar experiments in small, alternative schools committed to preparing critical, engaged, and participatory citizens and this study will benefit pre-service and practicing teachers and teacher educators focused on alternative urban education and urban educational reform.

III. Conclusion

We live in a time of deep economic insecurity, growing disparities in wealth and privilege, and increasingly dire ecological crises. Americans' distrust of government is at its highest level ever (*New York Times*, October 26, 2011). As Eirik Eiglad (2007) describes our current situation,

We are standing at a crucial crossroads. Not only does the age-old "social question" concerning the exploitation of human labor remain unresolved, but also

the plundering of natural resources has reached a point where humanity is also

forced to politically deal with an "ecological question." Today, we have to make

conscious choices about what direction society should take to properly meet these

challenges. At the same time, we see that our ability to make the necessary

choices is being undermined by an incessant centralization of economic and

political power. (7)

Deeply connected to these broad social, ecological, and political issues are the ways in

which we educate our young. Taken with the fact that many individuals and communities feel

the educational system is unable to meet their personal and collective needs, it seems high time

that we go beyond thinking within existing power relations and social, political, and economic

coordinates and move toward changing "the very coordinates of our choices" (Žižek, 2011, 358).

Since its inception, public education has been viewed as essential to preserving and advancing a

democratic society. In reassessing that aim and the means we have devised to accomplish it, it is

vital that we examine and question not only the edifice we have built but also the foundation

upon which we have built it. Social ecology and libertarian municipalism, representing

> an effort to work from the latent or incipient democratic possibilities [within the
>
> social realm] toward a radically new configuration of society itself – a
>
> communitarian society oriented toward meeting human needs, responding to
>
> ecological imperatives, and developing a new ethics based on sharing and
>
> cooperation (Bookchin, 2007, 108)

– hold great promise for assisting us not only in that reassessment, but also in the more important work of reconstruction.

Chapter Two

Anarchism and Education

I. Introduction

Bookchin's life and work and the development of this theory of social ecology were deeply enmeshed with a number of the radical left social movements of his time. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century social anarchist movements were to have a profound impact upon the way he conceived of social change toward a more equitable and ecological society free of domination and hierarchy. In this chapter, I first outline the distinctions between anarchism as a political philosophy and that of liberal democratic theory upon which much of educational philosophy is based. Additionally, I compare/contrast the anarchist perspective on education with that of Marxian critical pedagogy and highlight some of the important overlaps and differences between the two. Secondly, as social ecology is largely rooted in the social anarchist tradition, I briefly sketch out the principles upon which the social anarchist position (on the state, on authority, on human beings' way of interacting with and relating to one another) rests. Next, I consider some of the anarchist critiques of state-controlled schooling. Following this discussion of what I call traditional anarchism (largely rooted in late nineteenth and early twentieth century European workers' movements), I examine some of the foundational principles of contemporary anarchism, beginning in the 1960's and continuing up through the present. Finally, I sketch a brief outline of what it might look like to utilize anarchist principles as an organizing framework for education, but save a more detailed discussion of this topic for Chapter Six.

While I will save a more thorough examination of social ecology for later chapters, it is important to identify some of its major tenets as they are specific articulations of anarchist principles within the realms of philosophy, politics, and social relations that have particular relevance for an educational model aimed toward direct democracy. Briefly, these principles include: a contextualist view of human nature; the importance of non-hierarchical, non-coercive relations; radically democratic, participatory decision-making; decentralization of institutions and decision-making processes; and the direct self-management of community issues and institutions by the individuals that inhabit those communities.

Because it lies outside the liberal, pragmatic philosophical tradition *and does not take for granted the necessity of the State*, anarchism has been summarily rejected by many academics without serious consideration of its principles, history, or development. Other scholars within the educational community suggest that associations within the popular imagination between anarchism and disorder/violence have resulted in its failure to be taken seriously as a legitimate theoretical framework for education (Bowen & Purkis, 2005). Additionally, there are those that attribute anarchism's absence from critical educational discourse to this discourse's foundation and subsequent development within Marxist and neo-Marxist theory and critique that rely on the possibility of a central state apparatus. While I agree these are legitimate explanations for the lack of consideration of anarchism within the academy, my feeling is that there are related yet more pragmatic reasons that the history and philosophy of anarchism and its relationship to education have not been more thoroughly explored within radical/critical/progressive education circles. In short, amidst a time of increased centralization and standardization and the persistence of conservative forces at work in the political, economic, and educational realms, I would argue that even those whose thinking might strongly resonate with an anarchist ethic,

philosophy, and worldview are reluctant to name it as such for fear of the direct and concrete as well as subtle and less tangible reprisals that might follow from claiming such an affinity.

The essential point I continually return to in my own work and relationships is that a better, more just, more equitable world is possible and that the way we think about and practice education is fundamental in moving toward realizing this world. This is a belief that led me into and sustained my work as an educator and an academic. It is a belief I share with many other anarchists, both living and dead. As explained by Krimerman and Perry (1966), "anarchism has persistently regarded itself as having distinctive and revolutionary implications for education. Indeed, no other movement whatever has assigned to educational principles, concepts, experiments, and practices a more significant place in its writings and activities" (11) – outside of perhaps nationalists.

In considering and exploring the relationship between anarchism and education, I need to clarify an essential point at the outset. This exploration is not necessarily an exercise in thinking about how to educate or teach young people how *to be* anarchists. Rather, the premise underlying this work is that anarchist principles, an anarchist ethics, and an anarchist vision of social change and movement toward a more rational and ecological society can serve as a bedrock for reconsidering how schools are organized and structured, the form and function of relationships within the school setting, and the interrelationship between the means and the ends of educational endeavors. This last point is the most important. That is, a school based upon anarchist principles should be an example of the future social organization community members desire in the present.

II. Points of Departure: Beyond 'Liberal' Education and Marxian Critical Pedagogy, Towards

Anarchistic Learning Communities

The ways in which we conceive of the role of education in both fostering democratic self-governance and of expanding democratization into the everyday social life of individuals is going to depend heavily upon how we conceive of or envision democracy itself. While we often assume to share a common understanding of what democracy is and what democracy looks like in practice, I would posit that there is a particular normative understanding of democracy upon which most discussions of politics, citizenship, and education are based. That is, the hegemonic construction of democracy most often rests upon the assumptions of a centralized state, a representative form of government elected by the populace yet often far removed (geographically, socially, and economically) from those it claims to represent, liberal notions of the primacy of individual rights, and the primary role of the citizen as voter, taxpayer, and 'productive' (i.e. working) member of the polis. When citizenship is discussed beyond the confines of simply voter, taxpayer, and worker, as in the case of the 'participatory' or 'active' citizen, this is most often done within the same commonly understood framework of democracy laid out above. As explained by Claudia W. Ruitenberg (2008), many scholars in the area of citizenship education have, as the starting point for their discussions, the idea of deliberative democracy, as developed in the political philosophy of John Rawls and furthered by educational theorists such as Amy Gutmann (see Gutmann, 1987) and Eamon Callan (see Callan, 1997).

My intention, however, is not to provide an exhaustive account of either liberalism or deliberative democratic theory. Rather, I would like to briefly explore some relevant scholarly literature that takes as its starting point something other than deliberative democracy because it is the normative foundation of liberalism and deliberative democracy and their relationship to

politics and citizenship that anarchism seeks to question and challenge. As such, this section attempts to distinguish anarchism from other radical discourses in education based primarily on the fact that it offers not only critique of existing institutions but also principles by which to re-imagine both the political and educational landscape. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) defines democracy in terms of two fundamental principles: that democracy is characterized by "popular control over public decision making and decision makers" and "equality between citizens in the exercise of that control" (Beetham et al. 2001, 3). How often this definition is used in discussing democracy and education, not to mention how often it is practiced, is difficult to say. However, this definition is broad enough to encompass a number of different conceptions of the 'good life' and specific enough to begin to suggest how schools and what kind of schools might more meaningfully contribute to realizing democracy in its purest sense – direct democracy (*demos + kratia*=rule by the people).

Critical pedagogy has been the most widely recognized radical strand within educational thought. Critical pedagogical thought and its explicators have been the most ardent critics of the status quo, capitalist domination, inequality based upon race, gender, sexual orientation, and the like. Critical pedagogues generally focus their examination on "the mediations that link the institutions and activities of everyday life with the logic and commanding forces that shape the larger social totality" (Giroux, 2009). In other words, the attention of critical pedagogues tends to fall on these "commanding forces" that are often difficult to identify in one's everyday life but that nonetheless affect one's thought, behavior, and the possibilities for the full unfolding of one's individuality and potential.

Generally speaking, critical pedagogues, like their Frankfurt School predecessors, have been strongly influenced by Marxian analyses of society and culture through a more narrow

economic lens and tend to view the fragmented human subject as the outcome of the alienation

created in and through capitalism. While often negated or consciously overlooked, Paulo

Freire's own commitment to and grounding in Marxist-Socialist thought is most obvious in his

early works such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/1993). As Antonia Darder (2009)

explains, "Without question, when Freire spoke of the *ruling class* or the *oppressors*, he was

referring to historical class distinctions and class conflict within the structure of capitalist society

– capitalism was the root of domination" (570).[3] In a cyclical process, capitalism feeds off of this

void and fragmentation by producing needs and desires that the subject is conditioned to fill

through consumption of the products of capitalism (Marcuse, 1964; Fromm, 1976/1997).

Because the material products of capitalism are inadequate and incapable of filling the void that

accompanies existence and self-awareness, individuals continually search for more and/or more

advanced products to fill the (W)hole. This leaves the process of production and consumption

intact, ever expanding, and self-sustaining and renders capitalism the dominant system

structuring individual and social experience. Pepi Leistyna and Loretta Alper (2009) articulately

explain this relationship:

> While capitalism consists of a structural reality built on political and economic
>
> processes, institutions, and relationships, its proponents also rely on the formative
>
> power of culture to shape the kinds of meaning, desire, subjectivity, and thus
>
> identity that can work to ensure the maintenance of its logic and practice. (501)

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[3] That said, a frequent tendency within critical pedagogy is to transmogrify Marxist theories
without serious and sustained engagement with Marxism proper. Therefore, the two schools of
thought should not necessarily be conflated with one another.

Based upon Freire's (1997) own insistence that his pedagogical project be reconstructed and re-envisioned within different cultural and historical contexts, a number of educational scholars and theorists have critiqued and problematized his work and that of his North American proponents so as to make it more inclusive and to broaden its ability to address the contemporary constellation of issues related to power, oppression, and liberation (Bowers, 2003; Ellsworth, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Luke and Gore, 1992; Weiler, 1991) . These critiques have come from a variety of sources and theoretical perspectives (i.e. feminist, post-structural, psychoanalytic, Critical Race Theory, and ecological, to name a few). However, like critical pedagogy itself, these critiques rarely question or offer alternatives to the nexus of centralized power, hierarchy, and monopolized violence that is *the state*.

As Peter Marshall (1992/2010) describes in his comprehensive historical account of anarchism, 'the stream of anarchy' can be said to reach back as far as pre-historical hunter-gatherer societies and the ancient Taoism of China. However, as a historically significant and coherent political ideology that took rise in the nineteenth century, any consideration of social anarchism must begin with its fundamental rejection of the state and the multiple layers of hierarchical forms of government associated with it. I would argue it is this characteristic that most outsiders associate with the word, but it is clear from the wide-ranging theoretical articulations and historical accounts of anarchism 'in action' that, as a social doctrine, anarchism goes far beyond a simple rejection of the state and institutionalized forms of authority and offers nothing short of an entirely new way for human beings to relate to one another based upon a particular view of human nature and particular notions of authority, freedom, and community.

While some of these important ideas will be examined more thoroughly later in the chapter, I would like to provide a few brief comments on each of them here. First, anarchism

tends to view human nature as having a roughly equal capacity for competition as it does for cooperation. The social and cultural context in which one is raised and the discourses through which one comes to understand the workings of the world and his/her place within it is what reinforces or provides credence to one of the two tendencies while undermining the other. Authority, or what might also be called *power over*, is viewed by anarchists as essentially illegitimate unless it can be sufficiently justified for the specific individual(s) upon which it exerts its influence. For example, a police force may be able to justify its authority over a population upon the basis of providing for that population's safety and security; however, for any single individual that does not directly consent to that authority, said authority is entirely illegitimate.[4] Conversely, freedom is regarded as having its foundation in one's ability to have a direct, participatory role in the decisions that most intimately affect one's life.[5] Finally, the anarchist conception of community is generally not something vague or abstract or defined based upon some shared characteristic without spatial or temporal limit (i.e. 'community of believers'). Rather, 'community', from the anarchist perspective, is defined by the place one lives and the people with which one associates and mutually depends upon for one's physical and emotional well-being. Community is small, local, and conceived of on the human-scale. In short, community is one's immediate surroundings and the variety of relationships within those surroundings upon which one depends for survival and consociation.

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[4] Some anarchists go so far as to claim even majority decision-making violates the freedom of or rules over the minority and is, thus, also illegitimate. I, however, do not subscribe to this belief but feel that, while consensus may be the most desirable means of making decisions, there may be instances where the endorsement of the majority must win out.

[5] Like notions of human nature and authority, there are as many definitions of 'freedom' as there are anarchists. There are really no authoritative definitions of any of these concepts. Their many articulations fall across a wide spectrum that have individualist anarchism at one pole and social anarchism at the other.

While the anarchist critique of existing social relations, institutions, and political and economic structures is comprehensive and its vision of a freer and more just and equitable society far-reaching, it is wrong to think that anarchists are indifferent to addressing important social issues within the nation-state and under capitalism and the hierarchical relationships that exist in most realms of public life. A free society is not something that will only be realized after the 'revolution'. Individuals and communities, taking direct control of and participating on an equal footing within the realms of social life by which they are most directly affected in the present, will help usher in a more equitable, free, and just society. As explained on the *Anarchist FAQ* website:

> It is this organic evolution that anarchists promote when they create anarchist alternatives within capitalist society. The alternatives anarchists create (be they workplace or community unions, co-operatives, mutual banks, and so on) are marked by certain common features such as being self-managed, being based upon equality and decentralization and working with other groups and associations within a confederal network based upon mutual aid and solidarity. In other words, they are anarchist in both spirit and structure and so create a practical bridge between what is and what is possible.
> (http://www.infoshop.org/page/AnarchistFAQSectionJ5, retrieved September 23, 2011)

The social anarchist approach to this activity is that of localized and collective action of groups to directly intervene in and change certain aspects of their lives. Social anarchism takes

many different forms in many different areas but most often these different forms share the same

basic aspects of "collective direct action, self-organization, self-management, solidarity, and

mutual aid" (*Anarchism FAQ*) – all of which are intended to support direct, face-to-face

deliberation, discussion, and management of community affairs by members of the community.

I believe the anarchist approach to social change, broadly speaking, and to education more

specifically offers new and exciting possibilities for the way we think about pedagogy,

teaching/learning, the philosophical foundations, and school reform and restructuring for civic

education centered upon direct democracy. In essence, I am looking to anarchism and social

ecology more specifically for a set of structuring principles for education toward direct

democracy that go beyond and approach from a different angle those principles/frameworks

grounded in the liberal tradition and discussed extensively in the literature concerned with the

link between education and democracy.

Anarchism shares the assumptions of Marxian critical educational discourse regarding the

structural inequality of capitalist society, and the possibility of subverting this by means of a

critical pedagogy. Explaining some points of convergence between anarchism and critical

pedagogy, Judith Suissa (2001) states:

> Indeed, the Platonic ideal of education as freedom from illusion is one that
>
> underlies much of the tradition of radical and critical pedagogy, reflecting yet
>
> another point of convergence between liberalism, Marxism and anarchism. Yet
>
> anarchist thinkers would reject both the theory of social reproduction and the
>
> ideas of the socially constructed nature of knowledge implicit in much
>
> contemporary work in critical pedagogy. As an Enlightenment movement,

anarchism involves a great deal of faith in progress and universal values. It is

this, indeed, that separates it from postmodernist theories, in spite of its

decentralist, anti-hierarchical stance. (640)

That said, the fundamental difference between the two schools of thought is the anarchists'

fundamental rejection of the state apparatus.

In his article, "Analytical Anarchism: Some Conceptual Foundations", Alan Carter

(2000) postulates that clarification of foundational concepts within anarchist political philosophy

could aid in helping this perspective gain a foothold in academia similar to that enjoyed by

Marxism. He begins with a working definition of anarchism that defines the philosophy as one

opposed to substantive political inequalities *as well as* substantive economic inequalities. From

the anarchist perspective, most significant political inequalities, Carter (2000) argues, "are those

that flow from centralized, authoritarian forms of government" (1). According to Carter (2000),

anarchism consists of a normative opposition to substantive political inequalities along with an

empirical belief that political equality is unavoidably undermined by state power (1). The

opposition to political inequality and the belief that political equality is undermined by

centralized authority necessarily makes all anarchists opposed to the state as such. However,

Carter reminds us, opposition to the state and, thus, rule is not the same as opposition to society

and rules used to structure that society. As he explains,

What is surely crucial to any version of anarchism worth its salt is that the

anarchist structures it proposes be empowering to those within them and do not

lead to a centralization of power or decision-making. Even with those

restrictions, the possibilities for anarchist social organization are clearly far

greater than most opponents of anarchism realize or than is portrayed in popular

stereotypes of anarchist practice. (232)

Carter (2000) goes on to outline the significant distinctions between anarchism and

Marxism. The first and foremost difference is that Marxists are willing to adopt a vangaurdist

approach to revolutionary change and a transitional form of government leading toward a

socialist society while anarchists argue that this vanguard would itself develop into a state-like

form and that no state-like form could be relied upon to bring about the transition to an

egalitarian society (232). In essence, Carter argues that the most sophisticated articulations of

Marxist theory draw their focus upon economic forces, economic relations, and political relations

yet ignore *political forces* (i.e. police and military) that are drawn upon to secure economic

control (i.e. ownership of the means of production – tools and raw materials). It is the failure of

Marxist theory, according to Carter (2000), to distinguish between political *relations* and

political *forces* that is the first primary distinction between it and anarchist theory. In other

words, just as there is a distinction between relations of production (i.e. relations of effective

control of forces of production) and the forces of production (i.e. labor-power of producing

agents and means of production), there should also be a distinction between political relations

and political forces (i.e. the forces that empower the state). As Carter (2000) explains:

Included within the set of political relations, constituting the political structure,

are these power relations, essential for enabling and preserving the relations of

control over production and exchange and that are embodied in the various legal

and political institutions. The political institutions are relations of…effective control of the defensive forces. In the modern state, these political forces are coercive in nature. And such forces of coercion can comprise political labor-power and means of coercion. (235)

With technological development (i.e. developments in the means of production) comes the transformation of legal and political structures to stabilize required economic relations. Carter (2000) introduces a third factor to help explain "the features of society that otherwise appear to fall outside the ambit of historical materialism (i.e. nationalism). This third important factor can be characterized as (c) self-definition within a community" (238). Insofar as individuals identify with different groups and that it is within these groups that rational individuals face scarcity, they may choose to plunder the surpluses created by other groups rather than rationally choosing to develop the productive forces. For those that choose systematic plunder of other groups in the face of scarcity, development of the forces of coercion would be of great benefit.

Rather than viewing the nature of a set of production relations as explained by the level of development of the productive forces, Carter explains that a set of production relations in a society is explained by state interests. In order to protect their interests and develop their ability to defend themselves (political forces), state actors have an interest "in selecting and stabilizing appropriate economic relations" through the political forces under their control thereby further developing these very forces. Finally, Carter argues, it is neither the legal and political *institutions* nor simply the political actors or *individuals* but the "rational choices taken by individuals who act within certain relationships to one another" that select economic relations. The primary implication of Carter's (2000) State-Primacy Theory flows from this:

given that states select relations of production that are in their interests rather than egalitarian relations that are in the interests of the mass of the population, then a necessary (though not necessarily sufficient) condition for human emancipation and equality must be the abolition of the state by the citizens themselves. (249)

In short, whereas critical pedagogy often argues for the reform of, greater access to, recognition from, and equality within the existing state apparatus, anarchism finds as its starting point an outright rejection of centralized authority, manifested most clearly in the centralized state. While anarchists and Marxian/Neo-Marxian critical pedagogues most certainly share much common ground, this important point of divergence raises an essential question in a discussion of the relationship between education, democracy, and citizenship.

This question asks whether the theories, analyses, and praxis of critical educators and pedagogues are aimed toward providing each human being with greater access to and more equitable distribution of the fruits of modern industrialization, technological development, and political power or if they are more interested in articulating, pursuing, and realizing a completely new (maybe not so new as it may have existed in the past) way of life that has at its center "learning, sociality, community, 'autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment'" – all of which "work to produce a more democratic and sustainable society that is 'simple in means and rich in ends'" (Kahn, 2009 quoting Illich, 1977, 44).

In summary, the anarchist perspective differs from Marxian-inspired critical pedagogues' efforts at social transformation in a number of different ways. Broadly speaking, anarchism

stands in opposition to central ownership of the economy and state control of production. It maintains the belief that a transition to a free and classless society is possible without any intermediate period of dictatorship. As Judith Suissa (2010) explains, anarchist opposition to Marxism is rooted in the belief that "by using the state structure to realize their goals, revolutionaries will…inevitably reproduce all its negative features" (Suissa, 2001). Finally, anarchists commonly hold that the Marxist claim to create a scientific theory of social change will invariably lead to a form of elitism. In contrast, a fundamental aspect of the anarchist position is the belief that the exact form of the future society can never be determined in advance as it involves "as constant, dynamic process of self-improvement, spontaneous organization and free experimentation" (Suissa, 2001, 631).

III. Overview of Historical and Contemporary Anarchist Critiques of State-Controlled Education

A preliminary search for scholarly articles under the broad heading of 'anarchism and education' yields literature coming primarily from the late 1960's and early 1970's. It appears that many of the investigations into this topic were conducted during the heyday of social, cultural, and political resistance to hierarchy and authoritarianism in its many guises. Obviously, the nature of social and political life and the ensuing discourses around the purpose, practice, and organization of public education have changed dramatically over the past 30 years as have the iterations and relevance of anarchist theory and practice. Therefore, I thought it wise to limit my overview of the literature that is concerned with anarchism as a political philosophy and its specific implications for the way we think about and practice education to the past 20 years as this is most relevant for the present study. That said, education has been a central aspect of anarchist thought since its officially recognized inception between the late 17th and mid-18th

century and, thus, there is a wealth of literature on the topic that will be examined and considered in due course throughout the dissertation.

Robert H. Chappell (1978) offers a comprehensive survey of the educational viewpoints held by the major European anarchists of the 19th Century. As it turns out, like so many other social movements of the time, the anarchist critique of public education was rooted in the belief in reason and rationality as the means and ends of an education aimed at individual and social freedom. While some of these early anarchists developed their programs around the former goal (individual freedom), others viewed this as inseparable from the latter (social freedom).

William Godwin (1756-1836), one of the forefathers of anarchism as an organized political theory and movement, opposed a state-controlled educational system because it served to bolster the power of the state and thereby occluded the development of human reason as the basis for social progress. The development of human reason, Godwin argued, could only come with social interaction and communication and could not be trusted to any government or religious institution. Similarly, Mikhail Alexandrovitch Bakunin (1814-1876) was strictly opposed to a national education which, he believed, primarily served the socio-economic interests of the state and those that controlled it and not the interests of the people. As Bakunin believed the only legitimate authorities for a human were the laws of his/her own nature and those of the environment, education should be based upon gaining an understanding, through scientific inquiry, of nature and society. He called his approach integral education as it provided both the theoretical and practical aspects necessary for the individual's full development.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), the first to explicitly identify himself as an anarchist, suggested the principal role of state-sponsored education was to create and reproduce class divisions within society by separating professional and practical instruction. Similar to

Bakunin, Proudhon argued that book-learning or theoretical education should be integrated with practical education focused on trades and conducting the affairs of one's daily life.

In surveying the field of the study of anarchism and its relationship to education, there are only a few contemporary scholars that have engaged sustained considerations of the topic. Of the work of these few, most can be categorized as either historical investigations of (see Avrich, 1980; Shotton, 1993; Smith, 1983; Spring, 1998) or philosophical inquiries (see Smith, 1983; Suissa, 2010) into the relationship. However, there are a couple of scholars that have gone beyond the historical and philosophical to examine how an education firmly rooted in anarchist principles looks in practice (see Gribble, 1998; Hern, 1997) or how anarchist principles could be incorporated into the traditional public school (Deleon 2006 and 2008).

In her 2006 book, *Anarchism and Education: A Philosophical Perspective*, Judith Suissa undertakes one of the most in-depth contemporary considerations of the implications of traditional anarchist thought for philosophy of education. In her discussion of anarchism and the underlying principles that have some bearing on education, she draws primarily from the foundational anarchist thinkers of 19th century Europe – namely, Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon – and the numerous interpretations of their lives and writing offered by contemporary academics and intellectuals. As Suissa's work is one of only a few current publications that engages a meticulous and relevant analysis of anarchism and its relationship to/implications for education, I will provide a summary of her approach and major claims paying particular attention to the comparisons/contrasts she provides between anarchism and liberalism, identify the areas in which I feel she has laid some of the groundwork for my own exploration, and map out the uncharted territory through which I traverse in the remainder of the dissertation.

Suissa (2010) clearly and concisely distinguishes the anarchist perspective from most other political philosophies by claiming that anarchism does not take any existing social or political framework for granted but rather focuses upon imagining how an ideal social order could look, identifying the principles underlying this vision, and enacting them within existing social relations. The first chapter in the book immediately attempts to sketch out a working definition for anarchism and to lay out the central questions related to anarchism and education that she will explore in the subsequent chapters. Suissa claims that anarchism addresses "basic philosophical issues concerning such notions as human nature, authority, freedom, and community" (8) and places the burden of proof for the justification of authority or coercion in any realm upon the agent/institution that exercises that authority or coercion.

Comparing anarchism to liberalism, Suissa claims that at the heart of anarchist theory is the desire for freedom. Equally important to and mutually dependent upon freedom is equality – a primary concern for anarchism and socialism alike. But while liberalism is centrally focused upon freedom and socialism primarily concerned with equality, the anarchist stance is that they are inseparable, neither freedom nor equality is realizable without the other. She distinguishes between 'individualist' anarchism and 'social' anarchism (9) - the former privileging individual freedom or autonomy above all else – and clearly states that her inquiry is primarily concerned with the latter. Finally, she goes on to identify and briefly define the five main variants of social anarchism which include mutualism, federalism, collectivism, communism, and syndicalism. For the purposes of my discussion, it is not necessary to provide a detailed account of each of these strands of anarchist thought as they all share, in one form or another, the fundamental set of principles laid out above.

Suissa identifies the anarchist conception of human nature as the key to understanding "much of anarchist thought and…to addressing the criticisms of anarchism as a political theory" as well as an "important element in the anarchist position on education" (16). Through consideration of foundational anarchist thinkers of the 19th century, Suissa determines that anarchism tends to hold a conception of human nature that is essentially or "innately twofold, involving both an egotistical potential and a sociable, or altruistic potential" and that it is the form of the dominant political and economic relations within which one is embedded that promote the expression of one or the other of these potentialities (25). As Suissa explains, according to traditional anarchist theorists, "although there are two innate sides to human nature, the way in which different propensities develop is a function of environmental conditions" (32). In other words, capitalism and capitalist social relations and the indirect forms of political participation available to people within large, bureaucratized, and centralized representative or parliamentary democracies tend to bring out or nurture the more egoistic and unsympathetic tendencies of individual human beings and entire societies living under these conditions. Conversely, Suissa explains that many anarchists believed social relations (and primarily educational relations)

> which systematically promoted cooperation, solidarity, and mutual aid, thus
> undermining the values underlying the capitalist state, would both encourage the
> flourishing of these innate human propensities and inspire people to form social
> alliances and movements aimed at furthering the social revolution. (32)

Finally, in addition to holding a twofold notion of human nature, the social anarchists also placed a strong emphasis on the idea of rationality and humans' ability to reason as central to the project of moral and political progress.

In the chapter titled, "Education for an anarchist society: Vocational training and political visions," Suissa (2010) attempts to answer the question, "'What should the anarchist policy-maker or educational theorist do – in keeping with anarchist theory – in order to bring the possibility of an anarchist society a little closer?'" Despite the oxymoronic notion of an 'anarchist policy-maker', Suissa's examination of this question is worth considering in detail as it attempts to directly bridge the gap between traditional anarchist theory and practice and the moral and political content of anarchist education. In other words, she provides an articulation of the traditional "anarchist perspective on the relationship between education and social change" (103).

Drawing from late 19th and early 20th century anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin and Pierre Josesh-Proudhon, Suissa highlights the importance of integral education – that is, "an education that combined intellectual and manual training" – in early attempts at providing an anarchist education (103). The centrality of integral education rested upon the notion that an education too divorced from the world of work would limit one's ability to navigate the industrialized marketplace while a wholly specialized vocational education would doom the student to a life of monotonous factory work. Ideally, integral education would help break down the distinctions created by capitalist economies between manual work and mental work and the "associated inequalities in social status" to which this distinction gives rise.

In addition to the emphasis upon an education which combined manual and mental work, the educational endeavors of traditional social anarchists also involved

a commitment to political and moral education, in the sense of challenging the

dominant values of the capitalist system – for example, the wage system, the

competitive marketplace, the control of the means of production, and so on – as

well as fostering the social virtues. (Suissa, 2010, 105)

That is, students, whether old or young, were encouraged to critically examine and question the

legitimacy of social systems and institutions based upon obedience and authority such as the

Catholic church, division of labor, and traditional school organization itself and the values upon

which these systems and institutions rested (Avrich, 1980). Alongside the questioning of

dominant values, anarchist educators attempted to advance and cultivate - in word and deed -

"the human propensity (already present, but often suppressed by capitalist institutions and

values) for benevolence, mutual aid and fraternity" within students (Suissa, 2010, 107).

In short, according to Suissa's examination of the traditional social anarchist perspective

on and practice of education, those involved in the education of the young should not be

concerned simply with intellectual development or preparation for the world of work – albeit

with a different orientation toward these endeavors. Education, according to the early anarchists,

should in no way aid and abet dominant economic and political trends, but should question and

challenge the moral foundations upon which such trends rest. The task for the anarchist

educator, according to Suissa, is

to lay the grounds for the transition to an anarchist, self-governing, equitable

community. One can begin this process…on the smallest possible scale, by

challenging dominant values and encouraging the human propensity for mutual

aid, cooperation and self-governance. Indeed…the anarchist revolution is

conceptualized by most of the social anarchists not as a violent dismantling of the

present system in order to replace it with a radically new one, nor, as in the case

of Marxism, as a remolding of human tendencies and attitudes, but as a process of

creating a new society from the seeds of aspirations, tendencies and trends already

present in human action….the foundations of anarchist society are, above all,

moral, and thus one cannot escape the conclusion that the emphasis of the

educational process must be on fostering those moral attitudes which can further

and sustain a viable anarchist society. (118)

After considering some of the foundational principles of traditional social anarchism and

the ways in which they were realized in anarchist schools of the past, she goes on to consider the

moral and political content of traditional anarchist education. First and foremost, mid to late 19th

and early 20th century anarchist educators thought it necessary to remove schools from control of

the state. Theorists such as Proudhon insisted that decentralization of the school system was as

necessary as decentralization of the workplace in order that "the responsibility for the setting up

and managing of schools would rest with parents and communities and would be closely tied to

local workers' associations" (120).

While the notion of wresting control of the educational system may seem far-fetched, we

need not look far to see examples of how this has and continues to happen. For example,

anarchist free skools, the home schooling movement, and certain elements of the charter school

movement have as their goal the education of young people with greater and lesser degrees of autonomy from state control.

The political content of education rooted in the traditional anarchist movement, according to Suissa, is grounded in the ideal of dismantling capitalism and creating a classless society. The approach to the realization of this ideal, as explored earlier, lies in fostering the human tendencies necessary to advance and support it (such as cooperation, mutual aid, solidarity, sensitivity to injustice, etc.). However, the fostering of these qualities is insufficient on its own and, according to Suissa, must be supplemented by two other vital ingredients. As Suissa claims, a political education must first equip students to understand the anarchist critique of existing society and, second, must provide students with opportunities to imagine alternatives. This final quality – that is, encouraging students to develop reconstructive visions of society – has been a central aspect of anarchist educational experiments in the past and present and is what sets it apart from the liberal and Marxist perspectives. Suissa summarizes it this way:

> The anarchist perspective…involves not only the 'leap of faith' that a stateless society is possible, and can be sustained along communal, non-hierarchical principles, on the basis of already present human capabilities and propensities but also, crucially for education, the utopian hope that the very imaginative exercise of encouraging people to conceptualize the exact form of this society, and to constantly engage with and experiment with its principles and manifestations, is itself a central part of the revolutionary process. (123)

Suissa provides one of the most comprehensive contemporary accounts of the traditional social anarchist perspective and its philosophical implications for education. This work has been a major catalyst for my thinking. However, it is important to note that Suissa's analysis and philosophical investigation is focused upon the foundational anarchist thinkers, activists, theorists and educators of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th century. Because it is obviously beyond the scope of her book, Suissa does not take into consideration the ways in which anarchism has changed and transformed over the course of the second half of the 20th century in response to a rapidly shifting social, economic, and political landscape. Nor does she examine how these social, economic, and political shifts have influenced education and how the contemporary anarchist movement has responded. I will proceed in the next section of the chapter to provide a broad outline of the contemporary anarchist movement and the principles that define it and briefly sketch out its implications for education that will be explored in further depth in the following chapters.

IV. Principles of Contemporary Anarchism

What falls outside of most historical and philosophical investigations of the relationship between anarchism and education are contemporary iterations of the theory, philosophy, and practice of self-identified anarchists living in the 21st century. Anarchism, as a clearly articulated political philosophy and basis for individual and collective action, took rise during the Jacobin revolution of the 1790's and saw its largest following from the middle of the 19th century (during which time the 'forefathers' of anarchism lived such Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Peter Kropotkin, and Mikhail Bakunin) through to the end of World War II (Marshall,

1992/2010). While anarchists and anarchist-inspired groups, organizations, and projects have continued since, adherents of the philosophy have easily been overshadowed by the ascendancy of Marxism and communism's role in world events since the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Interestingly, anarchism has seen a revitalization that some attribute to the rise of neo-liberal globalization, the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the global resistance movements by which these trends have been met (i.e. the 1996 Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico; the 1999 IMF/World Bank Protests in Seattle, WA; and the 2000 Free Trade Area of the Americas Summit protests in Quebec) (Graeber, 2009). In fact, anarchism has seen its most widespread and visible re-emergence in the global Occupy movement beginning in New York City in 2011 (Aragorn!, 2012). While these movements have been made up of a wide range of interests and foci and just as many variations of anarchists (black bloc anarchists, eco-anarchists, anarcha-feminists, anarchists of color, insurrectionary anarchists, anarcho-primitivists etc.), they have shared a number of traits, principles, strategies, and tactics in common with one another.

Uri Gordon (2007), in his doctoral thesis, *Anarchism and political theory: Contemporary problems*, argues that contemporary anarchism has veered sharply away from the historical workers' and peasants' anarchist movement that emerged in the mid 19th century and saw a significant decline after WWII. As he explains it, contemporary anarchism:

> represents the revival of anarchist politics over the past decade in the *intersection* of several other movements, including radical ecology, feminism, black and indigenous liberation, anti-nuclear movements and, most recently, resistance to neoliberal capitalism and the 'global permanent war'. Because of its hybrid

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genealogy, anarchism in the age of globalization is a very fluid and diverse

movement, evolving in a rapidly-shifting landscape of social contention. (10)

No question, contemporary anarchism has carried forward a number of the principles and

strategies of traditional anarchism such as its rejection of the centralized state and capitalism and

the centrality of mutual aid, cooperation, and direct action. However, the contemporary

movement has taken these principles and strategies and provided them with re-articulations to fit

and more meaningfully resist and transform current power dynamics, relationships based on

command and obedience, centralized and/or private control of cultural and environmental

commons and decision-making, and the many mutations of capitalism and the concomitant

hyper-individualism, commodification, and consumerism it breeds.

More specifically, contemporary anarchism – across its variety of iterations and foci – is

grounded in resistance to all forms of hierarchy, direct action, consensus-based or horizontal

decision making, and pre-figurative politics. What unites and animates anarchists of every

stripe, Uri Gordon (2007) explains, is

a shared orientation toward ways of 'doing politics' that is manifest in common

forms of organization (anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, consensus-based); in a

common repertoire of political expression (direct action, constructing alternatives,

community outreach, confrontation); in a common discourse (keywords,

narratives, arguments and myths); and in more broadly shared 'cultural' features

(dress, music, diet). (10)

I will briefly examine each of these principles/strategies in order to provide a comprehensive yet necessarily broad picture of the movement before moving on to introduce its implications for education.

A. Resistance to hierarchy/Anti-authoritarianism

The Greek meaning of the word 'anarchy' is formed by the prefix 'an' or 'a', meaning 'not', 'the absence of', or 'the lack of', plus 'archos', meaning 'a ruler', 'director', 'chief', or 'authority'. Thus, the word anarchy itself can be defined as 'without authority' or 'without a ruler'. As mentioned, anarchism has defined itself as anti-statist and anti-government since its inception. One can add to this list opposition to organized religion, capitalism, and private property as each of these is either a manifestation of domination or has a direct link to the interests and power of the few over that of the masses. While anti-statism, anti-capitalism, anti-militarism, and opposition to organized forms of religion were the bedrock of the anarchist movement in the 19th and early 20th century, anarchists have largely broadened the scope of their activism to resist and replace hierarchy in all of its manifestations.

Again, resistance to hierarchy has long been a feature of both the traditional and contemporary anarchist movements. However, contemporary anarchists have attempted to recognize and confront manifestations of hierarchy in arenas that were largely ignored by traditional anarchist activists. For example, few traditional anarchist theorists recognized issues of hierarchy involving race and ethnicity, indigenous sovereignty, sexual orientation, and ecological crises nor did they address these issues directly in their writing. Contemporary anarchists, on the other hand, view these as fundamental issues - as fundamental as gender oppression and patriarchy - that are not simply unconnected squabbles over identity politics, but

as fundamentally tied to domination, capitalist exploitation, and the concentration of power and decision-making.

In short, contemporary anarchists work not only to resist hierarchy in its multiple and overlapping manifestations (i.e. sexism, racism, classism, ableism, speciesism) but also to develop practices that promote, as much as possible, equity and autonomy for all people. Following from the belief that all individuals are equal and autonomous, the contemporary anarchist movement strives to organize itself, make decisions, and pursue structures that are themselves anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, and consensus-based. In other words, while the movement resists authority, domination, and their manifestation in the state, it "is less about seizing state power than about exposing, delegitimating, and dismantling mechanisms of rule while [also] winning ever-larger spaces of autonomy from it" (Graeber, 2002, 13). In other words, anarchists promote self-organized alternatives to hierarchical institutions.

B. Direct Action

Direct action, in its simplest form, refers to people *doing* things for themselves without permission, authorization, or assistance from those in authority. Direct action has taken the form of anything from providing free medical care to injured activists at a protest to self-organized distribution of food and supplies to the victims of a natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina (see *Black flags and windmills*, Scott Crow, PM Press, 2011). Direct action stands in contrast with any decision or action that is politically mediated. Oftentimes, direct action takes the form of civil disobedience. As anarchists are anti-statist, they do not believe in appealing to the state, government officials, the police or the military to make decisions for them, carry out actions on their behalf, or to otherwise approve of activities individuals or groups have mutually agreed to

engage in. Direct action, in short, means choosing *not* to go to a 'higher up' for permission, assistance or advocacy but looking to oneself and one's peers to do what needs to be done – whether it is in the workplace or the community in which one lives.

C. Pre-figurative Politics

As David Graeber (2004) explains, pre-figurative politics is an "ethical imperative" for the contemporary anarchist movement and essentially involves the attempt to create non-alienated experiences and forms of direct democracy. He goes on:

…only by making one's form of organization in the present at least a rough approximation of how a free society would actually operate, how everyone, someday, should be able to live, can one guarantee that we will not cascade back into disaster. Grim joyless revolutionaries who sacrifice all pleasure to the cause can only produce grim joyless societies.

(http://www.zcommunications.org/anarchism-or-the-revolutionary-movement-of-the-twenty-first-century-by-david-graeber, retrieved April 12, 2012)

In other words, contemporary anarchists not only resist state control and authority but do their best to work outside the state; they not only condemn hierarchy and authority but also work to implement non-hierarchical structures, decentralized organizations, and decision-making based upon consensus; they not only work to undermine capitalism but also work to develop alternative forms of exchange, mutual aid, and cooperation. There is an overwhelming

emphasis, Gordon (2007) argues, "on realizing libertarian and egalitarian social relations within the fold of the movement itself" (23).

As cited earlier, Judith Suissa (2010) highlights the centrality amongst anarchists of both critique and resistance to *what is* and imaginative reconceptualizations of *what could be*; that is, of nurturing the utopian kernel of the anarchist sensibility. Contemporary anarchist theorists and activists take this one step further and attempt not only to imagine what a non-hierarchical, classless, and egalitarian society could look like but also to put these principles into practice in the present – as the old Industrial Workers of the World saying goes, 'to build the new world in the shell of the old'. Again, Uri Gordon (2007) sums up the meaning of pre-figurative politics quite well:

> What anarchist ideological expression overwhelmingly lacks…are detailed
> prognostic statements on a desired future society. This does not mean that
> anarchism is merely destructive, but that its constructive aspects are expected to
> be articulated in the present-tense experimentation of pre-figurative politics – not
> as an *a priori* position. This lends anarchism a strongly open-ended dimension,
> whereby it eschews any notion of a 'post-revolutionary resting point'. Instead,
> anarchists have come to transpose their notion of social revolution to the present-
> tense. Non-hierarchical, anarchic modes of interaction are no longer seen as
> features on which to model a future society, but rather as an ever-present potential
> of social interaction here and now. (11)

As such, I will conclude this chapter with a consideration of how the aforementioned principles

and characteristics of contemporary anarchism may influence how we look at, think about, and

practice education. Stated differently, I will introduce some characteristics a school might

possess that used these principles as an organizing framework for structure, curriculum,

relationships, and objectives. Again, a more detailed exploration of these principles and their

implications will be taken up in Chapter Six.

V. Anarchist Principles as Organizing Framework for Education

A small number of contemporary scholars have begun to explore the relationship between

contemporary anarchism and the education of the young. Abraham DeLeon (2008) attempts to

draw attention to aspects of anarchist theory that he claims can inform educational praxis. More

specifically, he focuses upon the notions of direct action and sabotage as means of challenging

educators and students to resist the oppressive practices within educational institutions. The

anarchist notion of sabotage can be utilized, argues DeLeon (2008), "to interrupt the curriculum

educators are given, the high-stakes test their students are subjected to, and a framework for

moving their resistance outside of the walls of the school" (124). He goes on to offer an

excellent synopsis of the contemporary anarchist position that has direct implications for

education:

> Anarchists also insist that human beings need to have the capability of managing
>
> their own affairs without the need of top-down social structures. This rests upon
>
> the belief that people should govern every aspect of their lives and this should be
>
> done in a way that is as cooperative and non-coercive as possible. Anarchists

contend that people are naturally cooperative and that social systems, such as

capitalism, have conditioned them to be selfish. Instead of relying on the

traditional dichotomous system of ruler/ruled, anarchists insist on building new

forms of organization that account for self-governing that are non-hierarchical.

(130)

Upon this basis, DeLeon (2008) makes a substantial argument for how direct action and sabotage

can be utilized within traditional school settings to disrupt circumscribed curriculum and

standardized testing, to introduce students to key concepts and strategies used by radical groups

to challenge unjust social relations, and to subvert social norms that are most often unchallenged

and perpetuated in traditional school settings. DeLeon (2006, 2008) consciously acknowledges

that *infiltration* is one of his key organizing frameworks. That is, in considering an anarchism

for education, he promotes the notion that those with anarchic sensibilities work to place

themselves within established institutions and practice "acts of epistemological and ideological

subversion and sabotage" (Ross & DeLeon, 2010, xiii).

This, I think, can be a helpful strategy for introducing anarchist discourse into these

mainstream institutions. However, I feel that contemporary anarchist principles and strategies

have much broader implications for education that move far beyond the pedagogy and praxis of

individual educators. While these implications certainly involve pedagogy and praxis, they also

speak to issues of curriculum, school organization, methods of decision-making, and the

relationships between individuals within the school and that between the school and the

community within which it is situated.

William T. Armaline (2009) expands the perspective on education offered by contemporary anarchism. He focuses upon some of the values inherent in contemporary anarchism, described above, such as deconstructing all forms of hierarchy, a notion of 'Truth' as fluid and situated, and the creation of democratic communities based upon situated knowledge and a cooperative system of horizontal free-association. Armaline (2009) contends these values help outline the primary characteristics of an anarchist pedagogical space which might include: a "humble" approach to 'Truth' and a recognition of knowledge as something created and constructed; the effort to create a space for the critical questioning and deconstruction of oppressive practices, systems, and ideologies in and outside of the classroom; horizontal democracy "where students and educators engage in freely associated cooperative learning and activity rather than individual competition and mutual alienation"; and, lastly, a view of all people as worthy of curiosity, learning, teaching, and creation (139). Finally, Armaline (2009) suggests all educational endeavors "begin with the very real and immediate curiosities and needs of those participating in whatever educational spaces we create" (144). This final point is crucial in that an educational structure based upon anarchist principles must always be situated within, initiated by, and developed through a community of individuals that share a common place and set of evolving interests, desires, and needs.

VI. Conclusion

As the anarchist approach to change is not thought about in terms of a sweeping, revolutionary transformation of society on a spatially broad scale and temporally condensed timeframe, but, rather, through pursuing a pre-figurative politics within existing social relations, it becomes obvious why education has been a central concern within anarchism since its

inception. As schools affect so many individuals in society and are one of the first institutions in

and through which the young are socialized, it has been a primary site of contestation and

experimentation. The thinking is that if this primary socializing agent were to be premised upon

a different set of principles - namely cooperation rather than competition; the common good

rather than individual self-interest; local context and concrete lived experiences rather than

formal, abstract, and pre-formulated curricula; equality rather than hierarchy; direct democratic

control rather than leaving decision making to a select number of experts or professionals– then

the seeds for the future society toward which anarchists strive - though "buried beneath the

snow" (Ward, 1982) - would be firmly planted in the ground.

Chapter 3

Social Ecology as Philosophical and Ethical Foundation for Ecological and Community-

Based Education

Social Ecology *n 1: a coherent radical critique of current social, political, and anti-ecological*

trends. 2: a reconstructive, ecological, communitarian, and ethical approach to society. (The

Institute for Social Ecology, http://www.social-ecology.org/, retrieved February 23, 2012)

I. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to closely examine and explain the theory and philosophy of

social ecology as developed by the late Murray Bookchin (1921-2006) as a possible

comprehensive framework for a secondary curriculum centered upon an anarchistic and

ecological ethics. I will first review some of the approaches to teaching and learning that fall

under various labels including environmental education, ecological literacy, and/or ecojustice

pedagogy. In doing so, I am interested in examining the underlying philosophical and ethical

foundations of each of these approaches. The chapter will continue with a more detailed

consideration of the philosophy espoused by and developed through social ecology as well as its

ethical implications for human thought and behavior. In short, social ecology advances what

might be called an anarchistic philosophy of nature and an accompanying ethics based upon

mutuality, cooperation, non-hierarchy, and diversity. In the final chapter, I will return to this

topic and consider what the philosophical and ethical foundations of social ecology imply for the

content of an ecologically oriented education.

This will involve a close reading and analysis of Bookchin's work on social ecology, including but not limited to *The Ecology of freedom: The emergence and dissolution of hierarchy* (1982/2005), *The Philosophy of social ecology: Essays on dialectical naturalism* (1990), and *Remaking society: Pathways to a green future* (1990). Bookchin spent the greater part of his life developing the social, political, and philosophical bases of social ecology. Ultimately, social ecology is rooted in the claim that the global ecological crisis (which Bookchin was one of the first to call attention to in the early 1950s) is not a result of overpopulation, industrialism, or technology per se, but is the logical result of hierarchy and domination *of* human *by* human. In developing and supporting this claim, Bookchin traces back through the course of human history to identify the emergence of hierarchy within pre-historic societies and through to its most developed incarnation in the form of the modern State and its intimate relationship with corporate globalization and neo-liberal capitalist economics. The historical analysis of the emergence of hierarchy is conducted in Bookchin's *The Ecology of Freedom*, but is carried over into and further developed in subsequent works.

Some background on Bookchin's origins and life are important for fully understanding the scope and development of his work. Bookchin was born in January of 1921 in New York City to Jewish-Russian immigrants who worked in the Manhattan sweatshops of the garment industry. Radicalism was, one could argue, a family inheritance. His grandparents had been members of the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Russia. He grew up in the working class neighborhoods of the Bronx and, early in his life, got involved in radical organizations. As a young worker, he participated in the trade union movement of the late 1930s. He was active in a number of Communist-inspired groups from which he eventually broke away and began to move more and more toward libertarian socialism and anarchism (from Eiglad's Introduction to

Bookchin, 2007). Peter Marshall (1992/2010) describes Bookchin as "the thinker that has most renewed anarchist thought and action since the Second World War" (602). He participated in the environmental movement when it was just beginning, the Civil Rights movement, the anti-nuclear movement, the Students for a Democratic Society, and a series of urban development projects. Throughout his life of activism, despite developing a reputation for a sometimes acerbic personality, Bookchin constantly examined, reevaluated, and re-articulated the premises, logical conclusions, and strategies of radical theory across the spectrum and his writings have included a variety of subject matters including history, anthropology, philosophy, science, technology, culture, and social organization. Eirik Eiglad (in his Introduction to Bookchin, 2007) sums up the relationship between Bookchin's life and work:

> Bookchin experienced many radical movements in his lifetime, and had a
> relationship to all the major radical ideological trends of the last century. Still, he
> managed to hammer out a unique political philosophy that attempts to build on
> the best in these traditions. The purpose of his work was to renew radical theory
> so that it maintains its best principles and draws lessons from a broad spectrum of
> historical experiences, while being adapted to new issues and challenges. (xi)

Bookchin develops the philosophical basis of social ecology in 'dialectical naturalism', or philosophy of nature, that expands upon the work of 19th century anarchist Peter Kropotkin. As Matt Hern (1997) explains it, dialectical naturalism suggests that "the example of an endlessly diverse, self-organizing, and mutualistic ecosystem should be the model for human society, rather than the simplistic and falsifying projection of nature as a brutal, competitive hierarchy, a

misinterpretation that obscures the natural world's inherent cooperativeness" (64). The basic premise of social ecology is that in order to bring society and nature back into sustainable and healthy balance, we must deeply examine and rectify the "irrationalities" that dominate social life.

As social ecology is centrally concerned with the nature of how humans relate to other humans and, thus, how humans relate to the natural world and considering the fact that schools are a primary socializing agent/institution, it appears each of these topics has implications for the other. Dialectical naturalism, as a philosophy of both human and nonhuman nature, is an attempt, according to Hern (1997) to place "humanity in the context of the natural world and establish an ethical basis for interaction" (64).

Therefore, this chapter will attempt to draw out the implications of social ecology as a philosophical foundation for how and toward what ends we educate younger generations. Namely, social ecology could be used as a framework for assisting young people in understanding the interrelationship of existing social relations and humans' relationship to the natural world through the lens of history, philosophy, and natural and social sciences. Drawing as it does from history, philosophy, social theory, and the natural sciences, I would argue social ecology could be utilized not only to guide curriculum but also as the curriculum itself – a curriculum centered upon "the ability of an emancipated humanity to function as ethical agents for diminishing needless suffering, engaging in ecological restoration, and fostering an aesthetic appreciation of natural evolution in all its fecundity and diversity" (Bookchin, 2007, 21).

It should be noted that ecological science has moved away from viewing natural ecosystems as working toward maintaining stability and a healthy equilibrium. Rather, ecologists view ecosystems as more dynamic and unstable within geological and evolutionary

timeframes (Des Jardins, 2005). Additionally, there is a significant controversy over whether ethics can or should be grounded in what is considered 'natural' – in this case, the understanding of nature uncovered by ecological science. Based upon my reading of Bookchin's work, I believe his view of nature aligns quite well with the dynamic viewpoint mentioned above. That is, he tended to view nature and natural evolution as an unfolding process toward greater differentiation and diversity. However, human activity and disruption of natural processes have tended to render non-human nature as more homogeneous and, therefore, more limited in its capacity to continue to move toward greater diversity and, ultimately, to sustain biotic life. It was really this interface, between humans and the non-human natural world and their relationship to one another, that Bookchin sought to think through and analyze and out of which he sought to develop his ecological ethics.

Finally, it is important to recognize that objections to grounding ethics in nature are rooted in the value placed upon neutrality and objectivity within scientific discourse – be it in the form of the natural sciences themselves or analytic philosophy. What I am attempting to highlight here is that 'objectivity' and 'neutrality' are values nonetheless.[6] The point that will come to light in the ensuing discussion is that Bookchin viewed the human species as fully embedded within nature as opposed to standing outside or above it. At the same time, the evolution of human reason and the species' unique capacity to alter the environment put it in a distinctive position relative to the rest of non-human nature and bring with it certain ethical responsibilities. In the next section, I will consider some of the philosophical underpinnings of environmental education and ecological literacy in order to situate the philosophy of social

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[6] It is beyond the scope of the current project to discuss in detail the ways in which Bookchin's work is aligned/misaligned with contemporary ecological science and to engage in a more thorough discussion of the objections that have been raised against Aristotelian teleology.

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ecology within these established approaches. Following from this, I will discuss and examine

social ecology's claim that the ecological crises have a social foundation. In the final section of

the chapter, I will take up an exploration of the philosophy of *dialectical naturalism* as

developed by Bookchin and look specifically at the way he used this philosophy as a basis for an

objective ecological ethics. As with previous chapters, I will save a more systematic assessment

of the implications of the philosophy of social ecology for education for the final chapter.

II. Philosophical Lenses for Environmental Literacy, Eco-Justice and Social Ecology

It is widely recognized that the earth's ecosystems upon which all of life on the planet

depends have been in steady decline for over half a century. The UN-funded Millennium

Ecosystem Assessment (MEA), released in 2005, found that during the last fifty years, humans

have altered in significantly negative terms the earth's ecosystems "more rapidly and extensively

than in any comparable time of human history" (MEA, 2005, 2). Leading up to this rapid

degradation, human's have developed an increasingly instrumentalist perspective of the Earth

and its resources that has eventually led to the release of significant amounts of pollutants into

the air and water; the demand for and depletion of industrial energy resources; increases in

carbon emissions responsible for global warming; the desertification of once-vibrant, living soil

"which threatens the livelihood of more than 1 billion people in 100 countries" and that comes as

a result of mono-crop agriculture, the use of land to support increasing dependence upon meat

from livestock, and mismanagement of water resources

(http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35633 retrieved May 5, 2012); the combined

effects of pollution, acidification, ocean warming, over-fishing, and depleting levels of oxygen in

the water that may result in the mass extinction of marine life

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13796479 retrieved May 5, 2012). The list of facts could go on, further detailing what has now become an indisputable truth: the planet is in crisis and we, as humans, are largely responsible. Without wide-scale and radical changes in our orientation toward the Earth and concomitant transformations in our lifestyles, widespread death and suffering is all but inevitable.

In light of our current predicament, the way we conceptualize and answer a number of fundamental questions is going to have a profound impact upon the way we approach these problems. What is humanity's place within the natural world? Does nature have intrinsic value beyond its usefulness to human beings? What are our responsibilities to future generations or to the future in general? Upon what ethical basis can we make decisions that contribute to a sustainable relationship with the non-human natural world in which we are all embedded? For several decades, K-12 and higher education have been viewed as vital arenas in which to pursue answers to these questions and to inculcate youth with an urgent sense of responsibility in redressing the calamitous effects of the past century's disregard for the earth's capacity to sustain life.

It is my belief, and the main thrust of my argument in this chapter, that the education of young people toward a sense of responsibility and agency for both alleviating the oppression of human by human and the exploitation and destruction of the Earth's ecosystems is of the utmost importance. One of our primary responsibilities as educators and intellectuals is to instill in the young a sense of interdependence with the human and non-human worlds around them and the land upon which they live and to assist them in recognizing the forces at play that ultimately work to undermine these physically, emotionally, and psychologically nourishing relationships. Over the course of approximately the past twenty years, there has been an increasing recognition

that environmental awareness and ecological literacy should be fundamental components of any modern educational endeavor (Stone, M.K. & Barlow, Z., eds., 2005). Within this brief time-span, educators, educational theorists, and other environmentally-conscious individuals have developed a variety of frameworks for the teaching and learning of more sustainable life-ways and for recognizing the larger forces at play that work to undermine them. In the next section of the chapter, I will provide an overview of some of these approaches, highlighting both their strengths and limitations, and then move on with a consideration of social ecology as a basis for an ethical education centered upon ecological and social justice.

As Rebecca A. Martusewicz, Jeff Edmundson, and John Lupinacci (2011) point out, it was not simply changes in human behavior that have brought us to the brink of ecological catastrophe, but, more fundamentally, "important shifts in thinking that put individual gain above communities, human needs or wants above non-human, 'progress' and growth above simple happiness and well-being" (3). Economic 'progress' and 'growth', we have been told, are responsible for the general affluence and security we in the developed world enjoy and continue to be necessary to raise the standard of living of those in less developed regions of the world. However, by even the most conservative measures, human communities worldwide are experiencing widening economic inequalities and insecurities (Luxembourg Income study at http://www.lisdatacenter.org/ retrieved May 7, 2012). It is difficult to question the relationship between hunger and poverty and the degradation of the natural environment. The globalized food industry, owned and controlled by a small handful of multinational corporations, generally utilizes mono-crop farming, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and industrial machinery to produce as much food as possible for the lowest possible price.

Unfortunately, this factory or industrial approach to farming has grave environmental and social effects. Land is deforested, soil rapidly depleted, and water contaminated. Communities and families that were once self-sufficient now produce commodity crops they cannot eat for wages that are often insufficient to feed themselves. In addition to the devastating environmental and economic effects, the globalized free market economy also tends toward tearing away at the fabric that holds families and communities together through the promotion of what Bill McKibben (2007) calls "hyperindividualism" and the increasing privatization of the cultural and environmental commons (Shiva, 2005). As corporations are provided equal or greater legal status as actual living, breathing individuals and possess the capital and political support to advance their agendas, the ability of local communities to make decisions that most directly influence their lives are continually being eroded and leading, at best, to a general sense of disempowerment and, at worst, a cynical nihilism.

Upon these grounds, I will attempt to advance the argument for an anarchistic ethics of ecojustice (present chapter) and citizenship (see Chapter Four) education. Before doing so, however, I will briefly outline some of the approaches to environmental education that have already been developed.

Environmental education, in its simplest form, generally aims to provide students with a basic knowledge and understanding of ecological systems and issues and an appreciation of outdoor environments. Often, environmental education is rooted in the natural sciences and encourages students to understand, identify problems within, and examine potential solutions to ecological issues through that lens. Another approach to raising awareness and appreciation of the environment is *experiential/outdoor education*. As Martusewicz, Edmundson, and Lupinacci (2011) note, "people in this field tend to emphasize the value of learning by doing, the

importance of learning specifics about how ecosystems work, and try to encourage positive feelings towards the outdoors" (11). Unlike outdoor/experiential learning, *place-based education* aims to help students understand the relationship between natural and human communities and is usually grounded in the locale in which the students reside. *Holistic education* is intended to provide the individual child with multiple ways of coming to know and learn about his/her inner and outer landscapes. While different in many ways from traditional education, holistic education maintains it focus upon the individual and largely ignores the ways in which culture shapes the individual and his/her way of viewing the world (Martusewicz, et al, 2011). As another bridge between the human costs of practices that are ecologically destructive, *environmental justice education*, emphasizes the ways in which poor and minority communities are disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation. *Critical animal studies* draws attention to the cruel and often deadly treatment of animals and the roots of this behavior in anthropocentrism and speciesism. Critical animal studies, unlike most of the approaches previously mentioned, examines the philosophical and epistemological foundations of the destruction humans have wreaked upon other animal and plant species. Below, I will engage in a more detailed examination of the *ecopedagogy* and *eco-justice* movements within education as they come closest to fully articulating the relationship between oppression within human communities and the devastating effects of humans' attempts to dominate the natural world that is advanced by social ecology.

In his book *Critical Pedagogy, Ecoliteracy, & Planetary Crisis: The Ecopedagogy Movement*, Richard Kahn (2010) conducts an exhaustive account of the different approaches that have been developed to address the unfolding ecological crises that we, as a species, currently face. Kahn cites *environmental literacy* as the first attempt within educational circles to address

environmental issues within the classroom. While this approach espouses the goals of providing students with knowledge of the natural environment, interdisciplinary exploration, and an inquiry-based, student-centered curricular framework, Kahn (2010) argues it lacks "the strong critical and ethical focus that is presently demanded by our unfolding planetary ecocrisis" (8).

Kahn (2010) admits he is not the first to recognize the shortcomings of the first wave of environmental literacy. He cites *ecological education*, *place-based education*, *humane education*, *holistic education*, *eco-justice*, *commons-based education*, *transformative education*, and *peace education* as emerging discourses that have issued critiques of non-politicized and uncritical approaches to environmental literacy and that have attempted to link environmental literacy to social and cultural literacy (11). However, even within these movements, there has been a tendency to move toward education for sustainable development - another trend Kahn views as insufficient for dealing with our current predicament.

Kahn (2010) traces the movement of education for sustainable development to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during which an attempt was made to develop "a systematic policy statement about the interrelationship between humanity and the earth" and that would also "formulate the sustainability concerns of education once and for all in both ethical and ecological (as opposed to merely technocratic and instrumentalist) terms" (12). This statement, titled the *Earth Charter Initiative*, attempted to form that link between human relations and our relationship with the earth and was developed and pursued into the early 2000's at the World Summit for Sustainable Development. What ultimately arose from the WSSD was not a common commitment to pursuing both environmental and social justice but rather a deep divide between "large-scale corporate and governmental technocrats and the more grassroots-based theorists, activists, and educators proper" (13). Many of the governments involved in the

summit were those of developing countries and were trying conceptualize commitments to sustainability without foreclosing possibilities for development. Many activists from these same developing countries, however, viewed the development paradigm as the root of ecological degradation (Esteva & Prakash, 1998). In essence, it remains quite questionable whether the discourse of sustainable development is consonant with the grass-roots, alter-globalization views of the radical left *or* the new rallying cry of neo-liberalism in "either its right or left-liberal variants" (Kahn, 16).

The hope that Kahn (2010) holds out for critically engaging and beginning to meaningfully address the potentially catastrophic social and ecological imbalances is the ecopedagogy movement. According to Kahn (2010), ecopedaogy:

> seeks to interpolate quintessentially Freirian aims of the humanization of experience and the achievement of a just and free world with a future-oriented ecological politics that militantly opposes the globalization of neoliberalism and imperialism, on the one hand, and attempts to foment collective ecoliteracy and realize culturally relevant forms of knowledge grounded in normative concepts such as sustainability, planetarity, and biophilia, on the other. (18)

Ecopedagogy, according to Kahn, has begun to establish connections within both grassroots political movements and academic and governmental institutions. It has drawn explicitly from the work of Paulo Freire, Latin American networks for popular education, and liberation theology. Simultaneously, Kahn (2010) recognizes that critical pedagogy has remained "historically silent on environmental matters" and cites critics, such as C.A. Bowers and Ilan

Gur-Ze'ev, of this silence by Freierian-inspired critical pedagogues. He goes so far as to assert that the "foundational humanistic dualism between the 'human' and the 'animal' in fact runs throughout Freire's work and must itself be subjected to a reconstructive ecopedagogical critique" (21).

Interestingly, Kahn proceeds to round out his notion of northern ecopedagogy through the work of critical theorist Herbert Marcuse and the father of the deschooling movement, Ivan Illich. In this consideration, Kahn contends that "ecological politics were an important aspect of Marcuse's revolutionary critique, and he should be considered a central theorist of the relationship between advanced capitalist society and the manifestation of the ecological crisis" (22). While I would not disagree that Marcuse and Illich are important figures to consider in developing a radical critique of modern industrial civilization and the alienation and destruction it has wrought upon human and non-human life, I will argue that Murray Bookchin offered both a thoroughgoing critique of as well as a reconstructive vision for contemporary human relations and humanity's relationship with the natural world.

C.A. Bowers has written widely on the relationship between education and helping students to develop an awareness of issues related to both social and ecological justice/injustice. Throughout his work, he levels a strong critique of Freirean-inspired critical pedagogues. This critique is based upon the fact that theorists such Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren largely ignore the relationship between social injustice and environmental degradation and often unthinkingly ground their analyses in the very notions that have led to the ecological crises we face – such as the privileging of progress over tradition, transformation over preservation, and the individual over community. In contrast, Bowers (2001) offers a pedagogical framework based upon eco-justice. In summary, an eco-justice pedagogy, Bowers (2001) explains, would

be comprised of four essential characteristics. First, an eco-justice pedagogy would take into account and incorporate local traditions and culture. Second, it would help clarify for students the dynamics of how technologies and hyper-consumerist strategies (such as mass media, marketing, and advertising) contribute to environmental racism and to undermining the heritage of minority cultures. Third, eco-justice pedagogy would include intergenerational knowledge of the practices and values that contribute to mutual aid and networks of solidarity within and across communities. And, finally, it should promote the regeneration of less-commodified activities and relationships that could help facilitate critique of destructive ways of thinking (i.e. hyperindividualist) as well as provide opportunities for participation in community activities that develop personal talents and a sense of responsibility toward others (77-78).

More specifically, Bowers (1995, 1997, 2001) argues that an eco-justice pedagogy should attempt to reverse the dominant Western liberal thinking regarding the individual as the primary political unit. As Bowers (2001) explains,

…the idea of the individual as an autonomous, rational being is an ideological construction based on the failure of earlier Western political theorists and philosophers to understand how languaging processes reproduce patterns of thought that have a distinct cultural history. Thus, the form of democracy to be strengthened by an eco-justice curriculum is one that recognizes individualized perspectives and talents as being embedded in distinct cultural approaches to community. (150)

From an ecological standpoint, the liberal paradigm, in which the individual self is regarded as the primary political unit, is problematic for a couple of reasons. First, one's understanding of oneself and one's relationship to the social and natural environment, through language, tends to portray one as separate, autonomous, and independent rather than interconnected, embedded, and interdependent. The latter understanding is much more closely aligned with the organization of the natural world as well as with an ecological sensibility. Secondly, and more specific to one's interactions in the social realm, the liberal paradigm and the language upon which it is structured, tends to obscure one's dependence upon the human and non-human communities in which one lives and, subsequently, undermines one's commitment to working toward the health and well-being of those communities.

Similar to the Freirean-inspired ecopedagogy movement, eco-justice education, in the words of Martusewicz, Edmundson, and Lupinacci (2011), "insists…that there have been both serious social injustices that result from [age-old] cultural assumptions as well as serious environmental damage, and that these should be seen as intertwined and bound to the same belief system" (15). The goal of this approach, according to the same authors, is to provide a framework for teachers and teacher educators "to assume the responsibility for preparing citizens ready to create democratic and sustainable communities in an increasingly globalized world" (18). I believe the work of these educational scholars is comprehensive, intelligent, and extremely important. My hope is that I can build upon this work and contribute to the conversation by explicating a philosophical orientation that both situates humans back within the intricate web of life (as opposed to having dominion over it) and, at the same time, rests responsibility squarely upon the shoulders of the human species to respect and sustain its interdependence with other living and non-living systems.

III. Social Ecology: The Social Foundations of Ecological Crises

As our understanding of the interrelationship between human activities and

environmental problems progresses, the core of environmental education, when

properly developed, may well become the pivot around which the future strategies

of general education will turn; it should provide the citizens of the world with a

new outlook and attitude, better suited to the needs of Man (sic) and nature.

("Some Thoughts on the Philosophy of Environmental Education," Adriano

Buzzatti-Traverso, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural

Organization, International Workshop on Environmental Education, Belgrade

Yugoslavia, 13-22 October, 1975)

The theory of social ecology is intended as a radical critique of the ecological crises we,

as a species, face, the social crises that have come as the result of a long history of hierarchical

relationships and domination within human societies, and the interrelationship between the two.

Importantly, social ecology is also intended to act as a viable framework for moving beyond

critique of existing ecological, social, and political arrangements and toward more harmonious,

egalitarian, and sustainable relationships between the human and non-human and within the

human community itself. In his development of the theory of social ecology, Murray Bookchin

conducts a sweeping and thoroughgoing analysis of the rise/materialization of hierarchy within

human societies and the gradual infiltration of *hierarchical thinking* into human interaction with

the non-human natural world.

His critique and reconstructive vision, developed over the course of five decades and refined in countless books, articles, interviews, and debates, was never intended strictly as a set of problem-solving techniques or recommendations for remedying the antagonistic relationship between human life and the environment within which it is situated though, of course, this was and continues to be of primary concern. While Bookchin's thought was shaped and directed by the awareness that despoliation of the environment would have grave consequences for life as we know it, he was just as concerned with alienation, domination, and hierarchy that, in his thinking, not only gave rise to the growing ecological crises but also to the limitations and constraints these characteristics placed upon the potentialities for human development and freedom. With these as his primary concerns, Bookchin set out to offer a framework for rectifying the grave imbalances in the environment that have come as a result of human activity and for a communitarian democratic theory which affords individuals the power to make decisions that most directly impact their lives and the life of their communities.

In *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, Murray Bookchin (1982/2005) introduces and provides a detailed outline of the notion of social ecology. In essence, the fundamental premise of social ecology is that "the very notion of the domination of nature by man stems from the very real domination of human by human" (66). Through a mix of historical and anthropological studies and philosophical inquiry and examination, Bookchin attempts to trace the emergence of hierarchy – what he defines as

> the cultural, traditional, and psychological systems of obedience and
> command…the domination of the young by the old, of women by men, of one
> ethnic group by another, of 'masses' by bureaucrats who profess to speak in their

'higher social interests,' of countryside by town, and in a more subtle

psychological sense, of body by mind, of spirit by a shallow instrumental

rationality, and of nature by society and technology. (4)

Hierarchy and domination, he contends, precede divisions based upon class and economic

exploitation and, yet, provide a foundation for these forces within history. From pre-literate

societies (what Bookchin calls *organic societies*) based upon an egalitarian consciousness and

worldview (in regards to both the human and non-human worlds) and the structuring principles

of 'unity in diversity', complementarity and interdependence, the irreducible minimum, and

usufruct arose a movement – by no means rapid or signaled by any single development – toward

hierarchical thinking and material hierarchies based upon age, sex, and quasi-religious and quasi-

political needs.

This assessment of pre-literate societies obviously stands in stark contrast to the 'state of

nature' described in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* in which he writes that "during the time men

live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called

war; and such a war as is of every man against every man" (Chapter XIII). Characterizing the

lives of men before the emergence of the social contract as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and

short", Hobbes portrays a humanity whose movement toward security from material want is

premised upon the domination and subservience of the natural environment. From this

perspective, of course, arose moral and political systems that supported an individualistic ethic

and an antagonistic relationship between 'man' and nature. Bookchin, on the other hand, paints

a very different portrait of humanity before the rise of civilization.

Based upon a variety of studies of pre-literate cultures, Bookchin (1982/2005) defines the worldview of these societies as shaped by a strong feeling of unity between the individual and the community from which emerges a feeling of unity between the community and its environment. The natural world is not viewed, as it came to be in ancient and early modern civilizations, as something above which humanity stands or by necessity it is forced to dominate but rather as the very fabric in which humanity is embedded and with which humanity is interwoven. As Bookchin (1982/2005) explains,

> nature is not merely a habitat; it is a *participant* that advises the community with
> its omens, secures it with its camouflage, leaves it telltale messages in broken
> twigs and footprints, whispers warnings to it in the wind's voice, nourishes it with
> a largesse of plants and animals, and in its countless functions and counsels is
> absorbed into the community's nexus of rights and duties. (47)

Just as people of all ages have projected their social structures onto the natural world, so too did these early human communities (early Neolithic 10700-9400 BCE) understand their relationship with the non-human world as they did their relationships with one another – that is, with a deeply ingrained sense of *interdependence and mutuality*.

As a hierarchical mentality took shape (which, according to Bookchin's analysis, first took shape in the form of gerontocracies and patriarchies) within humanity on the subjective level and within human relations on a material level, this way of thinking and relating, in turn, was projected onto the natural world. The notion of a 'brute' and 'stingy' nature with which

humans must wrestle for survival was relatively unknown to organic societies.[7] As hierarchies

took shape amongst humans so too did the notion that the natural world was something to be

dominated and subdued by man. In the wake of these developments came an increasing

tendency to describe nature in hierarchical terms so as to make sense of or provide an orderliness

to natural phenomena. Underlying this procedure, Bookchin (1982/2005) contends, is a

tendency to

> reinforce human social hierarchies by justifying the command of men and women
>
> as innate features of the 'natural order.' Human domination is thereby transcribed
>
> into the genetic code as biologically immutable – together with the subordination
>
> of the young by the old, women by men, and man by man. (27)

As he continues, he traces the dissolution of humanly-scaled communities and civic ties

and the rise of autonomous individuality. In short, "naked self-interest established its eminence

over public interest; indeed, the destiny of the latter was reduced to that of the former. The

objectification of people as mere instruments of production fostered the objectification of nature

as mere 'natural resources'" (163). However, in his genealogical approach to tracing the

emergence of hierarchy, Bookchin manages to avoid the two extremes of either romanticizing

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[7] Bookchin (1982/2005) described his use of the term 'organic society' as follows: "I use the term to denote a spontaneously formed, non-coercive, and egalitarian society – a 'natural' society in the very definite sense that it emerges from innate human needs for association, interdependence, and care" (5). He also characterized pre-civilized organic societies as "part of the balance of nature – a forest community or a soil community – in short, a truly ecological community or *ecocommunity* peculiar to its ecosystem, with an active sense of participation in the overall environment and the cycles of nature" (46).

organic societies as utopian or denigrating them as a savage struggle for existence. Bookchin makes clear, as Steven Best (1998) explains, how

> hierarchical societies help to advance emancipatory dynamics in some ways as they stifle them in others, and that organic societies lack crucial resources for human freedom that were developed by hierarchical societies. Nevertheless, [he] looks to organic societies for providing certain viable alternatives to hierarchical societies that should be appropriated for a future society. (342)

The notions of the inborn egoistic character of human nature, the necessity of competition in channeling the primacy of self-interest, and the prioritization of individuality and independence – not always present in history nor firmly rooted in the findings of the natural sciences – are foundational assumptions underlying and perpetuated by the objectives and practices of traditional schooling in most industrialized nations. Like so many anarchists before him, Bookchin challenges what have come to be common-sense assumptions regarding what constitutes and guides the functioning of and interaction between the human and non-human realms. As Bookchin (1982) explains,

> From the sixteenth century onward, western thought cast the relationship between the ego and the external world, notably nature, in largely oppositional terms. Progress was identified not with spiritual redemption but with the technical capacity of humanity to bend nature to the service of the marketplace. Human destiny was conceived not as the realization of its intellectual and spiritual

potentialities, but as the mastery of 'natural forces' and the redemption of society

from a 'demonic' natural world. The outlook of organic society toward nature

and treasure was completely reversed. It was *nature* that now became demonic

and *treasure* that now became fecund. The subjugation of human by human,

which the Greeks had fatalistically accepted as the basis for a cultivated leisure

class, was now celebrated as a common human enterprise to bring nature under

human control. (161)

Unlike many of his Marxist comrades, Bookchin's work addresses itself more to

hierarchy than class, to domination rather than exploitation, to liberatory institutions rather that

the mere abolition of the State, to freedom rather than justice, and pleasure rather than happiness.

He defines *hierarchy* as the cultural, traditional, and psychological systems of obedience and

command, not merely the economic and political systems to which the terms class and State most

appropriately refer; a complex system of command and obedience in which elites enjoy varying

degrees of control over their subordinates without necessarily exploiting them. Hierarchy is used

to refer to hierarchical relationships and a hierarchical sensibility.

Within the contemporary world, John Clark (2000) explains,

there are similar systematic causes for the social and ecological devastation.

Social ecologists contend that the roots are found in such (obviously interrelated)

social conditions as economic oligarchy and concentrated corporate economic

power; centralized, undemocratic political power; mass marketing and opinion

control that increasingly shape values and personality; massive, unresponsive

state and corporate bureaucracies; a culture of consumption that promotes a

privatized, depoliticized world; patriarchal values and an egocentric, power-

seeking self; otherworldly, nature-denying spirituality; and a vast system of

technology that appears as a self-moving megamachine. (64)

Due to the far-reaching and intimately interrelated systems of values, subjectivities, production,

consumption, and control, social ecologists conclude that "the social ecological crisis cannot be

resolved without serious global catastrophe unless there are far-reaching, fundamental changes in

the dominant institutions, cultural values and ideologies" (Clark, 2000, 64). As systems of

education and schooling are recognized not only as dominant institutions in the contemporary

developed world but also as fundamental in the shaping of cultural and social values and as

ideological apparatus' of the state, it seems imperative from the social ecological perspective that

we closely examine, critique, and re-envision the role of schools, and education more broadly, in

creating a more egalitarian social order as well as a sustainable relationship between society and

nature. This vision, it appears, must be one guided not by economistic values, consumer culture,

and the egocentric self of Western psychology nor free-market interpretations of Darwinian

evolution's survival of the fittest, but rather by a more naturalistic outlook based upon the

functioning of nature itself.

Murray Bookchin's formulation of social ecology views the foundations of the ecological

crisis in the dominant ideology of modern western societies. At the heart of this ideology is a

psyche structured around, and forms of relationship based upon, domination. There is a direct

relationship between domination of humans by humans and the human desire to dominate the

natural world. Out of ancient forms of hierarchy and domination based upon age and sex,

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through a series of developments, transitions, breaks and ruptures, has come the free market ideology of contemporary society in which both human beings and the natural world are reduced to mere commodities. In this sense, human liberation and the liberation of the natural world are inseparable. This notion distinguishes social ecology from much Marxist thought in which human freedom is dependent on the complete domination of the natural world through technology in order to overcome material scarcity.

In essence, humans must again recognize themselves as part of nature rather than being distinct or separate from it and must also allow human relationships to be informed by the essentially non-hierarchical and mutualistic relationships that are found in nature itself. Also, unlike much Marxist thought, the transformation in subjectivity, philosophy, and human relationship with other humans and the non-human natural world cannot be realized through an all-powerful centralized state but only through transformations in the organization and institutions of small communities (in the form of sustainable agriculture and production of other necessary products, engaged participation in decision making through direct democracy, and individual freedom through non-hierarchical relationships free of domination).

As we shall see, the philosophical and ethical foundations of Bookchin's thought have far-reaching implications not only for the place and responsibility of humans within the natural world, but also for the types of human societies that would be highly conducive to expanding forms of freedom and the fuller actualization of human and non-human potentialities.

IV. Bookchin's Dialectical Naturalism

Dialectical naturalism…conceives finiteness and contradiction as distinctly

natural in the sense that things and phenomena are incomplete and unactualized

in their development. Until they are what they have been constituted to become,

they exist in dynamic tension. Dialectical naturalism….advances the vision of an

ever-increasing wholeness, fullness, and richness of differentiation and

subjectivity. (Murray Bookchin, *Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on*

Dialectical Naturalism, 19-20)

Much of the inspiration for the development of Bookchin's philosophy of dialectical

naturalism can be found in the work of the Russian geographer and anarchist thinker Peter

Kropotikin. Like Kropotkin before him, Bookchin believed it was possible to develop an

objective ethics grounded in the functioning and manifestations of natural evolution. Primarily,

Bookchin argues that all matter, organic and inorganic, contain unrealized potentialities that

drive its self-directed development and symbiotic relationship with all other matter. This is no

different for rocks than it is for humans.

In the introductory essay of his *The Philosophy of social ecology: Essays on dialectical*

naturalism, Murray Bookchin (1996) introduces the central questions that drive his discussion:

namely, *What is nature? What is humanity's place in nature? And what is the relationship*

between society and the natural world? (1). The answers to these questions which may help in

providing some ethical guidance in our relationships with one another and with the non-human

natural world, Bookchin argues, can come neither through an instrumental, mechanistic

rationality nor through a cloudy and abstract intuitionism (embodied, as he saw it, in the

philosophy of Deep Ecology). Rather, we must pursue a centuries-old tradition of dialectical

reason which provides " a view of reality as developmental – of *Being* as an ever unfolding

Becoming" (Bookchin, 1996, 6). This form of reasoning, in many ways, stands in contrast to that

of logical or conventional reason whose tendency is to view phenomenon as separate and distinct

from one another and fails to "systematically explore processes of becoming, or how a living

entity is patterned as a *potentiality* to phase from one stage of its development into another"

(Bookchin, 1996, 7). Unlike conventional reason, dialectical reason views evolutionary

development as a process of unfolding and becoming as opposed to distinct and isolatable

moments; it allows for the rational interpretation of this development and, according to

Bookchin, could provide the basis for "a living ecological ethics" (15).

Serious and thoughtful consideration of the aforementioned questions, beyond

philosophical speculation and instrumental, analytical reason, is necessary for developing a

meaningful set of ethical standards. Bookchin set out to distinguish the way in which he

understands *reason* from strictly analytical and instrumental forms of reason rejected by so much

contemporary mysticism. Dialectical reason, he argues, is organic yet retains critical qualities; is

developmental yet retains analytical insights; and is ethical yet retains contact with reality (5).

Conventional reason, on the other hand,

> is based on an analysis of phenomenon as precisely defined, and whose truth
>
> depends upon their internal consistency and practicality. Conventional reason
>
> thus serves the practical function of describing a given entity's identity and telling
>
> us how that entity is organized to be itself. But it cannot systematically explore
>
> processes of becoming, or how a living entity is patterned as a *potentiality* to
>
> phase from one stage of development into another. (6-7)

In explaining Bookchin's ecological ethics, it is important to define some fundamental terms. First, Bookchin defines *Nature* as encompassing every material thing, both organic and inorganic; that is, the totality of Being. Without an accompanying adjective to specify which piece of nature we are talking about, *Nature* refers to Bookchin's notion of "first nature" or the cumulative evolution of the natural world, especially the organic world. This first nature exists in both continuity and discontinuity with 'second nature,' or the evolution of society, what others have described as cultural evolution. *Society*, according to Bookchin (1996), is specific to human beings while ecology denotes the dynamic balance of nature, with the interdependence of living and non-living things. Since nature also includes human beings, the science of ecology should take into consideration humanity's role in the natural world – specifically, the character, form, and structure of humanity's relationships with other species and with the inorganic substrate of the biotic environment. In conceiving holistically social and natural relationships in communities or ecosystems, that is to say, in terms of their mutual interdependence, social ecology seeks to unravel the forms and patterns of interrelationships that give intelligibility to a community, be it natural or social (Bookchin, 1982, 23). Finally, *reason* and *rationality* refer to "*dialectical reason*, a secular dialectical *logos*, as contrasted with *instrumental* or *conventional reason*, an ordinary mental skill. From Bookchin's (1996) perspective (and following from the work of Kropotkin and Elisee Reclus), "Reason exists in nature as the self-organizing attributes of substance; it is the latent subjectivity in the inorganic and organic levels of reality that reveal an inherent striving toward consciousness. In humanity, this subjectivity reveals itself as self-consciousness" (11).

In the first essay of *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism*, Bookchin goes about explaining his philosophical method and its foundation in the dialectic. While acknowledging his indebtedness to both Hegel and Marx, Bookchin takes this method of inquiry in a new and unique direction grounded in the workings of natural evolution. Dialectical reason, Bookchin explains, "grasps not only how an entity is organized at a particular moment but how it is organized to go beyond that level of development and become *other* than what it is, even as it retains its identity" (15). He distinguishes dialectical reason from conventional reason, ironically, by way of an educational analogy:

> The thinking of conventional reason today is exemplified - and disastrously reinforced - by the 'true or false' questions that make up most standardized tests. This testing procedure makes for bad mental habits among young people, who are schooled to take such tests successfully, and whose careers and future life-ways depend on their scores. But the thought process demanded by such tests compartmentalizes and essentially computerizes otherwise rich minds, depriving young people of their native ability to think organically and to understand the developmental nature of the real world. (8)

No doubt, Bookchin adds, conventional reason has played a significant role in the development of humanity and has its place in being utilized to solve certain problems and achieve particular ends; but "to achieve the consistency that constitutes its fundamental principle, conventional reason removes ethics from its discourse and concerns" (11).

Drawing evidence from philosophy, history, the natural and social sciences, and the evolution of life itself, Bookchin argues we must assume, first, that there is order in the world that exists beyond the concepts and meanings that humans have created. Secondly, there exists in all realms of Being – from the microbial to the cosmological - change and processes that lead toward differentiation. Finally, within this order and these processes, there is some kind of directionality toward ever-greater differentiation or wholeness insofar as potentiality is realized in its full actuality. However, he goes on to distinguish between what is 'real' (what *is*) and what is 'rational' (what *should be*). He explains the difference this way:

> A society that fails to actualize its potentialities for human happiness and progress
> is 'real' enough in the sense that it exists, but it is less than truly social. It is
> incomplete and distorted insofar as it merely persists, and hence it is irrational.
> Although it is 'real' in an existential sense, it is unfulfilled and hence 'unreal' *in
> terms of its potentialities*. (21)

According to Bookchin (1996), the dialectic is a method of reasoning and an account of the objective world, with an ontological causality. He goes on,

> As a form of reasoning, the most basic categories in dialectic are differentiated by
> their own inner logic into fuller, more complex categories. Each category, in turn,
> is a potentiality that by means of eductive thinking, directed toward an
> exploration of its latent and implicit possibilities, yields logical expression in the
> form of self-realization, or what Hegel called 'actuality'. (17)

Dialectical causality is the differentiation of potentiality into actuality, in the course of which each new actuality becomes the potentiality for further differentiation and actualization. The dialectic explicates how processes occur not only in the natural world but also in the social.

In short, Bookchin believed dialectical naturalism has the potential to bring coherence to ecological thinking and dispel anti-intellectual tendencies. It brings with it and adds an evolutionary perspective to ecological thinking and, in essence, *ecologizes* the dialectic. Finally, dialectical naturalism can help us discern evolution fluidly and plastically without divesting evolution of rational interpretation. Most importantly for this discussion, a dialectic that has a naturalistic core and a truly developmental understanding or view of reality could provide the basis for a living ecological ethics that can help redress injustices in both human social relations and relations between human societies and the natural world.

As has been made obvious and incontrovertible, the thrust of natural evolution has been toward increasing complexity; the colonization of the planet by life has been possible only as a result of biotic variety. Ecological wholeness and stability[8] are predicated upon a dynamic 'unity of diversity', a term Bookchin borrows from Hegel. Ecological stability is a function not of simplicity and homogeneity but of complexity and variety. "If 'unity in diversity' forms one of the cardinal tenets of ecology", Bookchin explains, "the wealth of biota that exists in a single acre of soil leads us to still another basic ecological tenet: the need to allow for a high degree of natural spontaneity" (25). A philosophy based upon dialectical naturalism suggests the nature of

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[8] As mentioned above, scientific ecologists have brought under critical scrutiny the 'stability' model of ecosystems. However, within limited temporal spans and amidst changing forms of interrelationship, an ecosystem must develop some form of dynamic equilibrium to remain healthy. Ironically, some of the most rapid increases in ecological instability have occurred over the last 50 years as the result of human behavior.

relationships - to be most conducive to unfolding potentialities, increased stability, and expanding forms of freedom - should be of a non-hierarchical nature. As Bookchin (1996) explains,

> Ecosystems cannot be meaningfully described in hierarchical terms…to rank species within an ecosystem, that is to say, between species, is anthropomorphism at its crudest. If we can recognize that every ecosystem can also be viewed as a food web, we can think of it as a circular, interlacing nexus of plant-animal relationships (rather than a stratified pyramid with man at the apex) that includes such widely varying creatures as microorganisms and large mammals. (26)

Additionally, describing nature in hierarchical terms provides a rationale for hierarchy within human social relations – hierarchy as something natural, innate, biologically immutable. As human history and society can never disengage themselves or disembed themselves from nature, mutual aid, cooperation, egalitarianism, and equity should guide our interactions with the natural world as much as they do in our interactions with one another.

V. Dialectical Naturalism as the Basis for an Objective Ecological Ethics

> [Dialectical naturalism] not only grasps reality as an existentially unfolding continuum, but it also forms an *objective* framework for making ethical judgments. The 'what should be' becomes an ethical criterion for judging the truth or validity of an objective 'what is'. (Bookchin, 1998, 24)

The thrust of social ecology is focused upon engendering ecologically sustainable and harmonious relationships between the human and non-human world and within human societies themselves in order to reverse the movement toward ecological disaster and the inability of the earth to support human life as the result of human irrationalities. Simultaneously, it aims toward the expansion of human freedom within the context of the good of the community through the challenging of and resistance to hierarchy and domination. As thinkers from Kropotkin to Bookchin realized and admitted, this would not be possible without widespread and radical changes not only in the way we live but also in the way we think. In order to highlight the reciprocal and symbiotic relationship between social structures and psychic structures, Bookchin contrasted pre-historic tribal societies with more modern forms coming of age after the emergence of hierarchy, the state, and eventually capitalism. In order to move toward a more ecologically sustainable set of material relations between humans and the natural world upon which they depend, modern-day economistic and mechanistic thinking and mentalities should be replaced with ecological thinking focused upon interdependence. Finally, in order for humanity's 'second nature' to realize its full potentiality, this 'second nature' must be grounded in reason and in grassroots, participatory democracy, economic and political decentralization, and community control of decision-making. Ultimately, what all of this suggests is that education aimed toward ecological justice and sustainability and direct, participatory democracy should be firmly rooted in a particular form of what I refer to as 'anarchist ethics'.

Within the field of nature philosophy and ecological ethics, it is common to categorize approaches to thinking about the relationship between humanity and the natural world as falling somewhere on a spectrum with *anthropocentrism* on one side and *biocentrism* on the other. The

anthropocentric perspective of course refers to the notion that the natural world exists and is available for exploitation by humans to satisfy human needs and desires. Biocentrism, on the other hand, posits the inherent value and equality of all living beings and claims to make no distinction between the human and the non-human. Somewhere beyond anthropocentrism and biocentrism lies *ecocentrism* through which moral significance is extended to whole natural systems rather than just to individual living beings. Within this view, ecosystems are the center of moral and ethical concern. As ecology is the study of the relationship between organisms and their environment and assuming that, if left alone, ecosystems will develop toward stable communities of interdependent parts, then the guide for human action and behavior would be to introduce the least amount of destabilizing forces that would upset the natural order. As Matt Ferkany (unpublished presentation) points out, "What is so attractive about eco-centrism for environmental ethicists then is that it makes moral laws out of nature's own laws. The norms of environmental ethics are the norms of nature. We ought to bring about just whatever nature would bring about if we left it alone." One of the most well-known advocates of ecocentrism was Aldo Leopold (1949) who, in his essay "The Land Ethic" from *A Sand County Almanac*, claimed that "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Leopold, 1949, page number not available).

While it would be easy to think Bookchin's philosophy falls on the side of biocentrism, he tends to view each of these poles as problematic for different but related reasons. Anthropocentrism, as previously mentioned, places humans atop a hierarchical pyramid of species, tends toward disembedding them from their natural evolutionary development, and dichotomizes society and nature. That said, Bookchin does claim humans – with their unique

capacities for thought, language, and reason – occupy a distinctive position in the natural order and therefore have a responsibility to act as stewards for the non-human in order to allow for its continued stability, development, and diversity. Biocentrism, Bookchin argues, is anti-humanist at best and downright misanthropic at worst. In his view, these broadly abstract approaches to thinking about the relationship between humanity/society and nature are overly reductionist and, despite the good intentions of their adherents, serve to conceal the concrete systems that threaten both the human and non-human and that are ultimately *social* in nature (i.e.patriarchy, racism, sexism as they limit the possibilities for the articulation and realization of the 'good life' for entire groups; and capitalism, with its foundation in limitless growth and consumption, threatens the earth's capacity to sustain life). In response, what Bookchin attempts to do is answer the question regarding how 'second nature' (institutionalized human communities, human technics, symbolic language, and managed sources of sustenance) is derived from 'first nature' (organic or natural evolution) and how human rationality – considered nature's actualization of its own evolution toward subjectivity – might reorganize society along rational lines, "imbued with an ecological philosophy and sensibility" (Bookchin, 1996, 120).

At the heart of Bookchin's (1996) nature philosophy is the belief that:

> Biological nature is above all the cumulative evolution of ever-differentiating and
> increasingly complex life-forms with a vibrant and interactive inorganic world.
> We can call this relatively unconscious natural development 'first nature'…that
> exhibits a high degree of orderly continuity in the actualization of potentialities
> that made for more complex and self-aware or subjective life-forms. (29-30)

Humans' capacity for thought and language, self-awareness, its ability to generalize this awareness toward a systematic understanding of its environment, and, finally, its capacity to alter itself and its environment by means of knowledge and technology place it beyond first nature, though not above it, into the realm of second nature. Bookchin (1996) continues his explanation of humanity being both beyond and embedded within first nature thus:

> From an evolutionary viewpoint, humanity has been *constituted* to intervene actively, consciously, and purposively into first nature with unparalleled effectiveness and to alter it on a planetary scale. To denigrate this capacity is to deny the thrust of natural evolution itself toward organic complexity and subjectivity – the potentiality of first nature to actualize itself in self-conscious intellectuality. What is decisive here is the compelling fact that humanity's natural capacity to consciously intervene into and act upon first nature has given rise to a 'second nature,' a cultural, social, and political 'nature' that today has all but absorbed first nature. (30-31)

Following from this, in Bookchin's view, humanity bears a moral responsibility to be the voice of this first nature and to act in a way that fosters and furthers organic evolution. As a guideline for doing so, Bookchin attempts to develop a basis for an objective ecological ethics.

VI. Conclusion

Bookchin consciously grounds his nature philosophy in the *orientation* of Pre-Socratic thought (though not necessarily its content) within which the world/universe has an order,

intelligibility, and moral character outside of and beyond human projection. He does so as a

basis for searching for a set of values that can be grounded in nature and natural evolution. He

critiques and searches for an alternative to the epistemological turn initiated by Hume and Kant

that renders all experience and phenomena as subjectivist in nature. In order to counter this and

to provide coherence and meaning to natural evolution, Bookchin puts forward a number of

premises upon which his nature philosophy rests.

First, Bookchin (1996) argues, "we have the right to *attribute* properties to nature based

on the best of our knowledge, the right to assume that certain attributes as well as contexts are

self-evident in nature" (56). One of these attributes, he suggests, is that nature has a particular

development and directiveness or *nisus* – that is, movement toward the realization of a particular

aim. Second, Bookchin presupposes that nature presses forward toward consciousness of itself.

Based upon these presuppositions, Bookchin (1996) claims, "nature itself seems to 'write'

natural philosophy and ethics" (59) in that substance has a self-directed capacity for self-

organization into increasingly complex forms. Thus, self-organization is the first ethical

imperative 'written' by nature itself. Echoing Kropotkin, Bookchin identifies the second ethical

imperative as *symbiosis* or mutual interdependence. Based on some scientific data, symbiosis,

cooperation, and mutual aid appear to be more important for survival than competition (Tragar,

1970).

Finally, he suggests that, contrary to dominant interpretations of Darwinism, evolution

may include an "immanent striving, not merely random mutational changes filtered by external

selective factors" (62). Only with the Enlightenment and its exorcism of an "often authoritarian,

supernatural arbiter" between nature and humanity, Bookchin (1996) claims, could an ethical

continuum between nature and humanity be rendered more meaningful and democratic (63).

Summing up these reflections on a nature philosophy that helps provide an objective ecological ethics, Bookchin (1996) writes:

> The study of nature exhibits a self-evolving *nisus*, so to speak, that is implicitly ethical. Mutualism, freedom, and subjectivity are not solely human values or concerns. They appear, *however germinally*, in larger cosmic or organic processes, but they require no Aristotelian God to motivate them, no Hegelian Spirit to vitalize them. If social ecology can provide a coherent focus on the unity of mutualism, freedom, and subjectivity as aspects of a cooperative society that is free of domination and guided by reflection and reason, it will have removed the difficulties that have plagued naturalistic ethics for so long. Mutualism, self-organization, freedom, and subjectivity, cohered by social ecology's principles of unity in diversity, spontaneity, and non-hierarchical relationships, are constitutive of evolution's potentialities. (66)

Eduction, unlike deduction, works toward manifesting and articulating the latent possibilities within phenomena. Based upon eduction, an ecological dialectic is a philosophy of progress "in which there is growing elaboration and self-consciousness" (125) or the self-directed movement of nature toward subjectivity and increasing self-reflexivity. As such, dialectical naturalism is *projective* and *speculative*. It is intended to ceaselessly critique reality or 'what is' and contrast this with the actuality of 'what could be'. Assuming nature's movement or development is toward subjectivity and self-reflexivity, speculating about possibilities anchored in rationality is no less objective than the irrationality of what currently exists. Following from this, if human

intervention into nature is inevitable (and, assuming second nature has emerged from first nature, it most definitely is), the question becomes whether or not humanity's transformation of nature is aligned with an objective ecological ethics that has been rationally developed or not (Bookchin, 1996).

Highlighted in *The Ecology of Freedom*, as biological evolution passed into the evolution of society, social evolution developed in the direction of hierarchical forms, taking shape in classes and statist institutions and ultimately giving rise to nation-states and the capitalist economy. The direction social evolution has taken is not the result of nature's thrust toward subjectivity and rationality but rather has been subverted by human irrationality. As the result of the concentration of power and the force accrued and exercised by political and corporate elites, what was a market economy has been transformed into a market society. As domination and hierarchy currently represent 'what is', it is the task of an ecological ethics to seek 'what-could-be' as a realm of *objective* possibilities. Finally, as humanity represents the *potentiality* of nature rendered self-conscious, it alone is responsible for actively creating an ecological society – that is, a society which:

> would be a *transcendence of both first and second nature* into a new domain of 'free nature,' a nature that in a truly rational humanity reached the level of conceptual thought – in short, a nature that would willfully and thinkingly cope with conflict, contingency, waste and consumption. Humanity, far from diminishing the integrity of nature, would add the dimension of freedom, reason, and ethics to it and raise evolution to a level of self-reflexivity that has always been latent in the emergence of the natural world. (Bookchin, 1996, 136)

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Chapter Four

Re-defining Politics, Citizenship, and Democracy: The Framework of Libertarian Municipalism and Communalism

I. Introduction

This chapter will involve a close reading and analysis of Bookchin's primary works on his political theory of *libertarian muncipalism* and *communalism* including, but not limited to, *From Urbanization to Cities: Toward a New Politics of Citizenship* (1995), *Remaking Society: Pathways to a Green Future* (1989), *The Politics of Social Ecology* (1998), and *Social Ecology and Communalism* (2007). As Eirik Eiglad (Bookchin, 2007) explains,

> vague libertarian ideals of popular self-management, mutual aid, and a stateless
> community, are through Bookchin's social ecology, developed into aspects of a
> coherent political theory, marked by direct democracy, municipalization, and
> confederalism. This constitutes the *political* alternative that Bookchin argued
> could confront the market economy and powerful centralized institutions. (13)

Like social ecology itself, the political theory developed by Bookchin has far-reaching implications for how we conceive of democracy, politics, citizenship and, by proxy, citizenship education.

In "Teacher Education as a Counter-Public Sphere: Notes Towards a Redefinition", Giroux and McLaren (1987) develop the concept of "schools as sites for self and social transformation" or "counter-public spheres". The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines

"transform" in three ways: a) to change in composition or structure; b) to change the outward form or appearance; and c) to change in character or composition. The type of transformation to which Giroux and McLaren allude seems to be of the first and second types. That is, to change in composition or structure schools and schools of education and/or to change in character or composition teachers, teacher-educators, and/or students. The authors further argue that this transformation is to be from teacher disempowerment to teacher empowerment, from a teacher composition that supports and "serves to reproduce the technocratic and corporate ideologies that characterize dominant societies" and "sustain and legitimate the status quo" to a teacher composition enabled to offer new possibilities for democratic social relations and the practice of radical democracy (268-269). They go on to articulate some of the limitations of liberal, progressive, and radical educators and intellectuals as they have been more focused on critique and resistance and less on situating the organization and practice of schooling within a more "political, theoretical and critical understanding of the nature of domination and the type of active opposition it should engender" (270). These are important and meaningful insights in that they compel us to move from a language of critique towards the articulation of the language of possibilities.

My premise, following Giroux and McLaren (1987), is that every critical educational endeavor should be driven not only by a critical social theory that helps explain the way things are, but also a utopian vision of how things could or should be and what is required to make this a reality. This points to a fundamental problematic of much critical and progressive work within the field of education and one we, as critical educators, must also grapple with. The problem, as I see it, is one of the relationship between means and ends. That is, critical theorists and educators have created and developed a body of work that has attempted to disentangle the

relationship between knowledge and power, the movement toward (or lack thereof) viewing oneself as a subject of history rather than an object of history, the reproduction of inequitable social relations based on race, class, and gender, and the function of schooling in these processes. What are less developed in the literature are viable alternatives to the structures of domination and exploitation both in schools and in the larger social context. What this calls for is an articulation of what it is, exactly, that we are working toward. It follows that one of the primary task for any critical teacher or teacher-educator is to begin to articulate what it is one is working *against* (pedagogy of critique) and, in doing so, to start the dialogic process of defining the contours of and shaping the practices that will help realize what one is working *towards* (pedagogy of hope/possibilities).

It is easy enough to get a sense of what critical theorists and critical pedagogues have been/are reacting to and pushing back against. Marx's project revolves around the economic exploitation of the working class that comes as a result of the organization of the means of production. The Frankfurt School theorists looked at the ways in which the mass production of commodities ushered in the by the industrial revolution was followed by the mass production of culture - the ideas, beliefs, and artistic expressions that came to dominate the public space in the early twentieth-century. Freire critiqued the banking model of education that turned historical subjects – 'authors of the word and the world' – into the objects of a static reality reified by a fixed and unalterable notion of history. It is true that some of these theorists go on to develop ideas regarding what a world free of these dynamics might look like – Freire's notion of the full humanization of both oppressed and oppressor and Marx's vision of the passage into a fully socialist society are primary examples and have proven their appeal in their persistence over time. At the same time, these visions have been critiqued for being overly utopian, impractical,

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and based upon a conception of human nature that does not match up with reality. As a result of these critiques (coming from both the political right as well as the left) I feel critical leftist intellectuals (myself included) have been reluctant to supplement their ideological critique of schools and schooling and the capitalist liberal democracies in which they are situated with viable social and political alternatives.

It could be argued that a number of alternatives have been put forward by the left that can be introduced and developed within schools such as the minimalization of inequality based on race, gender, and class, the exposure to and exploration of difference that contribute to multicultural awareness and tolerance, the continuing expansion of civil rights and liberties to marginalized groups, and the push for more government programs that could aid in redistributing wealth and in creating a stronger safety net for the disenfranchised. While these are important short-term goals that can drive critical pedagogical theory and practice, they are insufficient for providing the impetus for a sustained project that aims at radical self and social transformation. Therefore, it seems important to turn back and further develop one of the aforementioned 'utopian' visions and/or to engage more directly with the work of contemporary social and political theorists that can help us articulate what other visions of human emancipation and freedom might be available and worth pursuing. In short, in order to be more than mere reforms of the current systems and institutions that structure inequality, injustice, and exclusion, critical educational theory and practice must be informed by and aligned with a larger movement that is working toward a more radical transformation of the organization of social, political, and economic life. I believe the theory of social ecology and politics of libertarian municipalism/communalism may hold the potential to be just such a larger and more comprehensive movement.

For educators and citizens interested in strengthening the bond between education writ large and direct democracy, it seems important to move beyond envisioning how to make better *what is* and continue the tradition of imagining the possibilities of *what is not yet*. On the level of practice, this entails a critical interrogation of our own vested interests and attachments, beliefs and values. It also requires that we search out and/or develop a theoretical understanding of the present and a philosophical basis for arguing that our current predicament should be otherwise. As Giroux (2009), amongst others, argues, this theoretical understanding and philosophical foundation for moving forward cannot be developed in isolation from the broader public within which one is situated. Giroux (2009) argues, educators should consider how they might

> provide the opportunities for students to learn that the relationship between knowledge and power can be emancipatory, that their histories and experiences matter, and that what they say and do counts in their struggle to unlearn dominating privileges, productively reconstruct their relations with others, and transform, when necessary, the world around them. (236)

In short, the process of imagining *what is not yet* must involve the young people and teachers that are most directly impacted by schools and schooling. In engaging in this process with others, a critical intellectual has not only the responsibility of sharing the visions that have already been put forward by revolutionaries of the past, but of also being receptive to the imaginings and possibilities offered by the individuals with which one works. Without a theoretical understanding of why social and political life are organized as they are, some guiding

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visions of how they could be otherwise, and concrete practices that attempt to make these visions realizable, the radical left has little hope of creating any substantive change.

In this chapter, I attempt to describe just such a vision while also identifying and critiquing some of the issues within the contemporary western world that make more difficult the realization of this vision. In the first section, I provide an overview of Murray Bookchin's notion of *libertarian municipalism/communalism* which seeks to undermine centralized authority through the creation/development of small, humanly-scaled communities managed through direct democracy and organized on a confederal basis. Next, I will examine re-conceptualizations of the meaning of politics, citizenship, and democracy. In the third section of the chapter and its subsections, I will engage in a theoretical discussion of dominant western models of social organization and individual subjectivity that undermine the possibilities for the development of active citizenship in a direct democracy. These include institutional gigantism, the dominance of consumerism, and the appropriation of youth agency through the construction of 'adolescence'. In the process of doing so, I will also suggest ways in which these trends may be reversed.

II. Overview of the Politics of Social Ecology: Defining Libertarian Municipalism/Communalism[9]

Social ecology and libertarian municipalism claim that replacing the State, urbanization, hierarchy, and capitalism with direct-democratic cooperative institutions relies upon developing a notion of citizenship and citizens themselves based upon the virtues of *solidarity* and

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[9] Very late in his life, Bookchin began using communalism interchangeably with libertarian municipalism. For the sake of simplicity, it can be assumed in the remainder of the chapter that libertarian municipalism falls under a broadly communalist framework but I will only refer to the former term.

rationality[10] (Biehl and Bookchin, 1998). Fostering a sense of solidarity would be necessary for maintaining within individuals a fundamental commitment to the common good. Reason would be necessary, according to Biehl and Bookchin (1998), for constructive discussion and deliberation and of determining the best course of action that a community should take to address a particular problem, and for overcoming personal prejudices (86).

Additionally, libertarian municipalism works off of the assumption that every citizen has the potential to participate directly in democratic politics. However, there is a recognition that specific characteristics of citizenship must be taught and nurtured "through a specific political education, which includes character formation…The Athenians called this education *paideia*, the intentional cultivation of the civic and ethical qualities necessary for citizenship" (88) and direct participation in the polis. This type of citizenship education, argue Biehl and Bookchin (1998), cannot be confined to the schoolroom but must be fostered through the political realm itself, "during the course of democratic political participation, amid a plentitude of discussion and interaction that engender knowledge, training, experience, and reason" – in other words, in the very process of decision-making and political processes (89).

In articulating the political theory of libertarian municipalism, Bookchin explicitly draws from the Greek *polis* and Athenian direct democracy, the New England town hall tradition, the classical anarchists, and Spanish Workers' Collectives amongst other historical examples. He elaborates his theory by making clear distinctions between politics and statecraft, between the

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[10] I recognize that 'rationality' as a basis upon which to come to know and act in the world has been deeply questioned within the discourses of postmodern and post-structural theory, amongst others. Bookchin was an unabashed humanist and rooted much of his thinking in the Western Enlightenment tradition. However, following theorists like those of the Frankfurt School, Bookchin distinguished his conception of rationality from that of an *instrumental rationality*. For a more in-depth explanation of Bookchin's conception of rationality and its significance in moving toward a more ecological society, see Chapter Three.

city as a democratic public sphere and the phenomena of urbanization that has eroded the democratic roots of city life, and between the notions of citizen as 'constituent' or 'taxpayer' and citizen as an empowered and active participant in the development and decision-making processes of the communities in which he/she lives. In doing so, Bookchin makes as an argument for the gradual reclaiming of power and decision-making from the centralized, hierarchical, and beauracratic state apparatus by citizens situated within specific municipalities and organized with other municipalities as a confederation or 'Commune of communes'.

In short, the social and political agenda Bookchin advances over the course of several books and numerous articles is *dialectical* and in keeping with his conception of nature as a self-propelled unfolding of potentialities toward rationality, subjectivity, and freedom. As an expression of natural evolution and with the potentiality for becoming *nature rendered self-conscious and rational*, humanity and human societies have the capacity to not only live in a harmonious relationship with the natural world[11] but also to create social institutions that are decentralized, organized from the bottom-up, rooted in specific communities, and directly democratic.[12] This form of society, in turn, has found expression in the tribal communities of the Neolithic period, the *ekklesia* of 5th century B.C.E. Athens, the communes of the French Revolution of 1871, and so on. Despite their many shortcomings (patriarchy, slavery, and parochialism, amongst others), Bookchin argues, these historical examples are evidence of societies striving toward freedom. These instances of freedom taking form in human societies, however, have always been in dialectical tension with their opposites; that is, movements toward

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[11] See Chapter Three for further elaboration of these ideas.

[12] I examine an example of a school loosely organized around these characteristics in Chapter Five.

centralization, hierarchy, gigantism, the primacy of the individual over the common good, and an antagonistic relationship between humans and the natural world. It appears that in the contemporary developed world, the forces of the latter set of tendencies have eclipsed those of the former. But there is still hope.

This dialectical tension revolves around the competing conceptions of two ideas that have historically vied for primacy in both external forms of human social organization and within the human psyche itself. These countervailing forces, though often used interchangeably, have distinct historical genealogies as well as significantly different implications for notions of citizenship and democracy. According to Bookchin, these two distinct ideas can briefly be described as the opposition between 'autonomy' and 'freedom'. In essence, 'autonomy' utilizes as its basic unit of organization the individual while the notion of 'freedom' is firmly rooted within and dependent upon forms of human social organization and consociation. It is this distinction that ultimately led Bookchin, within the last decade of his life, to break with the anarchist movement and to develop his notions of libertarian municipalism and communalism. The contemporary anarchist movement, Bookchin (1995) argued, had eschewed one of its original aims – that is, social freedom – and had drawn its primary focus upon its other dominant tendency – that is, individual autonomy. As Bookchin (1992/1995), explains,

> …the 'autonomy' of the individual is structured in theory around the Roman and
> liberalistic notion of a seemingly sovereign, self-contained individual who has no
> clear roots in social life, while the word *freedom* (derived from the Germanic
> *Freiheit*) implies that individuality has deep social roots and responsibilities. In
> Imperial Rome, particularly under the Julio-Claudian emperors, the individual

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could exercise a wide range of choices in vocations, responsibilities, and the satisfaction of tastes. (52)

What can be surmised from this is that as individual choice expands, political involvement is eroded. It is not difficult to recognize a similar phenomena in the contemporary Western, developed world.

Apart from both individualist anarchism and liberalism, social ecology/libertarian municipalism advances a wholly different framework for thinking about democracy, citizenship, and, thus, education. While liberalism (as well as some strands of anarchism) holds as its irreducible unit the self-determining, autonomous individual and the state as guarantor of individual liberty and freedom, social ecology maintains as its foundation the *social interdependence* of individuals and an unswerving faith in the ability of people to work together to manage their own lives. As Janet Biehl and Murray Bookchin (1998) explain,

Libertarian municipalism [the political dimension of social ecology] proposes that passive dependence on an elite State is not, after all, the final condition of human political existence. A more active way of being is possible, it maintains, precisely because of some of the features that distinguish human beings as social, especially their capacity for reason, their mutual dependence, and their need for solidarity. Their interdependence and solidarity, in particular, can become the psychological, indeed moral groundwork for citizenship – and thus for the recreation of the political realm and direct democracy. (85)

In other words, liberalism, with its primary focus on the self-determining, autonomous individual, has been progressively distorted (by the State, urbanization, atomization, hierarchy, and capitalism) and has resulted in equating a 'citizen' with being a voter, a taxpayer, a consumer, and in rare instances, one who is able to actively participate in the shaping of community life *within the parameters the State itself has defined*. Much work has been carried out that examines the ways in which schools actively engage in a process of social and economic reproduction (see Bowles and Gintis, 1977). What I am suggesting here is that schools also tend to perpetuate *civic reproduction*. That is, as most efforts toward citizenship education are couched in the frameworks of civic republicanism and/or liberalism and conflate democracy with representative government, these efforts tend toward reproducing hegemonic conceptions of politics, citizenship, and the ways in which these concepts are to be enacted.

The notion of direct democracy and the formulation of a type of citizenship and citizenship education that it requires which are explicitly called for by the philosophy of social ecology and the politics of libertarian municipalism raise a whole host of questions and require a detailed examination. I will now summarize Bookchin's re-definition of the fundamental concepts of *politics*, *citizenship*, and *democracy*.

III. Redefining Politics, Citizenship, and Democracy: A Project of Re-Discovery and Re-Imagination

As made clear in the previous chapter, Bookchin viewed the ecological crises we face as the focus for a potentially trans-class movement that might bring together people from a variety of backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and cultures to reverse the suicidal course of global capitalism and a market-centered society which have commodified human and non-human life as well as

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the biosphere itself. Based upon an ecological ethics rooted in place and guided by the principles

of decentralization, non-hierarchical structures and relationships, and direct democracy, how

exactly might we as intellectuals and educators, young people and community members regain

some modicum of control over the decisions that most directly affect our lives? What form

should our interactions take that might allow for all voices to be heard, for all to be empowered

with a sense of agency not only over their own personal and professional trajectory but also over

the direction in which their community will develop? What characteristics of the citizen will

need to be introduced, developed, and nurtured in order to provide every person the opportunity

to take part in decision-making and managing the community? Finally, what might a school look

like that would provide a civic education rooted in direct democracy, an ecological ethics, and

the ideal of citizenship that brings these forces together?

A. Politics

In attempting to answer these questions, it is first necessary to give some consideration to

the specific ways in which Murray Bookchin defined 'politics', the 'city', and the 'citizen' as the

grounds for a re-conceptualization of the essence of democracy and, by proxy, citizenship

education *toward* a direct democracy. First, Bookchin goes to great lengths to distinguish

between politics and statecraft. As he does throughout his work, Bookchin draws many of his

ideas from the Athenian *polis* of the 5th century B.C.E. as the example *par excellence* of direct

democracy.[13] In so doing, he clearly defines and delineates the realms of *social life*, the *state,*

and politics. Social life, or what Hannah Arendt (1958) calls the "realm of necessity", refers to

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[13] While drawing inspiration for his Communalist project from the Athenian polis, Bookchin
repeatedly acknowledges its shortcomings (in the form of the exclusion of women and its
dependence upon slave labor) throughout his work.

the private world in which individuals work to meet their personal needs such as those for food, clothing, shelter, and reproduction.   Unlike today, in the ancient Athenian *polis* the social realm was not viewed as the primary arena in which one sought satisfaction, forms of expression, and the fulfillment of duties. These were more properly pursued in the civic realm and, more specifically, in the *agora* or public space provided for discussion with one's fellow citizens of matters both personal and political.

The *state* or *statecraft*, Bookchin (1992/1995) defines as a "professional civil authority with the power to govern a 'body politic' and "professional systems of governance and violence" (43). It is difficult to deny that, in the present day and age, the State has come to represent a particular set of power relationships. While in its ideal form, civic republicanism is intended as a form of government in which elected 'representatives' act on behalf of their constituents and attempt to align their actions with the will of the majority of citizens. Obviously, most everyday citizens recognize this ideal as being unduly influenced at best and completely corrupted at worst by powerful moneyed interests. Because electoral campaigns require exceedingly large sums of money and much of this money is provided by individuals or groups with corporate affiliations and interests or specific ideological interests, elected representatives are then obliged to advance policies, both domestic and foreign, that protect the interests of these groups rather than those of the constituents they supposedly represent. Despite their best intentions, politicians inevitably base their decisions not upon the common good nor even that of their constituents but rather upon a system of power relations largely dominated by wealth. As Janet Biehl (1998) explains,

> By functioning in the framework of this system, they come to share its aims of
>
> securing and maintaining a monopoly of power for an elite group of professionals,

and of protecting and advancing the interests of the wealthy, rather than the more

popular aims of empowering the many and redistributing wealth. (4)

This perspective is no longer coming strictly from those with left-leaning or even socialistic

political or economic inclinations. According to a New York Times/CBS News poll (2011),

two-thirds of the American public believe wealth should be distributed more evenly, seven in ten

Americans think the policies of Congressional Republicans favor the rich, and eighty-nine

percent of Americans say they distrust the government to do the right thing (*New York Times*,

October 25, 2011).

Unfortunately, I would argue, it is these sentiments that inform many people's thinking

about *politics*. In other words, due to the hegemony of civic republicanism and its philosophical

foundation in liberalism, many individuals are unable to distinguish between the Aristotelian

notion of *politics* and *the State*. While this may appear a fairly obvious point and, perhaps, not

one worth noting outside of circles of political philosophers, Bookchin (1992/1995) argues that

this is a relatively new phenomenon. As he explains,

> until recent times, professional systems of governance and violence coexisted
>
> with richly articulated community forms at the base of society – city
>
> neighborhoods in the world's few large urban areas, self-contained towns and
>
> villages, a network of extended kinship ties, a great variety of vocational, mutual-
>
> aid, and fraternal groups – which were largely beyond the reach of centralized
>
> state authorities. (43)

There has been a certain form of social amnesia that has clouded the notion of politics as direct management of the *polis* by citizens through face-to-face democratic institutions, particularly popular assemblies. In fact, the word *politics* itself, as defined and used in the writings of Aristotle, suggests direct democracy and the public, participatory dimension of a community.

Based upon the classical definition of the word, politics is not mere participation in the decision-making and management of the community but rather a realm of life associated with strong ethical and teleological foundations. It is the sphere, according to Aristotle, in which man becomes more than an animal and through which he fulfills his true nature as a political being. Unlike the household or what has been previously called the social realm in which humans simply fulfill their needs for survival, the political realm is where humans develop and construct a community with a shared commonality of purpose and consciously act to maintain, uphold or alter it (Arendt, 1958). According to Bookchin (1992/1995), as humanity moves from the mere struggle for survival toward organizing into broader collectives structured around shared ethics and cultures, the *polis* begins to take shape. The ancient Athenians were unique in that they broadened and fostered a "a degree of citizen participation not only in the decision-making activities of the assembly but in the everyday politics of the *agora*" and literally created *politics* as a "form of popular activity in administering public life that…is neither a state, conceived as a highly professionalized system of governance, nor a 'society,' conceived as forms of personal association for promoting survival and well-being" (Bookchin, 1992/1995, 49).

Politics, Bookchin (2007) defines as " the active engagement of free citizens in the handling of their municipal affairs and in their defense of its freedom"; historically speaking, politics connotes "the *direct* governing of the city by its citizens" (94). However obvious some of these observations may seem, the question remains as to how this ideal can be realized again in

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the global, hyper-individual, and highly complex world of the 21st century. This will require

more precise definitions of the elements that make possible direct democracy which include a

particular conception of the 'place' of citizenship (local, humanely-scaled, conceived within the

limits of the bioregion, and encompassing its natural as well as cultural features and history), the

ethics of citizenship (one which embodies the classical ideals of *philia*/solidarity, autonomy/self-

sufficiency, rationality, and civic commitment), and the practice of citizenship (decentralization,

direct participation in decision-making, and confederalism).

What will emerge, as I continue the discussion, is that active forms of citizenship and,

ultimately, direct popular control of community affairs through the assembly, will not emerge

simply from inculcating individuals with specific traits that contribute to their ability to identify

issues of importance, engage in rational and deliberative discussion and debate, and formulate

ways of addressing these issues. In other words, civic education toward direct democracy and

libertarian municipalism will not be effective if it is carried out in a vacuum. Rather, there must

be a community-wide effort that interdependently supports the place, ethics, and ecological

character of meaningful citizenship education toward direct democracy.

B. Citizenship: Rooted in Place, Grounded in Ethics

In *From urbanization to cities: Toward a new politics of citizenship*, Bookchin

(1992/1995) provides an exhaustive historical account of the move from tribal social

organization based upon kinship or blood ties and a strong dependence upon custom and well-

tested traditions of community management; toward the rise of cities and direct democratic

control and management of the *polis* by an active and engaged citizenry; and through to the

emergence of the centralized state, the replacement of politics by statecraft, and the dominance

of the market economy in organizing both urban and rural life. In doing so, he advances a

theoretical framework for communalism and a concrete agenda for the politics of libertarian

municipalism.   Ultimately, the move toward more directly democratic forms of

community/municipal management as well as the re-harmonization of human society with the

natural world rests upon shifting our attitudes, thinking, and activity away from the large, global,

centralized, and beauracratic and focusing more upon the humanly-scaled, local, decentralized,

and directly managed. As Janet Biehl (1998) argues:

> It is from this incipient political level of the community that libertarian
>
> municipalism strives to create and renew the political realm, then expand it. Here
>
> people can potentially reconstitute themselves from isolated monads into citizens
>
> who recognize each other, are mutually interdependent, and as such are concerned
>
> for their common welfare. It is here that they can create those political
>
> institutions that make for broad community participation and sustain them on an
>
> on-going basis. It is here that citizenship can become meaningful as citizens
>
> regain and expand the power that the State has usurped from them. (54)

The logical starting place for expanding the possibilities for a new notion of citizenship

and direct democracy is the community. This is obviously an overused term and one that lost

some of its meaning. However, drawing from Aristotle, Bookchin defines the community (or

Greek polis) as an area small enough to be taken in within a view from where one is situated.

Other definitions exist that look more to the number of residents or citizens within a given area.

According to Biehl (1998),

A community comprises individuals whose dwellings are clustered in the vicinity

of a distinct public space, forming a discernible community entity. [I]t is

residential proximity and the shared problems and interests that arise in a single

community, such as environmental, educational, and economic issues that form

the underpinnings of a shared civic life. (49)

Most importantly, it was this entity, the city or *polis*, with which a citizen most closely identified

and to which he/she pledged his loyalties. This matrix of identification and loyalty with one's

city gave way, slowly and unevenly, to identification with one's nation or nationality.

Up until the sixteenth century and the ascendancy of the nation-state, an individual

generally considered himself a citizen of the town or city in which he/she lived. The body politic

of a given town or city was not gigantic and anonymous but rather a real, tangible entity.

Because people more closely associated themselves with the places in which they lived and were

familiar with the land and other inhabitants of the place, there was a much stronger sense of

solidarity and, therefore, sense of communal obligation. As Bookchin (1992/1995), explains, "If

kinsmen were obligated to each other by virtue of blood ties and tribal custom, citizens were

obligated to each other by virtue of civic ties and ethical precepts" (59). In other words, there

was a strong sense of civic commitment, made palpable by one's surroundings and the people

one associated with, that the individual was expected to act upon through direct and rational

involvement in political life. Assuming that this identification with and loyalty to the locale and

its members is an essential ingredient for strong civic participation and investment in directly

democratic politics, the question of what obstacles stand in the way of this in the contemporary

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western world and how to engender this identification and loyalty will be explored in the final section of the paper.

Bookchin, in closely examining the character of pre-literate, ancient, and modern citizens alike, identifies certain important traits of citizenship largely grounded in a particular set of ethics. First, the citizens of the ancient Athenian *polis* placed a high value on a cultural conception of personal development which they called *paideia*. Bookchin goes on to explain *paideia* as the Greeks' notion of the education or development of a man (as this was not an option available to women) which:

> involved a deeply formative and life-long process whose end result made him an asset to the *polis*, to his friends and family, and induced him to live up to the community's highest ethical ideals. The German word, *Bildung*, with its combined meanings of character development, growth, enculturation, and an well-rounded education in knowledge and skills, more appropriately denotes what the Greeks meant by *paideia* than any word we have in English. It expresses a creative integration of the individual into his environment, a balance that demands a crucial mind with a wide-ranging sense of duty. The Greek word, *arête*, which in Homeric times denoted the warrior attributes of prowess and valor, was extended by the classical era to mean goodness, virtue, and excellence in all aspects of life. *Paideia* and *arête* are indissolubly linked - not as a means and ends but as a unified process of civic- and self-development. (64-65)

Often translated as 'education', the Athenian notion *paideia* went far beyond academic or intellectual development to include instilling within the individual a commitment to the *polis* and the ability to act effectively in the public interest.

In addition, *paideia* was not viewed as something that occurred primarily within an institution designated for learning. Quite the contrary, the education of citizens in civic commitment, rational deliberation, and reasoned discourse with fellow citizens was viewed as a community-wide endeavor. One learned how to become a citizen and political being by directly participating in the discourse, debate, public affairs, and management of the *polis* itself. The community, its inhabitants, its affairs, its issues, and the problems it faced provided citizens with an exhaustive 'curriculum' for developing intellectually, ethically, and personally (Bookchin, 1992/1995). It is not difficult to recognize how far our notions of citizenship and citizenship education have drifted from this ancient Greek ideal. However, I wish to argue that this is not because individuals are inherently less interested in participating in political life, but rather primarily because of the size and centralization of the modern political realm, the culture of hyper-individualism promoted by techno-capitalism and mass media, and the general trend toward the disenfranchisement and disempowerment of youth through contemporary institutions (schools included) and discourse.

In their ideal of citizenship, the ancient Greeks viewed autonomy as being inseparable from material self-sufficiency. Independence and self-sufficiency were greatly prized but could not be disentangled from one's embeddedness in the community in which one lived. That is, in order for one to make independent judgments in the interests of the community, rather than in strictly personal self-interest, one had to be free from dependence upon others for one's material subsistence. This is the reason, Bookchin argues, wage labor was viewed quite negatively by the

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ancient Athenians. In other words, one could not be autonomous without also being materially self-sufficient. Thus, the ideal citizen of the ancient Athenian *polis*, Bookchin (1992/1995) explains, was a "self-possessed individual who could be entrusted as much with the affairs of his community as with the satisfaction of his private needs" (69). Participating in politics was no different than providing oneself and one's family with food, shelter, and clothing. Politics, like life itself, did not require specialization and indeed, was kept 'amateur' rather than professionalized so that all (white, free men) could participate. And again, like life itself, one learned politics by directly participating in it.

Modern society, organized as it is around hyper-individualism and personal choice would have been anathema to the ancient Greek mind. To be 'free,' according to modern discourse both inside and outside of schools, is to be autonomous, to be able to choose amongst a variety of identities for the expression of one's individuality. In ancient Athens, where we find our closest living example of direct democracy in action, there was an interplay between a variety of factors and sets of values that made the well-being of the community of the utmost importance without sacrificing the integrity of the individual. To the citizen of the *polis*, Bookchin (1992/1995) explains,

> Individuality meant citizenship. And, ideally, citizenship meant personal
> wholeness that came from deep roots in tradition, a complexity of social bonds,
> richly articulated civic relationships, shared festivals, *philia* [solidarity], freedom
> from clientage and freedom for collective self-determination through institutions
> that fostered the full participation and everyday practice of a creative body politic.
> To be such a citizen, one had to live in a *polis* – a city that possessed an *agora*, a

space to convene general assemblies of the people, a theatre to dramatize the

reality and ideology of freedom, and the ceremonial squares, avenues, and

temples that gave it reverential meaning. To remove any of these elements that

made up this whole was to instantly destroy it. Without every one of them,

cultivated on a daily basis by the *paideia* of citizenship and guided by an unerring

concept of *arête* [virtue, goodness], the Athenian ideal of citizenship fell apart and

its institutions became hollow forms. (81)

C. The Social Ecology of Urbanization: Gigantism, Individualism, Disempowerment and the Decline of Citizenship

A variety of factors have worked to undermine the ideal of citizenship that first found

expression in the Athenian *polis* and that remained a strong undercurrent amidst the rise of the

nation-state, the emergence of the market economy, and the ascendancy of industrial capitalism.

It is only within the past half-century that the legacy of resistance to centralized authority and

communal solidarity and struggle for local autonomy and independence seems to have largely

faded from public memory. The *polis* - and its later manifestations in the feudal guilds, Spanish

communes, New England town hall meetings, amongst other historical examples – has been

thoroughly destabilized and weakened by gigantism in social and political institutions and the

increasing centralization of power, wealth, and decision-making. Communal solidarity and civic

commitment to one's village, town, or city has been weakened by a pervasive culture of

individualism and consumerism in many developed nations but particularly in the United States.

The desire for personal wholeness, a rounded self-development, and an individual and collective sense of empowerment has been undercut by the drive toward specialization, the professionalization of power, and a resulting privatization of the self.

If our aim as educators, activists, and individuals committed to the common good is to somehow revive these vital components of an active and engaged citizenry, particularly for the young amongst us, I believe it necessary to more fully explore the forces that have worked to undermine them. In doing so, I will first briefly consider Bookchin's account of the rise of urbanization against cities and the resulting deterioration of a shared commitment to local autonomy and self-determination. I will continue by exploring the ubiquitous culture of individualism and consumerism perpetuated by contemporary mass media and popular culture. Lastly, I will examine the collective disempowerment of youth through the construction of 'adolescence' and the appropriation of youth agency. In Chapter Six, I will return to some of these ideas and present some promising in-roads within the field of education aimed at re-imagining citizenship through the small schools movement, community or place-based education, and direct democracy.

1. Urbanization Against Cities

As has been illustrated, there is a long history of a notion of citizenship rooted in place, committed to local autonomy, and resistant to encroachment by centralized authority, be it in the form of a monarch or state bureaucracy. Bookchin (1992/1995) contends that these centuries-old traditions were significantly weakened by the long and uneven movement from the city – "where people advance beyond the kinship bond to share, create, and develop the means of life, culturally as well as economically, as human beings" – to urbanization – "the dissolution of the

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city's wealth of variety and a force that makes for municipal homogeneity and formlessness" (158). Urbanization, in turn, was precipitated by the emergence of the nation-state, the rise of industrialism, and the ever-expanding capitalistic forms of production and consumption. Without a community in which it could be grounded and around which it could be structured, politics and citizenship were gradually divested of their meaning and unmoored from their practice.

According to Bookchin, the increasing centralized power of the nation-state and the expansion of the market economy would not have been possible without significant developments in networks of roads, canals and rivers and modes of transportation. There was a conscious effort on the part of the emerging nation-state to develop these networks and thereby extend their reach into once locally insular, self-sufficient, and autonomous towns and villages. The nature of these geographically isolated communities was such that trade and institutions were humanly-scaled and promoted cooperation and face-to-face management of community affairs. However, by the seventeenth-century, Bookchin (1992/1995) explains,

> Western Europe and its towns seem to have reached a historic crossroads. The
> continent's further 'development', a term that by no means denotes 'progress' in
> any qualitative sense, was to depend less on the growth of a centralized state and
> on the expansion of commerce than on technology – on the development of
> machines and transportation techniques that were to re-work all the traditional ties
> that had produced such an ecologically extraordinary cultural, political, civic, and
> economic diversity of social and urban forms. The market society we call
> 'capitalism' – a society that tends to reduce all citizens to mere buyers and sellers

and debases all the ecologically varied social relationships produced by history to the exchange of objects called commodities – did not evolve out of a feudal era. It literally exploded into being in Europe during the eighteenth and particularly nineteenth centuries. Its invasion of the neighborhood, indeed of villages and small towns into the recesses of the domestic or familial relationships, has subverted the social bond itself and threatens to totally undermine any sense of community and ecological balance and diversity in social life. (180-181)

As a result, cities have gradually lost the attributes of unique cultural and physical bodies, small enough to be managed by the people that occupy them and to foster a sense of commonality amidst diversity, collective commitment to the common good, and a shared active citizenship. The gigantism of cities and their reduction to marketplaces for the buying and selling of goods has gradually eroded a communal sentiment and social cohesion present to a large degree through the expansion of industrialism and the growth of large urban centers that existed up to the middle of the twentieth century. "It was not until a technology developed that could make deep, perhaps decisive, inroads into this 'underground' municipal domain," Bookchin (1992/1995) claims, "that politics and citizenship were faced with the total 'commodification' of society, the supremacy of statecraft, and the subversion of the city's ecological diversity and creativity" (192). The underground culture of the municipality, centered upon cooperation, self-determination, and shared civic responsibility, has been all but buried beneath the globalized culture of mass media, hyper-individualism, and consumerism.

2. The Consumption of Education: Citizenship as Consumerism

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks carried out on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the nation was gripped with fear, anxiety, anger, and mourning. Tragic historical events such as this often provide large groups of people with the opportunity to reflect upon and reassess their collective beliefs, values, and actions. Often, a people are compelled to look toward their leaders to provide some sense of how to make meaning of and respond to such events. President George W. Bush's response to these events and his instructions to the American public for dealing with them were at once shocking and at the same time perfectly tailored for the dominant culture that has taken shape in this country over the past five decades: "Get on board. Do your business around the country. Fly and enjoy America's great destination spots. Get down to Disney World in Florida. Take your families and enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed" (Remarks by President George W. Bush to Airline Employees, Chicago O'Hare International Airport, Chicago, IL, September 27, 2001). The essential message here? Do not let the terrorists scare you out of doing what you have always done – shopping, consuming, and entertaining yourselves.

I fear that in our day and age, schooling, and the education it purports to do, have become enmeshed with market values and imperatives. This link between the capitalist marketplace and schooling has been elaborated in structural functionalist terms, positing the school as nothing more than the training ground for the future workforce. In the work of Bowles and Gintis (1976), the argument was that schools are structured in such a way as to prepare young people for a particular position in the class-based economy. That is, students coming from lower- or working-class positions received training within the school - training of both mind and body through routines, expectations, ways of interacting and relating with authority, and modes of expression – that would render them suitable for characteristically poor and working-class jobs.

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Conversely, students from middle- to upper-middle class and elite backgrounds received the requisite skills in schools that situated them to assume jobs characteristic of these class positions. While the deterministic nature of this argument has been thoroughly critiqued and problematized primarily due to its lack of attention to human agency, it still appears a highly viable explanation for existing class stratification. However, my concern is less with how schools function to reproduce an economic- and class-stratified workforce and more with the school's role in the production of a particular kind of citizen, namely that of the consumer.

From vending machines to scoreboard sponsorships, from team uniforms to 'educational' books and videos promoting television and film characters, the market imperatives of advertising and selling products has insidiously seeped into primary and secondary institutions of public education. Beyond the drive to advertise particular products to a captive audience, marketing and advertising in schools blends more traditional values of learning, growth, and creativity with the values of consumption, status, and brand loyalty. I am opposed to instilling in young people the notion that their worth is predicated upon their buying power or what they possess and feel that the educational process should be centered on exploration, critical examination, creatively re-imagining oneself and the world in which one lives. Erich Fromm (1976) articulates the distinction between these two orientations to life as that between *having* and *being*.

Corporate-sponsored media has contributed to keeping the attention of educators and learners away from the culture, history, problems, and educational possibilities that exist within their own communities (Bowers, 2000). As David Gruenwald and Gregory A. Smith (2008) point out:

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Few people would argue that first television and now the Internet and their

associated technologies and products help to choreograph youth and consumer

cultures based on the commercial values that benefit corporate media sponsors.

The entertainment-style technology-industrial complex reinforces the narrative of

economic globalization by constructing children and youth around the world as

hi-tech consumers rather than citizens. A youth culture based on the

commodification of experience through product identification intensifies

alienation from community and from the intergenerational relationships necessary

to strengthening community ties. Furthermore, a technologized consumer culture

reinforces a brand of competitive individualism familiar now to both school and

work environments. Corporate-sponsored media constantly teach that

participation in the global economy through consumption of ever-new products

(made from cheap labor in deregulated environments around the globe) is a right

as well as a measure of success and self-worth. Thus, in tandem with schooling

and the narrative of globalization, corporate media distort what it means to be a

person, a learner, and a member of a local community. (xv)

As such, young people are not only discouraged from learning about and investing in their local

communities but are often divested of the support and mentoring necessary for becoming active,

empowered citizens capable of imagining their own role in the development and future of their

communities. Situated within a dominant culture whose messages emphasize the primacy of

individuality and that provides little space for active and meaningful political participation on the

local level, many youth retreat into an egoism that is only fostered by the adults that surround them.

3. The Construction of 'Adolescence' and the Appropriation of Youth Agency

Many administrators, educators, and policy makers have labeled contemporary American youth as both disengaged from political life and apathetic toward pressing social issues. Social surveys and academic research on teenagers have found evidence for declining levels of political knowledge, interest and participation and a growing cynicism toward politicians and social institutions in general (Times Mirror Center Study, 1990; Hart, 1994 cited in Buckingham, 2000; Barton & Levstik, 1998; Cornbleth, 2002).

These criticisms come from both the right and the left in the United States. The right bemoans the seeming unwillingness of young people to become informed about and supportive of this country's official history and institutions. The left looks back nostalgically on the 1960s as a time when youth were visible leading the struggle for civil rights, women's liberation, and opposition to the Vietnam war. The point that I would like to make is that while a great number of contemporary youth in the United States are not informed nor involved in significant social, cultural, and political issues that directly impact them and the communities in which they live, the reasons for this do not lie in the 'nature' of 'youth' nor in their unwillingness to participate. Rather, the perceived lack of engagement on the part of youth may be related to contemporary constructions of 'youth' by adults and the foundational position these constructions have occupied in the design and implementation of public education.

In using the term 'youth', I am specifically referring to children between the ages of 13 and 17. I chose this as my focus for two reasons. First, it is between the ages of 13 and 17 that

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one is typically enrolled in secondary school in the United States. Both historically and contemporarily, this age range denotes a unique stage and state both in relation to those that are older and those that are younger. Culturally, socially, and legally, this is a period that signals a shift out of 'childhood' but not yet into 'adulthood'. This 'in-between-ness' has implications for adult expectations of teenagers that conflict with the social and cultural norms and legal restrictions that exist for people of those ages.

I will provide a brief historical overview of the roles and expectations of 'youth' during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and how these were transformed by the construction and development of the concept of 'adolescence'. I will also explore how the concept of 'adolescence' manifested itself in public education. This manifestation acted as a vehicle for adult colonization of youth space and time (Cannella and Viruru, 2004) that isolated them from and ultimately prevented their direct participation in the public sphere. I will also briefly consider the related issue of how these shifting paradigms also began to open up spaces for young people to create cultures of their own and to effectively resist, contest, and reshape the social conditions in which they found themselves. Finally, I will consider the contemporary movement toward standardization within schools as a response to the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s, and its implications for youth agency.

"Since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries", Colin Heywood (2001) explains,

the 'middle-class' desire has been to isolate children, and later adolescents, from the world of adults. Young people have been increasingly 'infantilized' by efforts to keep them out of the workplace, to repress their sexuality and to prolong their education in schools and colleges. (21)

These efforts created tension between adult control and the realities of the young and were often met with resistance. In some ways, this resistance led to the institution of compulsory schooling by government during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to control youth under the guise of providing them with an education.

As the child was liberated from adulthood, new forms of collective social constraint became necessary to contain it. "Theories of the child", Chris Jenks (1996) explains, "are always pointers towards the social construction of reality." The two dominant ways of talking about children Jenks call the Dionysian and the Apollonian. The Dionysian view, which seems to correspond to that of traditionalists, assumes children enter the world with an evil or corruption already within them. The Apollonian child, as reflected in progressive's definition of 'adolescence', is viewed as innocent and untainted by the world they have entered.

These images of the child help inform the strategies Western society, specifically schools in this case, enacts to control, socialize, and constrain the young. In the Dionysian view, children sacrifice their childhood to the cause of the collective adult good. In the Apollonian view, where children are viewed as unique and different, it is more difficult to appeal to a sense of shared values. "We monitor and examine and watch the Apollonian child; he or she in turn learns to watch over themselves and shame is replaced by guilt" (Jenks, 1996). In examining our views of and dealings with children, we are also investigating forms of social integration and social control. "Our historical perspectives on normality in childhood reflect the changes in the organization of our social structure", Jenks (1996) explains. "All ideas and practices concerning the care of, justice for, and protection of the child can be seen to be instrumental in the ideological network that preserves the status quo" (30).

As late as the nineteenth century, most children were encouraged to begin supporting themselves at an early stage. Children entering their early teens were likely to be working alongside adults or embarking upon an apprenticeship to learn a trade. In fact, many children had left home by the modern stage of adolescence to begin working as a servant or an apprentice to a tradesman outside the family (Heywood, 2001). During the early twentieth century, increasing numbers of children were spending the majority of their time in school, far removed from the world of work and adult responsibilities – a far different situation from less than a century earlier. What changed in the way adults thought about youth over this relatively short period of time and how were these changes related to the growth and structure of public schooling in the United States?

The "Child Study" movement within the United States was centered on gaining a detailed scientific understanding of children's emotional, physical, and sexual development. These new understandings marked the beginning of the emergence of the modern concept of 'adolescence' as a distinct phase of human development. As Steven Mintz (2004) explains, during the early twentieth century, adolescence was characterized by

> intense passions, a penchant for risk-taking, and wildly fluctuating emotions. G.
> Stanley Hall, the psychologist whose 1904 book on adolescence helped
> popularize the concept, convinced many parents and educators that young people
> were growing up too fast, that adolescence needed to be prolonged, and that the
> early and mid-teenage years needed to be spent in specialized institutions
> designed to meet adolescents' special psychological needs. (187)

Chris Jenks' (1998) observation is also instructive in putting these changes into perspective:

> If, as Rousseau advised and our late twentieth century liberalism encourages, children are immanent in their capacities then they must surely be allowed free rein, they must go where their journeying takes them and they must be encouraged in their pioneering spirit. But, of course, the lines are drawn. From the close arenas of domestic space to the infinite horizons of cyberspace the boundaries are erected by a gerontocratic hegemony, policed by discipline and legitimized through ideologies of care, protection and privacy. (22)

Lloyd DeMause (1962) argues that the further back in history one goes, the more likely children are to be physically mistreated. He describes the period beginning in the mid-twentieth century as characterized by the "helping mode" of parent-child relations, where discipline is not necessary and both mother and father empathize with and work to fulfill the child's particular needs. While the modern conception of adolescence may have led to more humane physical treatment of children (a decrease in the danger and amount of work done by young people or a more 'child-centered' curriculum, for example), it was no less oppressive in its management and discipline of their bodies through particular constructions of time and space.

While G. Stanley Hall's observations and the emerging concept of adolescence helped bring about a shift to a more progressive, child-centered pedagogy within schools (Mintz, 2004; Reese, 2005), it also led to the rapid expansion of adult control over how and where teenagers spent their time and an almost complete surveillance of teenagers inner and outer lives. Extracurricular activities were expanded but so was adult control and supervision. The role of

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schools as agents of socialization became more pronounced, but was directed toward

adolescents' smooth transition into the pre-existing world of adults. Enrollment in high schools

doubled during the first four decades of the century placing the majority of teenagers under the

care, supervision, and tutelage of adult-controlled, state-run institutions. All of this amounted to

the erosion of adolescent autonomy and the possibilities for youth to speak on their own behalf

and to act upon the issues that mattered most to them. Mintz (2004) explains the problematic

nature of these developments for young people:

> Why did the autonomous student organizations of the mid and late nineteenth
>
> century disappear, and why did students submit to administrative control of their
>
> activities? One reason was that the schools offered better facilities and coaching
>
> than students could provide for themselves. But it also reflected a shift in
>
> students' self-perception. As high schools grew more important as placement
>
> agencies and assumed a more all-encompassing role in middle-class lives,
>
> students began to see themselves as juveniles and became more and more
>
> acquiescent. It seemed appropriate that adults who knew better should organize
>
> their leisure as well as their academic activities. (199)

With large-scale efforts to make school more relevant, equitable, and child-centered

during the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, there were also many critics of progressive education that

condemned the shift in focus away from academics. These critics promoted the traditional

curriculum, conventional teaching methods, reliance upon textbooks, strict discipline within

schools and classrooms, and a system based upon competition and meritocracy (Reese, 2005).

While the traditionalists also saw schools as a central institution for social progress and individual improvement, they primarily viewed children as adults-in-the-making, empty vessels to be filled with specific pieces of knowledge at appropriate stages of development by their adult superiors. Traditionalists' conceptions of youth were far different from their progressive counterparts, yet they often served the same ends: adult control, monitoring and surveillance of youth activity, a smooth transition into the adult world, and maintenance of the established social order.

Despite widespread calls for educational reforms by progressives and a resounding backlash from traditionalists responding to Cold War fears and the launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union, innovative practices that took seriously the interests and perspectives of the child were not as common as sometimes perceived. The 1969 edition of the AERA encyclopedia contradicted many of the assumptions of critics of progressive education. As Reese (2005) explains,

> lectures, an efficient way to teach, prevailed, and so did pupil passivity, especially
> if teachers enforced a code of pupil decorum. As in past decades, pupils filled in
> workbooks, often sat quietly at their desks, and spent considerable time listening
> to other people, especially the teacher. (271)

While the explicit aim of schools was to aid in children's development into autonomous, civically engaged adults, I would argue the implicit message of dominant pedagogical approaches had the opposite effect.   As David Buckingham (2000) explains, "arguments about the 'innate' incompetence [of children] give rise to a circular logic. Children may well appear

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incompetent (and indeed uninterested) because they have not been encouraged to develop the skills or knowledge that would enable them to appear otherwise" (169).

Both the progressive model of education and its foundation on the concept of 'adolescence' as well as the traditionalist approach modeled on the factory acted to isolate youth from the public and political sphere and discipline their bodies in time and space. Ironically, as the result of soaring enrollments in high schools across the country and the social isolation of youth from the adult world within these institutions, what began to develop was a distinct youth culture as well as youth-led social activism. During the 1960s, young people were the leaders of challenges to the status quo and the pioneers of social and cultural change.

How do we explain the shift from the highly disciplined and conventional childhoods of the 1950s and early '60s to the rebellious and radical nature of much of America's youth in the mid- to late '60s? Steven Mintz (2004) offers one explanation:

> as a result of depressed birthrates during the 1930's and the postwar babyboom, the number of teenagers exploded. Unlike their parents, whose values and expectations had been shaped by the Depression and World War II, young people grew up in a period of unprecedented prosperity, security, and ease, when the gross national product expanded at an average rate of 3.9 percent a year and real income doubled. Their parents' concern for their well-being became translated into their own search for personal fulfillment. (313)

In reality, those most closely linked with the youth culture at that time were born before the postwar boom and the formative influence on their lives had been the democratic idealism of the New Deal and World War II (Mintz, 2004).

Leading to revolutionary changes in American society, the social unrest and political discontent of the 1960's created a great deal of fear and anxiety amongst adults. I would argue that the memory of these times along with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in the early 1980's reinforced adult unease over the younger generation. The combination of these factors worked to draw the focus back to schools as both partly to blame for and a potential solution to what were perceived as unruly, unpatriotic, and potentially dangerous young people. Linking scholastic performance with the health of the economy, *A Nation at Risk* demanded higher academic standards in the public schools (Reese, 2005). With youth culture(s) firmly entrenched in our society, other means were devised not only to isolate children from adults but also to isolate children from one another. This, coupled with the call for higher standards, in many ways led to the standardization of the curriculum and the reimplementation of testing as a mechanism for sorting and dividing children.

With youth tracked and sorted within schools and the explosion of electronic media that drew young people off the streets and into a seat in front of the screen, the stage was set for a generation of disconnected, socially unaware individuals. This seems to be a more accurate portrayal of the 1980s and early '90s than it is of the current century. While the 1980's were a fairly flat period for youth engagement in and work on social issues, I believe one can see resurgence in youth-led activism if one looks in the right places.

While it seems the '60s are long forgotten and the contemporary generation is as disconnected from political and social life as they are connected to the internet and ipods, I see

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some areas for investigation that may hold out some hope that contemporary youth do possess a sense of political agency and are ready and willing to enact it. The first area is that of the micro-practices in which students engage while in school. The second area is the growing number of youth-led social activist groups that are springing up nationally and internationally.

Though schools continue to act as disciplinary mechanisms for youth and are as adult controlled as ever, an examination of the micro-practices of young people may show they are not as passive as they seem. Despite the seemingly monolithic nature of temporal and spatial regulatory practices in schools, students' abilities to find loopholes, transgress controlled spaces, and turn time to their own ends speaks to their ingenuity and resiliency.

Teachers and administrators spend inordinate amounts of time and energy struggling to keep students "on task", properly oriented in space and time, and mentally engaged with the material deemed appropriate for the classroom. While the strategies employed by school authorities are often effective and therefore repressive of students' free will and autonomous use of space and time, what I find more interesting for exploration are the ways in which students tactically resist these strategies - in small ways and often on an individual basis – thereby reclaiming this very autonomy that seems to be taken from them. According to de Certeau (1984), these "tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong…must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into 'opportunities'. The weak must continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them" (xix) thus opening up greater possibilities for the expression of difference, pleasure, and creativity.

IV. Conclusion

As any simple Google search for 'youth activism' will show, there are a large number of youth-led organizations that have developed nationally and internationally over the past ten to fifteen years. These organizations have taken up a variety of issues including but not limited to environmental protection, LGBT rights, animal rights, ageism, racism, community-building initiatives, school reform, and anti-globalization. Some initial research (www.freechild.org) has revealed these groups are highly organized, connected with one another, and, to a large degree, completely youth-inspired and led. These young people are going against the grain and challenging assumptions regarding their level of competency and willingness to take part in larger discourses regarding issues that directly affect them but from which they have been kept from meaningful participation.

According to Buckingham (2000), "Children will only be likely to become 'active citizens', capable of exercising thoughtful choice in political [as well as social and cultural] matters, if they are presumed to be capable of doing so" (169). By moving toward a conception of youth as capable of not only meaningfully participating in the content and form of their own educations but also in actively engaging in the development, enrichment, and management of their own communities, we can begin to sow the seeds of a notion of citizenship education toward direct democracy.

Chapter Five

Social Ecology From Theory to Practice: Case Study of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos H.S.

I. Introduction

The Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) is a community-based charter school situated in the Humboldt Park neighborhood on Chicago's west side. Currently, PACHS serves approximately 175 students of Puerto Rican, Mexican, African-American and multiple other Latino ethnicities from grades 9-12. There is a faculty of approximately 15 teachers along with an administrative and support staff of approximately 11. The school is located in a newly renovated building with six classrooms including a modern science classroom and lab and a fully functioning hydroponics-based rooftop greenhouse. Accredited by the National Association for the Legal Support of Alternative Schools (NALSAS), PACHS is affiliated with the Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center, the Alternative Schools Network, and the Youth Connection Charter Schools.

According to the principal of PACHS, the school community has been actively working on making social ecology the conceptual centerpiece of the curriculum in order to actualize the school's mission and vision. As understood and utilized by the faculty at PACHS, social ecology provides a means of understanding the cause and effect relationship between human beings and their environment. According to the schools website, "A person's health and well-being – physical, emotional, and spiritual – has as much to do with a person's decisions in life as it does with the environments in which that person is raised. A person is always a part of an ecosystem that they can both impact and also be impacted by" (http://www.pedroalbizucamposhs.org/urban-agriculture/urban-agriculture/).

II. Description of School-Community or Community-School: Context, History, and Funding and Accreditation

A. Context: Paseo Boricua

The Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School is located in the heart of Chicago's Puerto Rican community and in what has come to be known as "Paseo Boricua". Always a bastion of community activism, Puerto Rican culture including food, music, and street vendors and pride in its Puerto Rican heritage, "Paseo Boricua" is located on Division Street between Western Avenue and Mozart in the Humboldt Park neighborhood. Flanked on either end with nearly 60-foot tall Puerto Rican flags constructed of steel and stretching over Division Avenue, this street has been named Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Street in honor of the first Puerto Rican to graduate from Harvard. Also a WWI veteran, labor leader, President of the Nationalist Party, and political prisoner, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos (1891-1965) has become a widely recognized symbol of Puerto Rican political consciousness and national pride.

As I walked up and down Division Avenue, the anonymity, rush, and isolation that as a large a city as Chicago can often invoke seemed to disappear. The sound of Bamba music came from storefronts and cars. People sat outside together talking feverishly and observing what was happening around them. The sides of many a building displayed hand painted murals depicting artifacts of Puerto Rican pride – the flag, the image of Roberto Clemente, and the fiery gaze of Albizu Campos himself, amongst others. All of the businesses along this stretch – including La Bruquena restaurant, Café Colao, Dance Academy of Salsa, and Batey Urbano – are small and locally-owned and work to uphold and transmit the Caribbean culture from which their food, music, dance, and art have their origins. This is no accident as the members of this community

have worked tirelessly to maintain its autonomy and culture and resist encroachment by the more dominant, affluent, Euro-centric, and often corporate culture that surrounds it. The Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School, which will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in the Fall of 2012, has been central to these efforts to resist gentrification, to maintain and perpetuate Puerto Rican culture and political consciousness, and to empowering youth to better themselves and their communities and to carry on these traditions.

B. History: "La educacion rompe las cadenas" ("Education Breaks Chains")

Originally named "La Escuela Puertorriquena (the Puerto Rican School)", the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School was established in 1972 by parents, students, teachers, and community activists in response to a 70 percent dropout/push-out rate amongst Puerto Rican youth in the city of Chicago. As José Lopez, one of the founders of the school, shared with me, the dominant culture of the time portrayed Puerto Ricans as lazy, unmotivated, and unprepared for academic learning and success. As documented through my interviews with current PACHS students, these racist and marginalizing discourses persist into the present and often lead many Latino/a and African-American youth to the conclusion that school is not for them. Both anecdotal evidence from teachers and staff and conversations with students themselves prove that many Puerto Rican and other Latino/a students leave school as the result of feeling uncared for, unsupported, and generally ignored in the large comprehensive high schools of the Chicago Public School system. Additionally, the curriculum and general culture of these schools do not give serious consideration to the language, culture, and history of the students they are charged with teaching. As the Chicago School Board resisted addressing what many viewed as deficits and discriminatory practices within Tuley, Wells, and Lake View High Schools, a contingent of

community members took matters into their own hands and established an independent school that would teach pride in Puerto Rican culture, history, and language, draw attention to the history of colonialism, imperialism, and racism and that would, over time, begin to connect these struggles with those of other marginalized and oppressed groups.

Currently located above the *Puerto Rican Cultural Center* on Division Street in Chicago, PACHS serves approximately 175 students in grades 9-12 from Humboldt Park and other surrounding neighborhoods. PACHS has a contractual agreement with the Chicago Public Schools to accept students that have officially dropped-out of the public school system. Students that are interested in attending the school need to apply and are then made part of a lottery to determine who is eligible to enroll. No form of standardized testing is used as a basis for admittance but each student is interviewed by school administrators and staff in order to make absolutely clear the rigor and expectations of the school and to identify whether or not the student is prepared to make the social and academic commitment the school requires. Presently, many students remain on a waiting list as the school works to uphold its commitment to remain small and maintain a strong sense of community and family.

Because of its size, PACHS is able to offer students classes with no more than a 1:16 teacher-to-student ratio and one-to-one student mentorship by full-time mentors working at the school. Over the past three years, PACHS has boasted a graduation rate of over 80 percent and provides students with opportunities to earn college credit and work experience. Amidst what can often be an environment hostile to difference, PACHS openly declares itself an LGBTQ-friendly school and campus. Connected to the school, the *Lolita Lebron Family Learning Center* offers young parents culturally relevant parenting classes, family literacy workshops, and an onsite bilingual daycare service for children from ages 0 to 5 years old. Finally, PACHS is an

affiliate organization of the *Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center*, a founding

member of the *Alternative Schools Network* (ASN), and one of approximately 20 Chicago

Campuses comprising the *Youth Connection Charter Schools* (YCCS).

C. Funding/ Accreditation

PACHS has accreditation from the *National Association for the Legal Support of*

Alternative Schools (NALSAS). A description of the role of the NALSAS comes from the

organization's website (http://www.nalsas.org):

NALSAS was originally "designed to help interested persons/organizations

locate/evaluate/create viable alternatives to traditional schooling approaches"---

including home study. Subsequently, NALSAS established a process to accredit

bona fide members of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools

(ncacs.org) requiring an on-site visit be conducted by a qualified representative to

members of NCACS and educational home schooling programs that apply.

A Certificate of Accreditation issued by NALSAS is not meant to

represent an evaluation and/or approval of the materials, teaching staff or

educational philosophy employed by the applicant program. Rather, only one

standard is applied: consumer protection---an assurance to the general public: 1)

that a member of NCACS not involved with the control, operation, or proceeds of

the applicant program has reviewed and confirmed documentation of their

compliance with all state and local laws; and 2) that the conditions and

advertising claims made regarding their location and operation have been verified

(that the program is what it purports to be and does what it purports to do).
Whether such a program is desirable or suitable for meeting the needs of a
particular learner then becomes a question for the consumer to determine.

As mentioned, PACHS is a founding member of the *Alternative Schools Network* (ASN)
and a campus of the *Youth Connection Charter Schools* (YCCS). The *Alternative Schools
Network* (ASN) is a not-for-profit organization in Chicago working to provide quality
educational opportunities for inner-city children, youth and adults. Since 1973, the ASN has been
supporting community-based and community-run programs to develop and expand training and
other educational services in Chicago's inner-city neighborhoods. In addition to supporting direct
services, ASN has been a consistent and effective advocate for community-based services
whereby the people involved are active participants in developing and running programs – not
passive recipients of services. The ASN currently works with 24 community-based alternative
high schools in Chicago (adapted from description of Alternative Schools Network on PACHS
website: http://www.pedroalbizucamposhs.org/programs/rsp).

> The Youth Connection Charter Schools, established in 1997, provides alternative
> education programs in the Chicago area and focuses upon serving the population
> of drop-out and at-risk students in Illinois. It has carried out this work by building
> small campuses in partnership with community-based organizations and colleges
> throughout Chicago. By providing at-risk students with unique educational
> approaches and learning environments, it has helped 80 percent of its graduates to
> continue on to post-secondary education or employment.

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Based upon the overall agency budget for the 2011-2012 school year, PACHS receives approximately 94 percent of its funding from public grants and the remainder comes from private grants. These private grants are further divided between PACHS and the *Puerto Rican Cultural Center* with which it is affiliated. Of the total income, 56 percent of PACHS dollars comes from YCCS. Less than 1 percent of the annual budget is comprised of government state aid for students at or below the poverty level. The *Alternative Schools Network*, who provides funding for schools with students that are wards of the state, provides approximately 1 percent of the schools funding. Less than 1 percent of the school's funding comes from federal Title I/NCLB. A small portion of the school's funding comes from a Title XX City of Chicago grant intended for student mentoring.

III. Foci of Previous Research at the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School

In "'This School is My Sanctuary': The Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School", Rene Antrop-Gonzalez (2003) presents the findings of a qualitative study of the Puerto Rican-centric high school situated within literature that examines the relationship between the general lack of care provided for Latino/a students in most large, comprehensive urban high schools and their history of low academic achievement. Through a focus upon the experiences of students and teachers at PACHS, Antrop-Gonzalez (2003) makes the argument that for a school to be effective for Latino/a students, it should foster student-teacher caring relationships, provide a familial type of environment to insure that its students are not marginalized, provide a gang-free safe space, and affirm students' racial and ethnic identities (2). In highlighting and describing these characteristics he develops the concept of "school as sanctuary."

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As Antrop-Gonzalez and Anthony De Jesus (2006) explain, a school like PACHS takes shape not only to provide improved educational opportunities for students of a given community but also as political movements for self-determination, community control, and decolonization. As such, the work of students, teachers, and community members are not centered solely upon individual accomplishment and advancement but is intimately tied to the maintenance of community cohesiveness, the preservation of relationships and traditions, and the enhancement of community life itself. Conversely, as the well-being of the community cannot be disentangled from the well-being of the individuals that constitute it, much effort is devoted to providing for the social and emotional well-being of the students themselves.

This approach to education cuts against the grain of much of the discourse, rhetoric, and practice of traditional schooling. This approach emphasizes that the good of the individual cannot be disentangled from the good of the community; that one is embedded in and deeply influenced by a place – that is, the matrix of geographical, environmental, historical, and cultural coordinates that give a region or neighborhood its unique flavor, strengths, and problems that form the fabric of people's everyday lives. It is an education that promotes an understanding of the interrelationship of political, economic, and cultural factors – that is to say, the *social* – with environmental conditions. However, the educational approach at PACHS aims to move students beyond a cognitive *understanding* of these interrelationships and into the realm of *collective action* to influence these factors in meaningful and beneficial ways. Using the framework of social ecology, this educational approach draws from Puerto Rican as well as other historically oppressed cultural traditions to make learning as personally and socially relevant as possible.

IV. Description of Interview Participants

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A. Founder and Faculty

José – PACHS Founding Member

Amidst his very busy schedule as professor, community activist, and executive director of the *Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture* (IPRAC), José Lopez agreed to sit down with me for an informal interview. A Puerto Rican male probably in his late fifties to early sixties, José has been a life-long resident of the Humboldt Park community and a long-time educator at the both the secondary and post-secondary levels. Beginning his teaching career in one of the comprehensive Chicago Public High Schools in the neighborhood, José described his opportunity to realize the 'American Dream' in that he graduated from high school with high marks and earned acceptance into prestigious universities. While acting as a research assistant on a project whose aim was to examine the phenomenon of Puerto Rican drop-outs in the city of Chicago, José had some stark realizations that led him to founding PACHS in 1972. What he continually heard from students he interviewed for the research project was that "teachers hear us, but don't listen to us". Initially, he had trouble fully comprehending to what these students were referring. As a Puerto Rican student himself, he always felt his teachers had listened to him. However, the realization he had was that he was the exception rather than the rule and that, despite their status as drop-outs, the young Puerto Rican men he was interviewing were "smarter" than he was insofar as they were critically questioning the world around them, a world that held largely racist views of them and subsequently foreclosed many of the opportunities and rights they were entitled to as human beings. It was at this moment that José felt compelled to begin to think about and address the issue of a nearly 73 percent Puerto Rican dropout rate in the city of Chicago. In attempting to do so, he began conducting a voluntary course on Puerto Rican history held after school and it was from there that the school began to take shape. Looking back

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upon the past 40 years since the school's inception, José explained that despite a wide variety of changes over time, he felt those involved with the school "maintained an incredible integrity in preserving the core values of what [they] set out to do".

Marcos[14] – PACHS Principal

Young, charismatic, and deeply passionate about his work and role as educational leader, Marcos, a Puerto Rican male, has been the principal at PACHS for the past eight years. After obtaining his teacher certification, he began at the school as a teacher and subsequently obtained the position of principal. He is extremely intelligent, organized, and well read and takes responsibility for the schools budgeting and finance, curriculum development, instructional leadership, and community outreach, amongst other things. From the time we met, Marcos made me feel welcome and engaged with the ideas I was exploring while also inviting me to offer critique of what I observed, to share my learning and experiences with him and the staff. Continually throughout my time at the school, I observed Marcos' commitment to and diligence in his work . He had a thorough understanding of the school's history and the thinking behind its mission and vision and consistently asked both teachers and students to critically reflect upon these ideas in order to identify what was being done effectively and the issues that were acting as obstacles to their more meaningful realization. He mixed serious reflection and high standards of accountability (for himself, for the teachers, and for the students) with fun, creativity, excitement, and encouragement. Based upon my experience, I saw his leadership as a vital component in the delivery of a critical, community-based education intended to foster student achievement and self and social transformation.

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[14] Names of all participants have been replaced with pseudonyms in order to protect their anonymity.

Manuel – Urban Agriculture Teacher and Assistant Principal

Manuel is a middle-aged Puerto Rican man that occupies the dual roles of classroom teacher and assistant principal at the school. Having started his work at the school as a part-time teacher of classes in Puerto Rican history and Black and Latino Literature approximately seven years ago, Manuel's background in science led him to take over the science department and to eventually develop the program and courses in urban agriculture. Manuel's history with PACHS dates back to his own high school career in that one of the founders of the PACHS was his teacher in a nearby Chicago Public School. In that he was familiar with some of its founding members, Manuel was aware of the school and its developing mission before it actually began in 1972. While the majority of the staff at PACHS is under the age of forty and have come from different parts of the city and country, Manuel is older and has lived in the community for the greater part of his life. He has a deep sense of the culture and history of the area that he works to impart to students. Manuel has a warm and welcoming spirit and obviously takes great pride in the expanding urban agriculture program at the school. In describing the success and expansion of the urban agriculture program, however – including a private-public partnership to build a $1 million greenhouse on the rooftop of the school – Manuel is quick to point out that the idea came from the students themselves and their explorations of some of the more predominate issues that face the community. Viewing his work with students as a partnership rather than in a traditional top-down fashion was characteristic of all of the staff that I worked with at the school.

Emiliana – US and World History Teacher

Emiliana obtained her teaching degree in early elementary education and was committed to finding a position in an inner city school. She learned about PACHS through a family member

that had been involved at the school and eventually started substitute teaching there. When there

was an opening for a full-time position teaching social studies, Emiliana applied and obtained the

job. At the time of the study, Emiliana, a Mexican-American woman, was in her fourth year as

lead teacher of both US and World History. Younger and usually dressed in jeans, a t-shirt and

sneakers, Emiliana had obviously developed a passion for the Social Studies and the young

people with whom she worked. Her classroom, like many of the other teachers at the school,

was small and intimate. She always welcomed me into her teaching space, invited me into

classroom conversation, and even asked me questions around topics of which she was unsure in

front of the class. In other words, she had no desire to appear as the 'expert'. I had the

opportunity to watch Emiliana engage in conversation with and counsel students in matters both

academic and personal. Her enthusiasm around and commitment to exploring with students

matters of social and historical injustice were also clear yet never overbearing or self-righteous.

Her general soft-spoken and amiable nature allowed for students to develop a sense of trust while

also being challenged with 'difficult knowledge' (Britzman, 1998) and high academic and social

expectations and accountability. Emiliana, along with other teachers I had the opportunity to

observe and interact with, embodied what I will later describe as a 'graceful' critical pedagogy.

Zuri – Integrated Science Teacher

Zuri is an Indian-American woman in her early thirties. At the time of the study, she had

been teaching Integrated Science at PACHS for two years. A non-native resident of the

Humboldt Park community, Zuri studied environmental science and International Community

Development and Conservation before pursuing a degree in teaching. Soft-spoken and

thoughtful, Zuri explained that her initial interest in and work around community development

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and urban agriculture with at-risk youth in the Detroit area led her to the realization that much of the change necessary in these three areas needed to happen within schools. Recognizing that youth were dropping out of school due to poverty, lack of relevant curriculum, not feeling cared for, and being criminalized through punitive measures, Zuri closely identified with PACHS mission to make learning personally and socially relevant, its commitment to developing personal relationships with and strong networks of mutual support for students, and its model of restorative justice. As the title of her classes suggest and to which her classroom practices attest, Zuri views science as an area that is naturally integrated and not something that, in the real world, is neatly divided into its constituent parts. The portions of her curriculum and instruction that I had an opportunity to observe focused upon the broad topic of food justice. The students identified Humboldt Park as a food desert and so were encouraged to identify the reasons behind that, both social and ecological. Through Zuri's pedagogical approach, students also began to recognize the relationship between Humboldt Park's designation as a food desert and the high rates of obesity and diabetes in the community. She artfully guided students and provided a framework for them to understand the interrelationship between human beings and their environments and their interdependence with other forms of life. In doing so, she hoped to instill in students a sense of responsibility and agency in preserving the systems that contributed to the overall health and well-being of the community and in changing those systems that adversely affected the community. Zuri's was truly an integrated approach to teaching and learning, individual and social responsibility, and physical, mental, and spiritual welfare.

Students

I conducted one-on-one interviews with four individual students that were enrolled at the school at the time of the study. I interviewed two male and two female students. Ideally, I wanted to interview students that had a range of experience at the school and within the community from which to draw for our conversation. My goal in these interviews was to develop an understanding of how each of them made sense and meaning of their experiences at the school. The school's mission and vision is to "empower students to engage in critical thinking and social transformation…based on the philosophical foundation of self-determination, a methodology of self-actualization, and an ethics of self-reliance" (PACHS *Mission and Vision Statement*). Ultimately, I wanted to hear from students themselves regarding whether or not and how the school/curriculum/pedagogy had been successful in realizing this vision and, if it had, how this translated into the day-to-day lives and worldviews of these young people. In other words, there is a distinct ideal of citizenship established and described within the theory of social ecology and my purpose was to determine whether or not the culture, curriculum, and practices utilized by the school staff were successful in fostering this ideal within students.

Davis – 19 year-old PACHS Senior

At the time of our interview, Davis was a 19 year-old African-American male completing his first full year at PACHS. Passionate for spoken word, poetry, and hip hop verse, Davis exhibited none of the bravado often associated with mainstream rap artists. I had the opportunity to listen to Davis perform his poetry and verse at both school functions and at a city-wide poetry slam in which he and some of his classmates competed with other students from other high schools within Chicago at a major university in downtown Chicago. It was in listening to Davis' original verses that I was drawn to him as an interview participant for he displayed an awareness

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and political consciousness of the issues he faced as a young black male as well as those of his community. Davis was a bit shy at first but once he became comfortable with me and fully internalized the questions I was asking him, his responses were thoughtful and lively and almost took on the aura of the rhymes he so eloquently and powerfully performed on stage. Before beginning at PACHS, Davis attended another large, comprehensive Chicago public high school for four years. Throughout our interview, Davis described the unique characteristics of the educational approach and relationships cultivated at PACHS in comparison to his experience at his previous high school. Smaller class sizes, the integration and interdisciplinary approach to subject matter, and the connection between class content and the historical and cultural backgrounds of students were all attributes of the school that Davis felt were positively impacting his learning, preparing him for life outside of school, and bettering his chances of obtaining a post-secondary education.

Victor – 19 year-old PACHS Senior

Victor was born in Puerto Rico and initially came to the continental United States in the fifth grade. He returned to Puerto Rico off and on until he began his freshman year at a large, comprehensive high school in the Chicago Public School system. He was eventually kicked out of that school and it was at that time that he decided to start attending PACHS. Gregarious and almost always wearing a smile, Victor openly shared the nature of his struggles in school before beginning at PACHS. He described his disinterest, his association with other young people that were also not invested in school, and the ease with which he cut class and regularly did not attend school. Over the course of our conversation, Victor attributed his newly found interest and success in school to a variety of factors. Primary to this success, Victor explained, was the

small size of the school which enabled him to develop close relationships with both peers and staff; the lack of gang violence and safe and secure environment fostered at the school; and the ability of teachers to connect the way students view their individual well-being with the well-being of their communities. Victor went from being what he described as 'anti-social' to taking leadership initiatives in the school's urban agriculture program, acting as a representative and spokesperson for the student body during events for outside organizations and private donors to the school, and being actively involved in the after-school creative writing and poetry group. Based upon my interactions with Victor, it was hard for me to believe he was ever anti-social, but it was obvious the culture, curriculum, and instruction as PACHS provided him with avenues for self-expression and the ability to view himself as an agent of change both in school and in the community at large.

Allyn – 18 year-old PACHS Senior

Allyn, an 18 year-old Puerto Rican female, began attending PACHS in January of 2012 right around the time my study began. In some ways, we were becoming oriented with the school at the same time and I remember participating in a theatre class in which we both introduced ourselves to a group of students and a teacher that already knew each other to one degree or another. Before coming to PACHS, Allyn had spent a year as a drop-out of a large Chicago public high school within a mile of where we were sitting. Describing herself as intelligent and capable of earning good grades, Allyn explained that she had not been interested in school, often did not attend, much preferred hanging out with her friends than sitting in classes where she was not noticed, and was failing "miserably". Her experience at PACHS, even within the few short months since she started attending, was noticeably different. She felt cared for,

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supported by both peers and staff, and held to high academic expectations. There has been a consistent message from school staff that she is responsible for her own education and that, while being supported socially, emotionally, and academically, it was up to her as to whether or not she would take advantage of the opportunity. Throughout our conversation, Allyn remained quite aware of the school's focus on both self- and social transformation. She was able to translate these somewhat abstract concepts and relate them to projects that she had participated in at the school such as examining instances of police brutality, community sustainability through urban agriculture, and action research on the nature and causes of physical, mental, and emotional abuse experienced by members of the outside community and how students can help address these issues. It was perfectly clear from our conversation and from informal observations of Allyn in classes and extracurricular activities that she is quite invested in the academic and action-oriented work of the school as well as the relationships that are being cultivated. As she herself expressed it, "I love this school, honestly. It doesn't even feel like a school to me. It feels like a second home, like everybody really cares".

Maribel – 18 year-old PACHS Senior

My interview with Maribel was based on a recommendation from a teacher and scheduled at the last minute as another student I had planned to interview was not present in school that day. Despite the abrupt nature of our introduction to one another, Maribel spoke candidly about her past and present experiences in high school. Like all of the other students I interviewed, Maribel had previously attended a large Chicago public high school before beginning at PACHS in January of 2012. Maribel, a friendly but shy female of mixed Guatemalan and Mexican descent, described in very similar terms to other participants the school

she had formally attended as being impersonal and academically unchallenging. Due to the small size of the school and the comparatively small class sizes, Maribel felt her teachers knew her better as an individual and as a learner and were therefore able to tailor their instruction to her particular learning style. Upon being asked how she understood the school's mission and vision, particularly the ideas of self- and social transformation, Maribel explained that her experiences in Emiliana's history classes had been totally eye opening. For instance, she recounted how she had learned something about sweat shops in 7th or 8th grade, but had no idea that practices of that nature were still occurring in the present. In similar terms and with a corresponding passion for acting to change these things, she described her learning around contemporary human trafficking and sex slavery. Exploration of these topics did not stop with simply learning about them in class, Maribel told me. Students were always encouraged to understand the topic, investigate its manifestations in their own lives and communities, and develop ways to individually and collectively intervene and create change. As a result, Maribel went from being a disinterested and unmotivated student to one who enjoys being challenged, thinks differently as a result of what she's learning and, to use her own words, wants "to change the world".

B. Data Analysis: Thematic Open Coding

The purpose of my research at PACHS was threefold. First, I wanted to identify, describe, and define the ideal of citizenship explicitly espoused by the school community through an examination of school documents and curriculum and observation of school routines, classroom practices, and teacher pedagogy. Second, I was interested in gaining insight into the subjective conception of the ideal of citizenship held by teachers, administrators, students, and

community members, the processes through which they hoped to realize this ideal, and to what degree these individual ideals were aligned with one another. Lastly, I wanted to gain an understanding of whether or not and to what degree the individuals involved in the school *feel they are successful* in their attempts to realize and put into practice their ideals of citizenship.

In summary, the first purpose I attempted to accomplish through observation of and detailed field notes about classroom instruction and activities, school-sponsored events, and school-community collaboration as well as analysis of existing documents such as the school's mission and vision statement and description of course goals and objectives. In order to fulfill the second and third purpose, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the individuals from the three aforementioned groups and tape-recorded each interview. I transcribed each interview and analyzed them for themes related to 1) the particular ideal of citizenship held by each participant; 2) their understanding/interpretation of the ideal of citizenship espoused and articulated by the school community; and 3) the degree to which they feel the school is successful in fostering and furthering this ideal within students. Utilizing thematic analysis, I closely re-read and analyzed each transcript in order to identify themes that emerged within each individual interview as well as themes that emerged across the interviews. I coded the data and then segregated the data by codes into data clumps for further analysis, interpretation, and description (Glesne, 2006).

V. Mission and Vision Framework and Curriculum: Self-determination, Self-Actualization, and Self-Reliance

In its approach to education, PACHS explicitly works to integrate critical pedagogy, social ecology, and culturally responsive pedagogy. PACHS utilizes these approaches in order to

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make learning as personally, socially, and politically relevant as possible. In this effort, education is approached "from the perspective of the whole person, linking education to the individual social, emotional, and academic needs of our students and empowering them to be active participants in creating change at the global, local, and personal level" (from Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School homepage, http://www.pedroalbizucamposhs.org/about/dr-pedro-albizu-campos-high-school/).

Through social ecology, the administrators and staff work to promote an understanding of the interrelationship of environmental, political, cultural, and economic aspects of community and how these pieces interact with and influence one another to produce certain conditions as well as how they are susceptible to change through human agency. The core of the school's Mission and Vision statement are the values of Self-Reliance, Self-Actualization, and Self-Determination. While these characteristics may appear to reinforce or uphold the notion of individualism explored and critiqued in previous chapters, within the context of the school these ideas are firmly embedded in a community-centered paradigm and need to be interpreted through the lens of Puerto Rican culture and history and an anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist perspective.

In the student handbook, each of these phrases is defined in the following way:

Self-Reliance: "Live and Help to Live"

You don't have to depend on other people to rescue you or provide for you, to give you direction. You can accomplish that yourself. If you don't have to depend on the Other to "save yourself from yourself" but turn instead to strength, knowledge and experience of those in your community then you are acting in a self-reliant way.

Self-Actualization: "Be the change you want to see in the world"

You need strength and belonging to your community and an understanding of your past and your people to achieve your maximum potential – these things make you who you are and you will never fully self-actualize and become your best self until you recognize your need as a human to belong to and participate in a meaningful community.

Self-Determination: "Building a sacred self and sovereign nation"

A strong community is built only by strong individuals. In order for a community to thrive, its members must first recognize and cultivate the value, talents, and strengths that they are born with. Every individual and community has a right to decide: major problems that need to solved; what resources to use in solving those problems; and how the solution should look. A sovereign community is not controlled by outsiders, instead, it is to determine its own future. (excerpted from Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School R.E.S.P.E.C.T. planner, 2011-2012)

It is obvious that these terms will mean very different things to different people. As they are defined by the school community, they take on their meaning, again, within the context of the Puerto Rican struggle against colonialism and imperialism and are rooted in cultural traditions that place a high value on one's embeddedness in community. They will not translate easily or neatly across contexts. However, they do provide a framework for a particular ideal of citizenship espoused by the school and very much aligned with that put forth in Murray Bookchin's work on social ecology, which I will examine further in the next section of the paper.

The question remains as to how the school community attempts to translate these characteristics of a particular ideal of citizenship into realizable benchmarks, curriculum, and practice.

Moving from the broad ideals of the Mission and Vision, the school has developed the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. framework to help provide further definition for the three core values. R stands for Responsibility; E stands for Ethics; S stands for Self; P stands for Puerto Rican; E stands for Extended Education; C stands for Community; and T stands for Transformation. Each of these traits is further defined through specific benchmarks or descriptions of behavior and language by which the realization of the Mission and Vision can be qualitatively measured (See Appendix 3 for R.E.S.P.E.C.T. framework and benchmarks). Prior to the start of the 2011-2012 school year, faculty and students collaborated to identify themes for each quarter that would tie together the work across the disciplines. The first quarter theme was 'know yourself'; the second quarter theme was 'know your community'; the third quarter theme was 'know your planet'; and the fourth quarter theme was 'Be the change you want to see in the world'.

In order to graduate, all students must satisfactorily complete requirements in four areas. First, each student must complete a total of 21 course credits. Second, all students must complete the Prairie State Achievement Exam/ACT Test. Third, students must complete a Senior Portfolio and Presentation in which they document their achievements at the school and develop a project that identifies, researches, and offers active solutions to problem within the community. A panel of community members, partners of the high school, and educators evaluate the portfolio and determine if it meets acceptable standards. Finally, all students must have a minimum of a 10th grade reading level as reflected in their TABE scores and a minimum of one year of attendance at the school (reading level accommodations are made for students with special needs).

The courses offered at the school include Black and Latino Literature, Integrated Science 1, 2 and 3, Integrated Math 1, 2, and 3, Puerto Rican Studies 1 and 2, World Studies, US Studies 1, US History 2, Creative Writing, Social History of Parenting, Spanish for Non-Speakers 1 and 2, Spanish for Heritage Speakers, English/Language Arts 1, English/Language Arts Critical Literacy 3, Introduction to Public Health, Theatre, Fine Arts, Consumer Education, Senior Portfolio, and Unity for Social Analysis. Unity for Social Analysis is held on a weekly basis in both small groups and with the entire school community. It is intended to provide a venue for shared critical analyses of the social dynamics of the community as well as for student recognition and artistic self-expression. Overall, the educational approach attempts to fully integrate teaching and learning with the life of the community.

Finally, the school utilizes a model of restorative justice to productively work through issues with behavior and disruptions to the learning environment. As defined in the PACHS student handbook, restorative justice:

allows for consistency and a flexibility that accounts for students' special situations and needs. Restorative justice is an invitation for dialogue and exploration. When a school policy or procedure is broken, restorative justice is a process to involve the school, staff, and students in re-establishing relationships. The goal is to engage everyone involved to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and make our school community as *just* as possible. Restorative justice encourages outcomes that promote responsibility, reparation, and healing for all. It is an alternative framework for thinking about 'wrongdoing'. As much as possible, PACHS seeks non-punitive

measures to resolve issues in school (excerpted from Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Planner 2011-2012, p.13).

This model is used as an alternative to punitive justice where offenses are met with

specific punishments. The goal is to provide space for dialogue and healing that takes into

consideration the unique circumstances of each situation and the needs of those involved. Taken

together – context, history, mission and vision, curriculum, and model of restorative justice –

these components are all intended to foster a strong sense of self and desire for self-development,

commitment to community enrichment and well-being, solidarity, mutual aid, and an image of

one's self and one's peers as agents of change acting upon the foundations provided by tradition

and experience. With all of this context in mind, I will now move into examining how

individuals involved at the school – teachers, administrators, and students – understand these

concepts and practices and the degree to which they are implemented on the ground in the school

and in the life of the community.

VI. Conceptual Lenses and Themes

In the previous four chapters of the dissertation, I have conducted an in-depth exploration

of the theory and philosophy of social ecology and attempted to draw out its implications for a

civics education rooted in sustainability, an objective ecological ethics, and direct democracy. In

doing so, I have sketched out a particular ideal of citizenship established by social ecology and

its foundations in eco-anarchism. As the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School has been

intentionally working to incorporate social ecology at its curricular centerpiece across

disciplines, I was primarily interested, through observation, participation, and dialogue, in

looking at the specific ways in which this work is being carried out at the school. More

importantly, I sought to understand how individual participants at the school understood and

made sense of social ecology; how teachers and administrators attempted to use the theory to

inform their development of curriculum, practice, and pedagogy; the degree to which the ideal of

citizenship promoted by the school aligned with that explicated in the work of Murray Bookchin;

and the qualitative measures by which the school community determined whether or not it was

successful in helping students develop the characteristics associated with this ideal of citizenship.

As I worked through the literature, identified the defining features of the ecological,

social, and political theory of social ecology, a number of themes emerged. The fundamental

principles underlying both social anarchism and social ecology are their anti-authoritarianism

and commitment to non-hierarchical relationships. As emphasized, social ecology is premised

upon the notion that the drive to dominate and subdue 'nature' is rooted in the domination that

took rise within human communities through the development of hierarchy based upon gender,

age, status, and eventually, class. The flip side of these principles is direct confrontation with

and resistance to the multiple manifestations of domination - be it in the form of patriarchy,

imperialism, humans' relationship to the natural world or the centralized state itself. Second,

social ecology promotes an ethic of solidarity, mutuality, and cooperation grounded in a

dialectical interpretation of natural evolution and nature's movement toward increasing diversity,

subjectivity, and freedom. Third, contemporary anarchism and social ecology promote the

practice of a pre-figurative politics – that is, a way of behaving and interacting in the present that

embodies a vision for the community and the world in the future. Importantly, the practice of

pre-figurative politics will never look the same in any two places but should be developed by

people living and working together and within the specific social, cultural, geographic, and

historical contexts they share. Finally, in the effort to realize these principles in practice, social ecology promotes decentralized organization and the development of small, face-to-face, and directly democratic relationships and humanly-scaled institutions in which members of communities or municipalities directly participate in making decisions that impact their lives.

At this point, it is important to make clear two related ideas. First, PACHS does not in any explicit way identify itself as 'anarchist.' Based on the school's work to use social ecology as a curricular framework and the principal's familiarity with the work of Murray Bookchin, my assumption was that the notion of anarchism may have been familiar to some individuals involved at the school. However, none of the members of the staff, students, or community members involved with the school ever explicitly acknowledged this familiarity with or use of the theory in the structure, organization, or content of the school. Principles of anarchism have a long history of manifesting themselves through the work of individuals and groups that may have little or no knowledge of the movement's history or theoretical articulations (Ward, 1977). That said, this was a lens that I brought to my research at the school and utilized to interpret some of the philosophy and praxis at the school that was more explicitly aligned with anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist thinking. The second important point I want to make before putting forward my analysis and highlighting the themes that emerged from that analysis is that social ecology as a curricular centerpiece at PACHS is still a work in progress and, while the staff is familiar with the concept and utilize it in thinking about curriculum and pedagogy, the students I spoke with generally could not define the idea.

That said, the major concepts that emerged through my theoretical explorations of anarchism and social ecology resonated deeply with the mission, vision, and day-to-day work of the school that I had the opportunity to observe and discuss with members of the school

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community. I will describe the correspondence between theory and practice based upon three foundational components that I identified during my time at the school in which the work of PACHS intersects with the theory of social ecology: 1) an exploration of how the school community defines social ecology; 2) the school community's unique ideal of citizenship rooted in the Puerto Rican experience and the theory of social ecology; and, 3) the means by which the school community attempts to realize its ideal of citizenship.

A. Defining and Integrating Social Ecology as Curricular Centerpiece

According to the PACHS website, the school defines social ecology in the following way:

> **Social** – from L. socialis "united, living with others," **Ecology** "branch of science dealing with the relationship of living things to their environments…" (www.etymonline.com). Our school uses the term "social ecology" to help us understand the cause and effect between human beings and their environments. For example, we all live in this world, and this world has different environments – from one continent to another, as well as from one community to another. A person's health and wellbeing – physical, emotional, and spiritual – has as much to do with a person's decisions in life as it does to the environments in which that person is raised. A person is always a part of an ecosystem that they can both impact and also be impacted by. The "social" in "social ecology" also helps us understand that environments are different – some better than others – because of human manipulation of those environments. Do you know how an environment

can be impacted by a human being? Think of differences in housing, stores,

community centers, employment, etc. (from

http://www.pedroalbizucamposhs.org/urban-agriculture/urban-agriculture

retrieved March 4, 2012).

In carrying out this research, it was vitally important to understand exactly how the

various members of the school community – administrators, teachers, and students – defined and

understood social ecology. As the phrase has come to be used rather widely and loosely as a

means of examining the ecology of a society or group of people living together, I asked the

principal if the school's use of the theory was, in fact, based specifically upon the work of

Murray Bookchin. I was curious about when the language and concepts around social ecology

were introduced as a potential organizing framework or curricular centerpiece for the school's

work. He shared that that one of the school's founders had suggested the work of Bookchin as a

provocative lens through which to "advance some of the thinking that we were already doing."

Through a collaborative examination and discussion of some of Bookchin's work, administrators

and teachers began to view social ecology as a clear articulation of many of the ideas the school

was already promoting. As Marcos explained:

The school always had a connection with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center and

the Cultural Center has always had a mission and vision that's conceptually linked

with this idea of social ecology and how human beings existed in ecosystems.

Those are concepts that go back to the study of human interaction…the idea of

interdependency, the idea of self-reliance, self-determination, self-actualization. I

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don't think that there was a crystallizing moment to say that social ecology is the

way to go because it has always been what our school has done.

According to the educational leadership at the school and those familiar with the school's history

and development, social ecology is most clearly and explicitly embedded in the R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

framework (see appendix).

Based upon conversations with the school leadership and teachers, the exploration of

social ecology as an organizing framework for the school really began in the early 2000's and in

response to state and federal efforts to standardize the curriculum. As these efforts moved

forward and materialized in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, those involved in the school felt

compelled to actively resist this standardization and to define a set of expectations, foci, and

approach to curriculum that was specific to the community within which the school was situated

and the students the school was intended to serve. According to Marcos, school leaders and

teachers were motivated by a series of questions:

> How do you establish a sense of self-reliance as a community? How do you
>
> ensure that your problems as a community can be solved by those who are here
>
> and not depending on somebody to come from the outside in a sort of altruistic or
>
> paternalistic method to say "we have the answer, take it"? We're going to say,
>
> "No, we have the answers to our own issues and we're going to struggle to
>
> establish them as we go".

There are clear connections between these questions that were driving the development of the school and some of the prominent themes within the theory of social ecology itself. The members of the school community had to struggle against efforts toward standardization and centralization and, at the same time, define their own alternative approach that was specific to their geography, history, culture, and issues faced by students. This struggle advanced around the ideas of community self-reliance and community self-determination. Progress toward these ideals could be advanced by people embedded within the community itself as opposed to politicians, bureaucrats, or "educational specialists" that had no connection to the school community or the community of the school. These have been central themes at the school since its inception. However, with pressure from the outside to conform to a particular model of education and pressure from the inside to more clearly conceptualize and make cohesive the schools mission, vision, curriculum, and practice, social ecology came to play a more central role.

The introduction of these ideas was an organic process based upon dialogue and discussions amongst school leadership, teachers, and students. As has been made clear, to move toward more humanly-scaled institutions and more directly democratic forms of decision-making and management of community life, dialogue, discussion, and debate amongst stakeholders is vital. These forms of discussions within the school revolved around some central questions that included all stakeholders asking themselves "what kind of community, what kind of world do we want to see?" Again, Marcos:

What kind of world [do] we want to have, do we want to be able to establish? Its

one where people are able to be proud of who they are, are able to be proud of

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their nationality and their cultural distinction. Not at the expense of other ethnicities or other nationalities but that they're able to be proud of that, and at the same time, that they're able to say that we don't have to depend on big corporations to provide food. We don't have to depend on big corporations that guzzle diesel fuel to transport goods from one location to the next. We have a threat to our natural resources which include our air, it includes our water, it includes our land. So how do we conceptualize the world that is able to be sustainable within the limits of those very crucial natural resources for the survival of the people?

This involved re-imagining what a school and curriculum would look like that would help support and realize the vision that began to materialize – a vision of a community in which the health of the whole was dependent upon the health of its constituent parts. Manuel described the evolution this way:

> We have sort of taken the liberty of re-defining Murray Bookchin's concept and tried to apply it here. What we were looking for is, we've been a school now for almost 40 years, we've been an alternative school for many, many years – for all that time, we're an alternative to public schools, but to what extent is our curriculum alternative? So, sure, the students got exposed to the community, got exposed to the history of Puerto Rico, got exposed to a lot of cultural elements, but to what extent was their academic education any different than the public schools? We have to comply with the State standards in order to grant diplomas

but they're fairly general and there's a lot of latitude that a charter school has. So one of the things that we thought was, do we have standards for ourselves?

As I spoke with other teachers, there was a fairly consistent understanding and definition of social ecology that was used to guide curriculum development and pedagogy. Emiliana defined social ecology as the "the direct relationship between people and their environment and the man-made manipulation that exists within the environments that we live in." Based upon this, Emiliana described how helping students develop an awareness of their surroundings and awareness of different forms of oppression become central objectives in her teaching of the social studies. Similarly, Zuri defined social ecology as "the whole system of interactions and linkages in relationships between different pieces of life that share space together…whether its plants and animals or the water and the earth and the air or humans and all of the other stuff that they bring with them. I think social ecology is just about how we live together and affect one another, as people, but also as a broader system of interdependent living beings". These definitions suggested that teachers were developing curriculum and teaching methods that would encourage students to understand natural systems as well as the capacity for humans to alter and manipulate these systems toward increased health and harmony or disequilibrium, homogenization, and degradation.

In participants' description of the evolution of the school and its incorporation of social ecology as an organizing framework as well as in the individual conversations I had with teachers and administrators, a number of central themes began to emerge. Importantly, these themes were both a result of the on-going critical reflection and dialogue the school community engaged in as well as manifestations of the principles of social ecology as a coherent theoretical

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framework. In other words, social ecology was not first identified as an organizing framework that the leadership then attempted to fit their work within. The re-development of priorities, objectives, and work of the school and its utilization of some of the concepts of social ecology occurred organically and simultaneously. Each of these pieces informed and mutually supported the others.

First, the school retains it commitment – established from its inception – to remaining small, intimate, humanly-scaled, and decentralized. Second, the curriculum is deeply rooted in and customized for the cultural background and lived experience of the students and directly connected to the community outside the walls of the school. The focus is on connecting learning to the traditions, strengths, limitations, and problems faced by the community in which students experience their lives. All the while, there is an effort to help students understand the connection between these aspects of their community and lived experience within broader social, political, historical, and economic structures and systems. Frequent and sustained dialogue between all stakeholders in the school community is prioritized as the means by which to identify its own strengths, limitations, and processes for continuing development. From all of this emerged a re-articulation of a mission and vision and curricular framework that identified the values of the school, its ideal of citizenship, and the processes and practices by which it aimed to realize this ideal.

B. Social Ecology as a Framework for Ideal of Citizenship: The End Toward which PACHS Strives

As the members of the school community worked to integrate their mission, vision, and curriculum with social ecology, they also began to more clearly define the outcomes they

expected of the students that graduated from the school. These outcomes of course, involve academic achievement and college readiness as described above but are articulated in terms of character development and civic dispositions within the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. framework. Beyond these documented traits the school community hopes to aid students in developing, I was also interested in learning directly from teachers and administrators the ideal of citizenship they hold for their students/graduates, how they go about trying to realize this ideal through curriculum, practice and school culture and then to compare this with the experience of the students themselves.

While there were individual nuances in the definitions provided by the teachers I spoke with, their visions for an ideal of citizenship were closely aligned with one another and centered upon some central qualities. Broadly speaking, the staff with whom I had an opportunity to speak were primarily interested in empowering students to be agents of change within their communities – that is, equipping students to be able identify problems and to develop and implement solutions. More specifically, teachers and staff believed their work should instill within students a responsibility to put their education to the service of the community; they expressed the idea that students' approach to and action within the community should advance community self-reliance and sustainability; that students should embody an ideal of active citizenship engaged in direct action to address issues without dependence or reliance upon intermediaries; and finally, that students should be both prepared to function within society as it is and to imagine and work toward society as it could be.

In discussing their goals for students, school leadership and teachers were fairly precise in what they hoped to accomplish. According to Manuel, central to the school's vision is producing:

a student that is socially conscious, politically conscious, values social justice, and

is armed to become a leader in the community. That's the type of student that we

want to create. We don't necessarily need for our students to be better citizens in

the traditional sense. We want them to be better citizens armed with the skill sets

and desire and passion to have an impact on the community.

The articulation of this ideal was consistent throughout the interviews I conducted with school

faculty. There was obviously a shared vision amongst teachers and school leadership (not

necessarily uniform) that enhanced cohesion across subject areas and within relationships

(teachers and teachers, administrators and teachers, staff and students). Teachers used a variety

of methods and approaches to work to realize this ideal that I will discuss in the next section but

there was a consistent focus on instilling within students a commitment to and responsibility for

the well-being and health of their community.

Zuri clearly recognized the dominant paradigm within which many traditional schools

work, particularly those serving marginalized youth. That is, education is viewed as a means of

escape from the community. Its a way of getting out and, more often than not, a sign that one

has been successful is the degree to which one has been able to extricate oneself from the

community. As Zuri described it,

the biggest piece of it for me is that students walk out with a sense of

responsibility as a result of their education. In terms of being able to understand

all of the forces that are at work on their own communities, and on their own

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lives, whether or not they see them when they come here and how they can use

that education as a tool in returning back to that community more equipped to

address it challenges, to take it to a higher level. So one of the things that we look

at and that I think about here is just the idea that whatever I teach students needs

to allow them to be better equipped to live and to be community members and to

be agents of change right here in the community.

Like Zuri, Emiliana was also invested in helping her students develop a sense of

commitment to community. She aimed toward providing opportunities for students to recognize

that they are capable of being agents of change. Through exposure to topics she viewed as

relevant to the lives of students, topics students themselves often identified, Emiliana believed:

students can become aware because I think that's the biggest thing. That you

have to be aware of what's going on in your surroundings. Aware of oppression –

and that's the major stuff for me – awareness. And then how can we bring that

awareness into social transformation.

José, one of the founders of the school, reiterated a number of the same themes shared by

the teachers with which I spoke. He emphasized the school's effort to not only transform the

way things are taught and how they are taught, but also toward what ends they are taught. He

contrasted the ethos of traditional schooling with that which PACHS is actively working to

create and fosters. In his own words,

We start out with the wrong premise in schools. The premise is that we want out

students to succeed, but that 'success' is defined as an individual endeavor.

Success should be measured to the degree that I become a transformative agent of

change. We want our students to be critical thinkers, we want them to be the best

that they can be. But, at the end of the day, we want them to return here. We

don't want the brain-drain. As it stands, individualism is the ethos of society,

that's the ethos of schooling. That's why for me the idea of learning has to be to

what extent is learning a process, a real exchange and a real dialogue?

These are quite clearly admirable ideals that I imagine a number of inner-city educators

might share: an ideal of citizenship through which students develop the ability to recognize the

strengths and limitations of their own communities; where they feel a deep sense of

responsibility to utilize their own unique talents and learning to maintain and further the

sustainability and health of these communities; where they do not view the issues they face or the

gains they make as strictly individual possessions; and where they recognize themselves as

active, participatory agents of change. However, the question remains as to how, exactly,

teachers and staff go about the work of trying to realize this ideal and whether or not they are

successful.

C. Approaches to Realizing the Ideal: Building Commitment to Community Through

Commitment to Community-Building

1. From the Political to the Personal

In attempting to answer this question, my observations and conversations with school staff and students led me to a number of conclusions. First, the school attempted to impart to students an intimate knowledge of and involvement with cultural traditions and history of community through curriculum and direct participation. Second, there was time and space built into the school schedule for dialogue and unity-building on both the small-group and school-wide scale centered upon an ethic of care, cooperation, solidarity, and mutual aid. Third, every class across the curriculum was organized around identifying issues and problems faced by the community. Finally, there was an emphasis on connecting classroom content with developing and putting into action solutions to the problems that had been mutually identified through dialogue and discussion.

Helping students to understand and connect with the rich cultural traditions and history of the community was an explicit commitment of the staff of the school. This was accomplished first by organizing course content in a culturally responsive manner. Students took Black and Latino Literature as part of their English/Language Arts requirement. Puerto Rican history was an option for fulfilling a social studies requirement. Both native and non-native speakers took courses in Spanish. Students also had the option of taking a Creative Writing course in which they explored spoken word traditions, rap, and hip hop, interrogated these popular forms of expression for the messages they conveyed, and attempted to use them to express ideas of both personal and political relevance. Additionally, the entire school community participated in community-wide events such as Three King's Day, Black Pride Day, the Puerto Rican Pride Parade, community clean-ups, and commemorations of Puerto Rican leaders and political prisoners. All of these activities helped students develop a sense of pride in their heritages and a broader sense of solidarity with the community outside of the school.

I observed the shared vision of committed, responsible, and active citizens cultivated amongst staff and students in a variety of ways. Amidst a condensed schedule of classes, students met with advisory teachers in small group unity where they were provided with prompts for discussion that were personally and/or politically relevant. These prompts included questions such as 'What is Race?' and 'What are the challenges facing women in the 21st Century?' (this second question coincided with a celebration of International Women's Day). Every Wednesday at the school, there were opportunities built into the schedule for the entire school to come together and remind one another of what had been accomplished (from recognition of individual student achievement to discussions of the school's involvement in community-wide events) and what needed to be accomplished. This coming together of the entire school each week was called Large Group Unity. An average Large Group Unity consisted of celebration of individual student achievement, discussion of topics important to the entire school community, and opportunities for student performance and artistic self-expression. I described Large Group Unity as follows:

> Today, awards were distributed for dean's list (3.0-3.49), principal's list (3.5-4.0), and perfect attendance for the month of March. The distribution of these awards was accompanied by much excitement, music, impromptu performance by teachers and administrators. The principal explained that these award ceremonies used to be quite stoic and without much fanfare. The staff decided that these awards should be sources of pride and accomplishment so they worked to make the presentation more special and unique. Most students were quite into the presentation of the awards but even more so into the performance by a dance team

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consisting of three female classmates. For this dance performance, students were

up on chairs to see, thoroughly engaged with the music, and very supportive of

the young ladies.

All of these activities - from culturally specific courses and pedagogy to involvement in

community-wide events and celebrations to small and large group unity – were intended to foster

within students a sense of belonging and solidarity. These were the systemic structures built into

school life to help students feel connected and genuinely cared for. However, there were also

innumerable 'unofficial' interactions that occurred on a day-to-day basis that I believe also aided

students in feeling that they were recognized and that their personal needs were being met.

Every student I spoke with mentioned that the small size of the school and personal, intimate

relationships they had with teachers and peers were of the utmost importance. Maribel said, "I

think it helps that the classes are smaller so they focus more on us individually". Similarly,

Davis described the difference between the previous school he attended and PACHS this way:

> Its smaller, the school is smaller so all of the students fit in the lunchroom.
> Everybody knows everybody. All the staff members, outside of the school, they
> talk to each other so the staff members have a close relationship and the students
> have a close relationship with the staff.

Continuing along similar lines, Allyn summed up the relationship between the size of the school

and the nature of the relationships cultivated there in a most powerful way:

I love this school, honestly. It doesn't even feel like a school to me. It feels like a

second home kind of, like everybody really cares. Coming here, I have met so

many teachers that actually care about me and my future and where I'm headed

toward and they are on top of me and they tell me all the time I have the potential

and they uplift the students here and I love it. Its like family. Its not even like

school.

In addition to feeling recognized as individuals and cared for and having the opportunity

to build meaningful relationships with faculty and peers, students also expressed the value they

have for the school as a safe space. Victor described the school as feeling much safer than his

previous school. He felt that there was a certain level of maturity amongst students. Instilled

within students, through discussion and reflection guided by teachers, is the idea that the health

of the community is dependent upon the health of the individuals within the community.

Students are encouraged to maintain their physical, mental, and emotional health through eating

a nutritious diet, finding ways to reduce stress, and developing healthy and respectful

relationships with others. The community-building, the inclusive, intimate and caring

relationships, and the safe and supportive environment are the foundations upon which the

teachers and staff attempt to carry out their work in helping students view themselves as agents

of change within their community and providing them with opportunities to directly realize this.

In short, students are both challenged socially and academically while also being empowered,

individually and collectively. Implicit in the staff's instruction and pedagogy and supported with

the evidence of the students' words and actions was the recognition that there cannot be the

expectation for individuals to work toward social transformation unless they feel a sense of belonging and their basic needs as human beings are met.

2. From the Personal to the Political: Problem-Posing Education within the Context of Community

Each of the teachers and administrators I interviewed highlighted the centrality of directly involving students in identifying issues and problems that the community faced, uncovering the reasons that were at the root of these problems, and actively working to develop ways of addressing them. Manuel encapsulated the process and its relationship to social ecology this way:

> Social ecology seemed to make sense to us. How we defined it, how we crafted
> it, was to say that we need to take a look at the community as an ecological
> system. That the health and well-being of the community is dependent on the
> health and well-being of its residents. We know the assets that we have in our
> community, we know the assets we have in our students, and we appreciate it, and
> so what are the illnesses, what is getting in the way of a truly effective, healthy,
> harmonious ecological system? The physical and medical health and well-being
> of our residents is important, but there's also all of these psycho-social elements.
> To what extent is poverty decimating the health and spirit of our young people?
> To what extent is being members of an oppressed people, being schooled in a
> colonial mentality, to what extent is the pressure of overcrowding and the
> pressure of poverty, the pressure of being deemed as *less than*, the poor treatment

by police, being criminalized impacting the health of our community? All of these things become fertile ground for our curriculum. So the concept of social ecology seemed to make sense to us when we defined it in terms of community health, that the community is an ecosystem.

It was obvious that these types of questions and viewing the community as an interdependent system were not simply matters of theoretical discussion. They have been used directly to guide what is done in classrooms on a daily basis.

One of the most notable examples of this dialogical process was the identification of Humboldt Park as a food desert and the establishment of the urban agriculture program and rooftop greenhouse at the school. In reflecting upon the development of this aspect of the school, Marcos explained that students were central to its fruition:

The students were part of thinking about this to say, "how do we establish some sustainability in this neighborhood?" Students thought about it, community leaders thought about it to say, "if we have an issue with this being a food desert then we have to establish our own source of goods. How do we do that with concrete surroundings? We do so on our rooftops. How do we do it year-round? We do so in a greenhouse. How do we do it without depleting our water resources? We do so hydroponically. How do we do it while maintaining our cultural identity? We do it by growing sufrito" [traditional Puerto Rican dish requiring a variety of fresh produce]. You don't necessarily need dollars to

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provide food on the table. You can again sustain yourselves as a community,

interacting with one another, inter-depending on one another.

Marcos went on to explain that the goal across the content areas is to create participatory projects

where student are able to clearly articulate challenges that they see in their neighborhood and

create a plan with which the issue can be dealt with and ultimately transformed. Emiliana noted

that there is an incalculable benefit for students in seeing these projects materialize. An idea

generated by students, developed by students, and fulfilled by students, in the words of Emiliana,

"brings about hope".

While the principal provides guidance and educational leadership, this inquiry and

project-based approach to education also requires a high degree of teacher autonomy and

collaboration. Based upon the shared vision of an ideal of citizenship and the commitment to

directly involving students in naming and addressing community issues, I observed that teachers

often build flexibility into their curriculums. This, I believe, is to ensure that when students'

interest is captured by a particular topic or question, the teachers have the room to grow and

cultivate it. Zuri described developing scientific questions based upon student ethnographies of

their lived experiences. Emiliana discussed an experience of attending a community event with

students and viewing a video that discussed hip-hop within the Palestinian context. In

recognizing the similarities between Palestine and Puerto Rico, Emiliana decided to develop a

unit on this topic. The point is she had the latitude and support to do what she and her students

found meaningful within the context of the content area she taught. Obviously, I do not wish to

oversimplify the continual cycle of reflection, action, and analysis engaged in by both teachers

and students. It was clear that teachers and school leadership had a shared ideal of citizenship

and common ways of attempting to realize it. But how did the students respond to this? Did students feel empowered and capable of actively participating in the life of their community? Could they recognize the relationships of interdependence that teachers worked to promote? One way to find out was by asking students themselves.

As mentioned, the strongest and most consistent messages that came across from the students I spoke with were regarding the small and personal nature of the school environment, the school as a safe and secure learning environment, and the intimate relationships they were able to develop with both peers and teachers. This largely reinforced the findings of Renee Antrop-Gonzelez discussed previously. However, in looking to understand the degree to which the ideals of citizenship held by school leadership and teachers were being realized, I asked students how they understood the core elements of the school's mission and vision statement regarding empowering students to engage in critical thinking and social transformation based upon self-determination, self-actualization, and an ethics of self-reliance.

Each of the four students I spoke with had a slightly different way of defining these core elements of the mission and vision yet they shared concrete examples of how these things looked in practice that shared some similarities. Each of the students mentioned specific projects they had worked on as part of a class in which they identified problems within the community and attempted to develop workable solutions. Davis explained how he participated in a project to help create safe space for young children in the community to trick-or-treat around Halloween and how he participated in planting flowers in the area to beautify the community. Maribel shared some of the topics she had been exposed to in Emiliana's class such as sex trafficking and modern-day examples of slavery – practices she had no idea continued in the contemporary world. She explained Emiliana's approach to teaching as follows:

She'll give us something and she'll know its hard but she'll help us understand it

and then at the end of the day we know so much more than we did before we went

into her class. Then we have to think about ways we can help. We create our

own ways and then go on-line and see if there are any organizations or anything

like that. So we had to figure that out on our own and give our own ideas on how

we would help.

Similarly, in being asked how she defines social transformation and whether or not she was

encouraged and supported by teachers to identify and address social issues important to her,

Allyn immediately began to describe a variety of projects she had engaged in through her

classes:

They're [teachers, administrators] really big on change. I've only been here since

January and I've done 3 or 4 huge projects that have to do with sustainability and

the community and trying to fix things and change things for the better.   They

push us a lot, whether it has to do with guarding against police brutality or other

serious issues like abuse. They really push for change. They want you to really

see what's out there in the world for you and how to make it better. You need to

make an improvement.

Allyn went on to describe the nature of specific projects she had worked on such as one

dealing with physical, mental, emotional, and sexual abuse in the community. She explained

how her and her classmates distributed surveys, conducted interviews, and did research to investigate the prevalence of abuse in the community and what they could do to change it or work to diminish its prevalence. She also talked about a current project on police brutality during which she and her peers were investigating and researching the issue within the community and organizing a march where, she explained,

> We're going to walk to our destination and we're going to show a video of what's been going on throughout the year, like not even just now, it's been happening in the past too. We're going to show some videos, get some fliers with information about the specifics. We might even have cops as guest speakers to hear how they feel about it.

Finally, Victor described not only his developing awareness around issues facing the community but also his desire to directly act to address them. As he said,

> Before, I used to be aware of the social issues and stuff, like let's say diabetes. I was aware that it was because of the food that we were eating and we shouldn't eat that food but now I'm aware that it's in certain communities and we need to change that, like with greenhouses. We got encouraged to grow our own plants and I now I see it's so cool. Now I see them and I know that we could actually make a change. I see gardens in the community. I can see more greenhouses. I can see rooftop greenhouses and we're being pushed to it and that's something that stays in your mind. If you ever become somebody, you can make a difference.

While the students I spoke with did not have an explicit understanding of social ecology as such, they were familiar with and able to talk about the components of the mission and vision statement and the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. framework. They were able to connect these relatively abstract qualities and concepts to experiences they have had through the school, the motivation they feel to work with others to identify, think about, and address issues within the community. Significantly, each of the students also reflected in concrete ways the community-centric and anti-individualist ideal of citizenship held by their teachers. This aspect of the ideal manifested itself in the students' expressions of their feelings of 'rootedness' in the community and their desire to remain within and continue to serve this community beyond their high school experience. Allyn described the transformation she experienced quite powerfully:

Well, coming here, honestly I really didn't care. I would throw garbage on the floor and I would do all of this stuff that was unnecessary but coming here really opened my eyes to all these problems. There's such big issues that I don't have control over, but I know one day I can. I really want to go into the Navy because I know I can get somewhere through there first, so then I can be set and come back and do what I want and do what I love. I'm going to come back to my community. I grew up here. This is where my family is from. This is where I'm from. I will never forget about where I'm from. I'm going to come back and who knows, I might even work at Campos one day. I'm going to come back to my community and continue to help.

In addition to being empowered to recognize and actively work to address problems in the community, these students saw beyond the problems and felt they belonged, they felt a strong sense of place that went far beyond a strict interest in their individual advancement. Due to the close links between the school, the curriculum, community organizations and traditions, and students' lived experiences, the students I interviewed seemed to understand the interdependent relationship between the outside world (i.e. community or neighborhood) and the individuals that inhabited it. As Victor so eloquently put it:

> I think if you help your community, you help yourself. I would see on the news
> how many people would die in Humboldt Park, the violence. But then I saw that
> this is a community that really helps each other out and they try to solve their
> social issues and I notice how when I help my community of Humboldt Park, I
> know when I help this place, they always give it back to me. I help out around the
> school and now I got a job in the community.

I often wondered if the recognition of this interdependency and the ethic of care, cooperation, and mutual aid was part of the Puerto Rican culture itself, so integral a part of what makes this place and this school what they are. Because he had lived in Puerto Rico as well as the continental US, I posed this question to Victor. He responded as follows:

> I find the Puerto Ricans over here are more proud to be Puerto Ricans than Puerto
> Ricans in Puerto Rico. And Puerto Ricans over here are more proud of the salsa
> music than Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico. I see a lot of pride in this community

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because after you leave your country, you only recognize this stuff and you make

it happen where versus in Puerto Rico, you hear a salsa song on every corner and

you don't really care. Over here, they got a lot more pride and they have to work

a lot harder to get that culture.

That being said, I did observe some students of non-Puerto Rican racial or ethnic

backgrounds expressing their frustration or difficulty with relating to issues specific to Puerto

Rican history and/or culture. As the school transitioned from an exclusively Puerto Rican

student body to one that included young people of other racial/ethnic backgrounds, I am certain it

struggled to maintain its identity as being Puerto Rican-centric while also holding fast to its

commitment to youth empowerment and critical agency. One of the ways the school attempted

to do this was through the claim that the struggles of Puerto Ricans were, more broadly, the

struggles of an oppressed and marginalized people. Therefore, if one was a member of any

oppressed or marginalized group – whether based upon race, ethnicity, gender or sexual

orientation – one could relate to and learn from the struggles of Puerto Ricans and apply this

knowledge across contexts. While I feel the school staff shared a common understanding of this

claim, it was much less clear whether all the students understood or, more importantly, bought

into this idea.

Despite this, there was no question in my mind that the pride, resiliency, ethic of care and

mutuality, and sheer vitality were directly connected to the history, culture, and struggle of the

Puerto Rican people in this part of Chicago. I did not spend a great deal of time in other parts of

the neighborhood outside of walking distance from the school and so have little data to support

such a generalization. But from the moment I began the study and came into the area, I could

feel the solidarity, the pride, and the openness to sharing their culture with others exhibited by

old and young alike. José offered what I think is a profound connection between the centrality of

a dynamic cultural tradition and the work of the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School "to

empower students to engage in critical thinking and social transformation, from the classroom to

the Puerto Rican community, based on the philosophical foundation of self-determination, a

methodology of self-actualization, and an ethics of self-reliance":

> Marginalization leads you to something which is really horrible because you
>
> begin to question everything about who you are, what you value, but the Puerto
>
> Rican comes with no sense of historical knowledge of being Puerto Rican because
>
> it wasn't taught in the schools. It was denied. That's why Puerto Ricans have a
>
> greater attachment to a flag, which is a piece of cloth, than almost any other
>
> people. You say "why?" Because this is the only thing I know that makes me
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> Puerto Rican, but its in my Puerto Ricanness that I define my humanity. I affirm
>
> who I am because you have denied me everything, but I must find my humanity
>
> somewhere. That's why for me, when we're talking about social processes and
>
> social change, for me the idea of historical memory is very important. As a
>
> Puerto Rican, I have to understand my own oppression and marginalization, but
>
> that should make me more human and humane and I have to look at other
>
> people's oppression and be in solidarity with them.

VII. Obstacles and Tensions

PACHS is a small, diverse, and pedagogically innovative learning community that has been serving to empower marginalized youth to take ownership of their education and of their role as leaders in their community. However, some of the same characteristics that make the school so unique and that challenge much of the dominant discourses in civic education can also act as obstacles that the school community must work to creatively deal with and surmount. Some of these obstacles are of a practical nature such as finding time within a busy schedule for teachers to reflect on their work and collaborate with one another. Other obstacles arise out of the tension between working toward community self-reliance and self-determination while also relying upon outside sources of funding, particularly state and federal dollars. While it is outside the scope of this chapter to examine and speak to in any detail the variety of organizational, pedagogical, and philosophical dilemmas the school has faced, I would like to briefly outline them here and hope to return to these issues in future work.

Organizationally, PACHS is committed to remaining small so as not to lose the intimate relationships between teachers, administrators, and students that are so important to its ethos. However, the school receives less per-pupil funding than the public high schools and has a much a smaller teacher-to-student ratio. According to one administrator at the school, while public high schools in Chicago receive approximately $11,000 per student, PACHS receives approximately $7300 per student. Obviously, fewer students means less money and more teachers per student means increased personnel costs. All of this translates into much time and energy directed toward seeking out alternative sources of funding.

Along with this comes the tension resulting from receiving/accepting government funding in the first place. Just as PACHS is committed to remaining a small and intimate learning community, it is equally committed to remaining relatively autonomous in its approach

to teaching and learning. For many years in the school's early existence, much of its work – both inside the school and in the life of the community – was focused upon Puerto Rican political prisoners that were involved in the movement for Puerto Rican independence from the United States. Some of these political prisoners were directly involved in beginning the school. In addition, and as expressed in José's comments above, the school has always been committed to an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist stance. As a result, there was active resistance to accepting any funding directly from the government for a long period of the school's history. This was done not only on ideological grounds but also because the individuals involved with the school feared being controlled by or beholden to outside agencies. However, there was at some point a shift in that mentality. Manuel explained it this way:

> I think up until around the early to mid 1990's, there was a conscious shift from being militant for Puerto Rican Independence to the extent that they actively discouraged people from voting - as that was legitimizing the colonizer - and that we, as a community, needed to resist. We never applied directly for government dollars; we didn't even apply for city dollars because, number 1, the city would probably never have given us the money, but also there was a conscious fear that they would control us. It seems to me that [in the early 90's] there was a significant shift in the attitude of political leadership at the Cultural Center and consequently, the high school.

Currently, there are active and strong ties between the Puerto Rican community in Humboldt Park and elected officials in both local and federal government. This has not seemed

to compromise the school's ideals in so far as the community as a whole has been able to maintain a high degree of autonomy and has *used* political representation to resist such things as gentrification rather than being *used by* political representatives. In this vein, Manuel said, "We have political leaders now and to the extent possible, we hold them accountable."

At the end of the study, it was not entirely clear to me how the school community and the community of the school (i.e. Humboldt Park) viewed its relationship to the centralized state and, more specifically, the United States government. As Manuel pointed out and what also became evident to me through my time in the area, there was a long history of Puerto Rican resistance to colonial rule by the United States and at least a contingent of the population that continued to view the U.S. government's authority over the island of Puerto Rico as illegitimate and imperialist. I read letters from a current Puerto Rican political prisoner published in a local newspaper that expressed support for the continued resistance to oppression of Puerto Ricans and other marginalized groups alike. As a result of Puerto Rico's history and some of the consequences of its own past involvement in the movement for Puerto Rican independence (which, amongst other things, resulted in the school's infiltration by the F.B.I.), there appeared to be a deep and understandable distrust of authority on the part of many within the school community. However, there was no evidence in the form of rhetoric, behavior, curriculum, or teaching that suggested the school or the individuals that constitute it espouse violent or subversive activity to undermine this authority. Rather, as I have attempted to explain, resistance is enacted through the focus upon and continued movement toward greater community autonomy and self-sufficiency on its own terms and through channels it has created.

This desire for autonomy and self-sufficiency also translated into the academic and curricular development within the school itself. While this autonomy appeared to be of central

importance to teachers and administrators alike and vital to the creation of the school's unique approach to teaching and learning, it brought with it its own set of drawbacks and obstacles. Due to budgeting constraints, teachers at PACHS are paid less than the average public high school teacher. At the same time, the nature of their work requires that they put in as much, if not more, time and energy into their work than the average public high school teacher. The primary reason I can make this claim is because PACHS does not use a standardized curriculum of any kind. In fact, because they want the teaching and learning within their classrooms to be directly relevant to the lives of their students and their realities outside of school, most of the teachers at the school only use textbooks as references.

The majority of the curriculum is developed based upon the mission and vision of the school and the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. framework and materializes through collaboration with one another and issues and interests that students raise over a given quarter's course of study. Of course, there is some core content teachers are required to cover based upon the Illinois State Standards and in order to prepare students for the Prairie State Achievement Exam and the like. The idea of a shared and articulated vision that I explored earlier provides for a common direction for instruction and assessment while also allowing a high degree of teacher autonomy within his/her given content area. Although I believe this dialogical approach makes for more authentic learning, there is no question it requires a great deal of work and investment on the part of the teachers. Additionally, because the school so highly values the relationships, culture, and traditions outside of the walls of the school and within the community, students and teachers alike are often participating in actions, events, and organizations in the evenings, on weekends, and during school holidays and vacations.

None of the teachers I interviewed complained or took issue with the 'extra' time and work they put in at the school. They seemed to understand that direct involvement in the Humboldt Park neighborhood was a vital part of their work and the school's mission. My only concern is that the enormous amount of time and energy teachers and administrators put into their work with students might contribute to premature 'burn-out' or decreased rates of long-term teacher retention. In reflecting upon the school's history and development, one teacher described the tension this way:

> There has always been a make-do attitude. We have to do it, so we'll do it somehow. We may not have the money to do it. So, it creates this thing about let's just do whatever needs to be done, no matter how many hours you have to work at getting it done. It created this thing about, "well, if you're really committed to the community, you'll work for shit and work 17 hours a day".

Unfortunately, this issue did not come to my attention until after completing my study at the school and I did not have the opportunity to figure out the average number of years a teacher works at the school.

Related to the intensive amount of work teachers and administrators put into maintaining and developing the school's unique approach to education, there was evidence that little time is left-over to network with other's doing similar work in alternative education and/or those that might benefit from learning more about PACHS 40-year history of providing at-risk youth an individually and socially empowering education. In an informal conversation early on in the study, Marcos shared that because PACHS approach to education came out of unique

geographical (inner city Chicago Puerto Rican neighborhood), historical (heightening movement for Puerto Rican independence), and cultural (Puerto Rican-Chicago culture and traditions) circumstances, it was not an approach that could be looked at as a model for other communities looking to achieve similar results with students. Others, however, believed that not enough was being done to share the school's work with other communities that might benefit from the many lessons learned over the course of the school's 40-year evolution.   As one teacher explained,

> There is so much we can do. We can't be focused solely here. This is one manifestation of our community. Its [struggle for community self-reliance and self-determination] so much bigger than that. To the extent that we can have an impact on other communities, it is essential that we share our work. Its our responsibility to do that. We can't be so insular.

The potential pitfalls of focusing exclusively on local context and the low priority placed upon or lack of space created for sharing and collaboration with other organizations are issues I will further explore in the final chapter.

VIII. Conclusion: A Community-Centric, Mutually Supportive, and 'Graceful' Pedagogy

Despite PACHS unique history, development, and culture, I tend to agree with the teacher quoted above. I do not think I would have undertaken the study if I did not believe PACHS had some invaluable knowledge, practices, and lessons to share with other educators, schools, and communities interested in sustainability, direct democracy, and/or deeply meaningful, relevant, and revolutionary education for largely marginalized and silenced youth.

Through a community-centric, mutually supportive, and graceful critical pedagogy, PACHS offers us new ways to think about the relationship between education and the ecological crises we face, the social roots of those crises, and movements toward sustainability and direct democracy.

The school is held together and its curriculum, instruction, and pedagogy made cohesive through a shared and articulated ideal of citizenship. This ideal of citizenship was defined as being/becoming a critical and active member of one's community who puts the common good over one's individual self-interest. It is an ideal of citizenship in which the individual recognizes his/her interdependence with both other human beings and the non-human natural world and systems upon which we rely. It is an ideal of citizenship that is realized through an ethic of care, cooperation, and mutual aid with those that one shares a community. It is an ideal of citizenship in which one recognizes one's own health and well-being as inseparable from the health and well-being of one's locale and its other inhabitants. Finally, it is an ideal of citizenship in which one can only fully recognize and realize their own humanity and self-actualization through the struggle for community self-reliance and self-determination.

In order to realize this ideal of citizenship, those involved in the PACHS community recognize the necessity of providing a safe and secure environment for students to participate and learn. They recognize that students must feel authentic care and belonging through the satisfaction of their physiological, emotional, and psychological needs. They recognize that these needs cannot be met and satisfied unless students are both challenged and nurtured, held to high social and academic ideals and recognized as the unique individuals that they are. They recognize this can only be accomplished through developing personal relationships with one

another and with their students, in celebrating their diversity, and in identifying their common struggles in the community they share.

Finally, the teachers and school leadership fully acknowledge that for learning to be meaningful and enriching, it must be directly connected to the lived realities of students. Despite the extra energy and thought it requires, they practice a problem-posing education in which students are directly involved in identifying the issues they, as individuals and as a community, face, the ways in which these issues can be productively and positively addressed, and how they themselves can be active agents of change. They recognize that they cannot simply tell students what to think, but rather can provide different lenses for how to think – as Victor put it, "provide knowledge, but give us a conscience about it". All of this, in my mind, represents a pre-figurative politics, providing a glimpse of what a society could look like if its youth were respected, trusted, and empowered and that inches us closer toward a direct, participatory democracy.

Chapter Six

Social Ecology and Education: Implications for Praxis

I. Introduction

In this final chapter, I synthesize the material from the preceding chapters and attempt to draw out in more detail its implications for how we might think differently about education and citizenship intended to support direct democracy and ecological sustainability. In light of Bookchin's robust theoretical framework for moving toward a more rational, just, and sustainable society, I intend to consider what this suggests for the goals, structure, decision-making processes, and curriculum within secondary schools focused upon fostering direct democracy and the preparation of citizens for just such an arrangement. In short, my explorations have led me to the conclusion that social ecology and libertarian municipalism suggest a movement toward *small*, *locally and democratically controlled* (by students, parents, staff, and other community *members*) schools utilizing *placed-based curriculum* tailored to the individual needs, interests and backgrounds of the students and with deep and meaningful ties to other organizations working within and for the betterment of that particular community. While this may appear idyllic, I hope to have made a convincing argument not only for how it is possible but also for why it is necessary.

In addition to thinking through how social ecology might act as guiding framework for how a school would be structured, how decisions would be made, and how curriculum would be developed, I have also considered some of the concrete obstacles that stand in the way of carrying out such a project. These obstacles would include issues around academic accountability, funding (state and otherwise), and teacher preparation amongst others. While a

thoroughgoing examination of these issues is beyond the scope of this project, I will touch upon them toward the end of this chapter.

The structure of the chapter takes the form of returning to the primary focal points of Chapters Two, Three, and Four in order to more thoroughly tease out their implications for education. More specifically, I first look back to principles of traditional and contemporary anarchism and use them as a guide for imagining an alternative educational model with a philosophical foundation in resistance to hierarchy and expanded avenues for pursuing local autonomy. Within this discussion, I consider the structure, form, and content just such a school might possess. Next, I return to the philosophy of social ecology and think through the ways in which it might function as a framework for an eco-justice education. This involved a consideration of how subject matter might be re-oriented in order to promote an understanding of the interrelationship between society and nature and the ways in which the health of one is dependent upon and interwoven with that of the other. In the third section, I again take up the most significant aspects of the libertarian municipalist agenda and discuss how it might act as foundation for a communalist civic education through place-based education within a small-school structure. Throughout, I compare these speculative imaginings with my experience at PACHS. Finally, I briefly consider how these ideas might influence our thinking about teacher education, the potential limitations inherent within them, and some of the questions they raise for future study.

Before I embark on this exploration, it is vitally important to reiterate that both anarchism and social ecology are not necessarily intended to be prescriptive or universalizable. Of course, each philosophy has certain foundational principles but these very principles are such that their application will vary significantly across social and cultural contexts. The principles are

intended to be debated, discussed, and re-interpreted by real women and men living in community with one another in local contexts. As I have pointed out, an individual or group of individuals need not even label themselves 'anarchists' or 'social ecologists' in order to live out these principles (see the work of Colin Ward for countless inspiring examples of this). By living and working at the grassroots in mutually supportive and cooperative ways free of domination and hierarchy, people anywhere can begin to re-gain control over their own lives and the decisions that most directly affect them while expanding the potential for increasing freedom, self-actualization, and creative thriving within both the human and non-human worlds.

Similarly, I am under no illusion that my explorations in this chapter could or should be applied across contexts or are some form of fix-all for the complex and multidimensional social and ecological crises we face. Rather, they are intended for others that view learning and education as vital spaces for resisting the deleterious social, environmental, and psychical effects of hierarchy, hyper-individualism, and the breakdown of community. If these ideas are a blueprint for anything, it is only a school I creatively imagine planting the seeds for, collectively with like-minded friends and colleagues, in the *place* in which we are embedded.

II. Anarchism and Education

The aim of this section is to engage a more in-depth exploration of some of the key principles of the political philosophy of anarchism and its relationship to or implications for education. I argue that an educational model organized around social anarchist principles might possess a number of the following characteristics: small and locally-constituted – the population of any given school should be small enough for direct and intimate relationships with all others in the school community; decentralized - decentralizing schools could greatly improve classroom

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instruction by allowing the school to pursue methods and materials that are more community-specific and that reflect students' cultural, academic, social, and economic diversity; equal and fully-democratic participation of each member of the learning community in the schooling process: students, teachers, parents/caregivers, and community members; Non-coercive pedagogical methods – the disentanglement of reward and punishment from the learning process; curriculum that is firmly rooted in the lived experiences of participants and deeply connected to the communities outside the walls of the classroom (namely, place-based education, which will be explored later); curriculum that offers students the opportunity to examine their own lived experiences and 'place' within the context of broader cultural, economic, and political hierarchy and domination (racism, sexism, classism, capitalism, and speciesism, amongst others); frequent and sustained dialogue between all stakeholders in the educational community (one voice, one vote in all school affairs); teacher autonomy within a mutually agreed upon curricular focus; learning by doing - curriculum consisting of practical training and fieldtrips; non-hierarchical, non-coercive relationships – no grades, no prizes, no punishments; forms of management and organization based on consensus.

Following from the examination of both traditional and contemporary anarchism, an educational model organized around anarchist principles might possess a number of the following characteristics. I have placed each of these characteristics within one of three broad categories that speak to the primary elements of most organized educational endeavors: structure, form, and content.

A. Structure

A school inspired by or working to emulate contemporary anarchist principles would be small and locally constituted. The population of any given school should be small enough for direct and intimate relationships with all others in the school community to develop. Like large state bureaucracies that are inefficient and alienating, organized hierarchically, and divest all modicum of control and decision-making power from those that they most directly impact, the model of the large comprehensive high school would be replaced by small schools directly controlled by the communities in which they are situated. This follows from the anarchist notion that small, face-to-face communities should be the basic unit of social organization in order to provide the context for truly democratic decision-making and individual and social autonomy.

Following from the goals of creating schools that are small enough for those involved to develop close, intimate relationships and to create a learning environment specific to the needs and curiosities of its learners, anarchist-inspired schools would be decentralized. All decision-making would occur within the school community itself and the goal would be to involve and provide space for all interested stakeholders and community members. Decentralizing schools, as mentioned, would allow for more flexibility in curriculum design and differentiated instruction. Admittedly, the idea of decentralizing schools brings with it a whole host of issues, not the least important of which is funding. Also, a school organized around anarchist principles, in theory, would refuse any association with and funding from the state.

Recall that the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School began nearly 40 years ago with approximately five to eight students. Despite a long and continuing battle for autonomy from the centralized school system, PACHS now serves nearly 170 students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds through a curriculum that is directly tailored to the students that attend. Additionally, the school has managed to strike a balance between maintaining its autonomy,

adhering to state standards, and receiving city, state, and federal funding. Based upon this example, I believe the charter school movement has the potential to help further decentralize schools and school systems and place power over education back in the hands of local communities. Of course, I also recognize some of the limitations of this approach insofar as those that choose to begin such schools may do so for profit, may further undermine struggling inner-city public schools, or may do so with aims significantly different from those laid out in this dissertation. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this project to fully consider the charter school debate.

B. Form

An anarchist education would ideally offer each member of the learning community – students, teachers, parents/caregivers, and community members - the opportunity for equal and fully democratic participation in the schooling process. As anarchists have long pointed out, the notion that groups of people, when left to their own devices, would be unable to engage in rational debate and collectively determine courses of action is one of the great myths upon which the state and most other forms of authority rest. Obviously, this would require frequent and sustained dialogue between all stakeholders in the learning community and the time and energy necessary for this to take place. However, if individuals and families freely chose to become members of the learning community and felt they had genuine voice in determining the shape and direction of the school and in collectively addressing specific issues as they arose, there is a greater likelihood they would make the time and space in their lives to engage and participate.

Despite critiques and misunderstandings of anarchism based on the notion that it is opposed to all structure and organization and lacking a central theme or ideology, consensus-

decision-making and the directly-democratic process have been central to the contemporary

anarchist movement and "these forms of organization *are* its ideology" (Graeber, 2002).

Anarchists have been remarkably creative in developing forms and structures for decision-

making that require consensus on anything from organizational issues to management of existing

activities to determining new courses of action. As David Graeber (2002) explains,

> Over the past decade, activists in North America have been putting enormous
>
> creative energy into reinventing their groups' own internal processes, to create
>
> viable models of what functioning direct democracy could actually look like. In
>
> this we've drawn particularly…on examples from outside the Western tradition,
>
> which almost invariably rely on some process of consensus finding, rather than
>
> majority vote. The result is a rich and growing panoply of organizational
>
> instruments – spokescouncils, affinity groups, facilitation tools, breakouts,
>
> fishbowls, blocking concerns, vibe-watchers and so on – all aimed at creating
>
> forms of democratic process that allow initiatives to rise from below and attain
>
> maximum effective solidarity, without stifling dissenting voices, creating
>
> leadership positions or compelling anyone to anything which they have not freely
>
> agreed to do. (71)

Following from this, consensus decision-making practices would need to be learned before they

could be utilized. The teaching of these practices could be facilitated by those with experience in

engaging with them within classrooms and in workshops. In this sense, the use of consensus

decision-making would fall into both the form and content of an anarchist-inspired school.

One of the primary anarchist critiques of traditional educational models is the coercive nature of these institutions. William Godwin (1756-1836), considered one of the first to fully articulate the anarchist position on education, without identifying it as such – vehemently objected to the coercive nature of relationships between adults and children and based this objection on a genuine respect for the autonomy of the child (Smith, 1983). As Michael P. Smith (1983) explains:

> This respect for the learner's autonomy is obviously an application of the general principle of respect for the autonomy of the child. But there is also a case for it on purely pedagogical grounds. Godwin believed that if education was approached in this way, and the process tailored to the deep psychology of the learner, then learning would simply be *better*. The point is an important one, for Godwin's view is shared by later libertarians. The case made for libertarian pedagogy is not just that it is more moral but that it is pedagogically superior. (9)

Anarchist educators' interpretations of the meaning of 'non-coercive' pedagogical methods and relationships fall across a wide spectrum. While some have felt this should be taken as far as providing no compulsion to attend or to participate, others have attempted to make education less coercive by eliminating tests, grades, and other forms of extrinsic rewards or punishments. Obviously, compulsory attendance has been the hallmark of state-sponsored schooling and was enacted to ensure that all students – despite their regional loyalties – would be exposed to the nationalistic and socially cohesive forces schools were intended to foster (Hern, 2003). That said, if a given school community chose to make attendance mandatory and learners

freely entered into this arrangement, it would not necessarily be a violation of anarchist principles.

A final consideration regarding the form of an anarchist-inspired school involves teacher autonomy. This is an interesting issue in that it crosses the boundary between anarchist considerations of education and those of labor. While there are a variety of anarchist positions and approaches to labor and the organization of the workplace, one of the most well known is that of anarcho-syndicalism. Anarcho-syndicalism traditionally advances the idea that the workplace should be run and controlled by workers themselves without the need of bosses and administrators. Of course, applied to education, this suggests that teachers would organize and run the school. However, this does not preclude individuals acting in other capacities within the school community such as administrators so long as they acted upon an equal footing with all others involved in the educational process and held no unique privileges or decision-making authority above and beyond that of other stakeholders. Beyond providing teachers with equal say in the organization and running of the school community, teacher autonomy would also apply to content and pedagogical principles within the individual teacher's classroom. The notion of teacher as cog in the educational machine has long been abhorred and resisted by anarchist educators. The founder of one of the most successful anarchist schools in early 20th century Spain, Francisco Ferrer was a staunch supporter of teacher autonomy. As Judith Suissa (2001) explains, "Ferrer was…adamant about the need for teachers to be professionally independent, and was highly critical of the system by which the educator is regarded as an 'official servant, narrowly enslaved to minute regulations, inexorable programmes' (Suissa, 2001 quoting Ferrer, 1913, p.55). Teacher autonomy would only be subordinate to the principles of

anti-authoritarianism, horizontality, and the direct incorporation of students' needs and interests in the learning process.

This idea was substantiated in the study I conducted at PACHS. Both students and teachers felt a sense of empowerment that I believe was largely attributable to the space provided for their full and equal participation in the learning process. This went beyond group work or collaborative activities within a pre-defined structure and curriculum. Rather, all members of the learning community were invited to provide input regarding the direction learning would take, the way the school day and year were structured, the rules and regulations that would be used to govern the school, and the way to approach issues that arose over time.

Teachers and administrators convened in both small and large groups on a weekly basis and participated in summer and winter institutes (i.e. faculty retreats) where a previous year's or semester's work was discussed, plans of action were formulated, and new ideas were put on the table. For example, it was during the summer institute prior to the 2011-2012 school year that the staff collaboratively decided upon the quarterly themes that would be used to structure the curriculum across content areas. Students also were brought together in both formal and informal settings to do such things as review and discuss the student handbook and revise rules and regulations and revisit and provide recommendations for how classes were conducted, the community organizations and events with which the school was involved, and the extracurricular opportunities that were offered. Further, parents and caregivers were often invited in to learn more about the school's work, to volunteer within the school and at different school functions, and to offer feedback on and ask questions about the education their children were receiving.

As might be expected, every individual did not participate fully and equally in these multiple forums nor were they forced to. The point is the space was created for them to do so, on

a relatively equal footing with all others, and because of the smallness and intimacy of the environment and the meaningful relationships fostered therein, many took advantage of these opportunities. It should also be noted that PACHS did not espouse any form of consensus decision-making and did have what appears to be a fairly traditional structure with a principal, vice principal, dean of students, and board of directors. However, decisions were not formulated and implemented in a top-down fashion but were always put in the public realm for genuine consideration, debate, and discussion by all stakeholders in the school community. Again, in this regard, I do believe size matters and will discuss this further below.

C. Content

As mentioned, an anarchist-inspired curriculum would be firmly rooted in the lived experiences of participants and deeply connected to the communities outside the walls of the classroom. This characteristic is dependent upon decentralization in that centralized control of schools necessarily requires some form of standardized curriculum that often ignores the issues, problems, culture, and history of specific locales and their inhabitants. However, providing curriculum that is, in large part, determined by administrators, teachers, and students within a given school would not necessarily exclude the teaching of core academic literacies. Insofar as school community members feel a sense of solidarity with one another and are encouraged to view their success and flourishing as inseparable from that of those around them, teachers and students may develop a shared commitment to both academic literacy, critical thinking, and resistance to domination.

As highlighted by examinations of past experiments in libertarian/anarchist education, political and moral education are the centerpieces of both challenging existing forms of

domination and hierarchy and of imagining more egalitarian alternatives to these forms of social

relationships. That said, the curriculum would offer students the opportunity to examine their

own lived experiences, individual and collective histories, and 'place' within the context of

broader cultural, economic, and political hierarchy and domination. This might involve

examining instances of inequality, privilege, and hierarchy in the experiences of students

themselves and drawing connections to historical and systemic oppression based upon gender,

race, sexuality, ability, and class.

I imagine there would be a continued focus upon the idea of providing 'integral

education'. This notion has been central to anarchist educational endeavors and has been,

according to Suissa (2001), the

> direct consequence of the commitment to social equality, and the belief that it is
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> capitalism itself that divorces manual work from mental work. Integral education
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> was intended not only to provide pupils with a useful trade, but to diminish their
>
> dependence on the capitalist system and to help to break down the division of
>
> labour and the consequent separation into educated and uneducated classes. (632)

Integral education has not only aimed toward erasing the divisions between mental work and

manual work, but also is intended to provide students with greater autonomy and self-reliance.

The contemporary anarchist movement is well known for emphasizing a 'do-it-yourself'

sensibility that is maintained through mutual aid and cooperation and is intended to subvert the

commodification of everything from work to leisure to relationships. Through an integral

education and a mix of academic and skills-based, hands-on learning, an anarchist school

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community would provide students with more of the tools they require for taking care of their own affairs and sharing their gifts and talents with those around them while also working to build relationships and community, all outside the market economy.

I do not feel it is necessary to review again the form and content of the curriculum developed and delivered at PACHS to illustrate some of the ideas previously mentioned. I will note that the centrality of community self-reliance and self-determination emphasized to students the value of working together in mutually supportive ways without the dependence upon outside experts, professionals, or 'middle men'. Practically speaking, students learned to grow their own food in an inner-city neighborhood. This is no small accomplishment and a particularly powerful means of teaching self-sufficiency as food is a basic necessity and one many of us in the developed world take completely for granted. As discussed in Chapter Five, there were further efforts in both integrated science and social studies to connect 'book' learning to hands-on activities in the school and the broader community. That said, there was little evidence of other efforts to teach students practical or technical skills they could use to aid themselves or others in mutually supportive ways or that would further collective self-reliance such as trades or mechanics.

III. Social Ecology as Curricular Framework for Ecojustice Education

We must always be on a quest for the new, for the potentialities that ripen with the development of the world and the new visions that unfold with them. An outlook that ceases to look for what is new and potential in the name of 'realism' has already lost contact with the present, for the present is always conditioned by

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the future. True development is cumulative, not sequential; it is growth, not

succession. The new always embodies the present and past, but it does so in new

ways and more adequately as the parts of a greater whole.

- Murray Bookchin, "On Spontaneity and Organization," 1971 in Biehl, 1999

Having engaged in a thorough exploration of both current approaches to thinking about

the grave ecological issues we face and the philosophical and ethical foundations of social

ecology as a means of addressing them, I would now like to examine the relationship between

these ideas and the possibilities for thinking anew about the form and content of education. As a

subjective and projective philosophy, dialectical naturalism aims to uncover the unfolding

processes of natural evolution toward greater self-reflexivity and rationality. As such, it can

assist us in developing a notion of the potentialities for humanity to re-harmonize the relationship

between society and nature and to create a more rational and ecological society. But what,

exactly, would be required for this re-harmonization? What characteristics would this rational

ecological society consist of? And what role would education play in helping to create it?

Bookchin attempted to provide at least the outlines of an answer to the first and second question

that I continue to explore in the remainder of this chapter. Since Bookchin himself did not

address in any systematic way the third question, I hope that I have made some progress in

beginning to that as well.

As I have already explored the philosophical basis of Bookchin's thought – that is,

dialectical naturalism – I would now like to draw out the implications of this philosophy for the

way in which we think about what it means to educate a citizenry for ecological sustainability

and direct, participatory democracy; what a curriculum with this as its goal might look like; and how a school might be organized and structured so as to promote this ideal of citizenship.

One of the most dominant critiques of both anarchism and social ecology has been their utopian character. From the late nineteenth-century theories of Kropotkin, Proudhon, and Ferrer to the libertarian municipalist agenda of Bookchin all the way up to the current Occupy Wall Street movement, conservatives and pragmatists alike have dismissed or condemned these tendencies as lacking a coherent list of demands, reasonable reforms, or concrete alternatives to the present social, economic, or political order. However, this utopian character, the ability to imagine society in radically different forms with radically different sets of values, and the absence of a concrete and prescriptive formula for how to achieve this has been one of anarchism's strongest attributes. It allows different groups of people in different locales living within different historical, material, cultural, and ecological circumstances to collectively and directly decide for themselves how their lives and communities should look and function. In this same spirit and as mentioned earlier, it is not my intention to prescribe a specific model for schooling or education that would apply across cultural or geographical contexts but rather to begin to identify some of the characteristics that might allow for the development of citizens capable of creating diverse, directly democratic, and ecologically sustainable communities.[15]

Bookchin spent the greater part of five decades developing the outlines of what a rational, libertarian, and ecological society might look like. It would be useful to briefly review that material here before moving into a discussion of what an education might look like that would help foster this type of transformation. Janet Biehl (1999), Bookchin's longtime partner and

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[15] That said, as my life experience, interest, and work as an educator and educational researcher have all been situated in large or medium-sized urban areas, this is the context in which I will focus my discussion.

collaborator, summarizes the characteristics of this society quite nicely in her introduction to *The Murray Bookchin Reader*:

> It would be a decentralized and mutualistic [society], free of hierarchy and domination. Town and country would no longer be opposed to each other but would instead be integrated. Social life would be scaled to human dimensions. Politics would be directly democratic at the community level, so that citizens can manage their own social and political affairs on a face-to-face basis, forming confederations to address larger-scale problems. Economic life would be cooperative and communal, and technology would eliminate onerous and tedious toil. (7)

In this summary and the writing of Bookchin's through which it is developed, we can discern some of the changes that would be necessary to move toward a more humane, ecologically sustainable, and emotionally satisfying society. More specifically, this would call for communities (including their economies and decision-making processes) to be decentralized and more humanly-scaled; the development of new forms of local and alternative energy; more localized food production and distribution; tailoring the overall economy of a community to its specific resources and trade with other locales for necessary resources not readily available. All of this would require individuals be skilled in rational discourse and collective decision-making; the ability to engage in both manual and mental labor – that is, some form of production that would contribute both to individual and community well-being and development; ultimately, individuals would need to be re-educated to *think* on a more local level – to become familiar with

one's natural environs, to understand and utilize local cultural traditions based upon mutual aid and cooperation, and to re-establish community autonomy, self-reliance, and self-determination. These are not simply romanticized notions or nostalgic longing for a by-gone era. More and more, farmers, economists, business owners, scientists, and everyday citizens are recognizing the social, psychological, and ecological benefits of localizing everything from food to entertainment to learning and decision-making (see McKibben, 2007 for a well-researched and highly provocative global account of the 'local' movement).

In looking back to the broad characteristics of contemporary anarchism and the objective ecological ethics of social ecology, I wish to suggest that an educational endeavor that had as its focus helping students to confront ecological issues and restore ecological balance while also developing individual and community empowerment would possess a number of broad characteristics. Objectively speaking, this vision for an eco-anarchistic education centered upon the framework of social ecology would not need to radically alter the *broad outline* of a traditional liberal education. Rather, an eco-anarchistic education would require a radical transformation of the *orientation* of a traditional liberal education. That is, I imagine this form of education integrating study of the natural sciences and the humanities but with the objective of fostering the aforementioned qualities of a rational and ecological society based upon community self-reliance, autonomy, and self-determination. Additionally, students and families that consciously chose to participate in this form of education would be encouraged not only to utilize and build upon their learning at the post-secondary level but also to put their learning and development of specific areas of interest or expertise *at the service of the communities in which they are situated and within the framework of local autonomy, self-reliance, and self-determination*. Far from coming out of a desire to wrest power and control from the state, this

approach would gradually undermine the authority and power of the state, nameless multinational corporations, and centralized bureaucracies *from below*.

A. Natural Sciences

A natural sciences curriculum rooted in the nature philosophy of social ecology and the social vantage point of eco-anarchism would, first and foremost, be an integrated curriculum. Biology, chemistry, and physics would all come into play in exploring and gaining understanding of the relationship between human societies and the environment. This would not be done through what some have labeled 'catastrophe education', but rather by first learning about the development and evolution of the earth and its living systems, the forces that have contributed to the destruction and undermining of these systems, and the possibilities that exist for rectifying the relationship. This basic understanding of the earth, it processes and interdependent ecosystems would build toward collaboratively identifying environmental and ecological issues specific to the community that the school is situated within. Applicable to all locales would be explorations of food, food production, the consequences of food processing and transportation; water, water sources, and water contamination; air, air quality, and other environmental pollutants; the production and distribution of energy, how much is required to maintain particular lifestyles and the environmental consequences of such production and use; and, finally, transportation and communication and the environmental resources necessary for existing and alternative forms of each. Much of this can be learned experientially and put into direct practice through urban gardening, community gardens, rooftop greenhouses, and exploration and implementation of wind, solar, and biogas energy production.

The trend within many schools or programs that work to raise the environmental and ecological consciousness of students is to focus upon the actions and behaviors of individuals rather than upon the larger corporate and political forces that are creating the vast majority of unhealthy food, waste, and environmental contamination. With that in mind, the focus of this form of natural sciences education would simultaneously be upon *resisting* these systemic and corporate-driven threats to individual and community well-being and upon *transitioning* to more local, autonomous, and ecologically sound production and distribution of basic necessities such as food, water, energy, and transportation.

B. Humanities

Again, traditional subjects within the humanities would be studied in an eco-anarchistic educational setting but would be oriented toward challenging all forms of domination and hierarchy and moving out from under the framework of the centralized state, corporate capitalistic economy, and representative democracy. Within a history curriculum, students would learn about and explore the emergence of hierarchy and domination within human societies, its roots in patriarchy, and its modern manifestations on the structural, community, and individual levels; students would also have the opportunity to explore both current forms of social, economic, and political organization and alternative forms of organization that have been or are currently being practiced. These alternative forms might include the anarcho-syndicalist tradition of worker-owned and operated businesses; systems of bartering; skill-sharing; alternative currencies and time banks; micro-lending; the town hall meeting; systems of consensus decision-making; anarchist spokescouncils; and local systems of food production and exchange such as community gardens and farmer's markets.

Also, and quite importantly, students would not learn standard and sanitized versions of history but rather history that is specific to and at least partially coming from the perspective of their particular cultural and geographical background. Civics and economics, too, would attempt to provide students with a contextual understanding of current political and economic arrangements while also fostering within students the ability to imagine alternative forms of organization rooted in direct democracy, community autonomy, and community self-determination.

Within English/language arts, students would continue to benefit from learning basic reading and writing skills but would do so in culturally responsive ways – that is, in ways that fostered more formal academic research and writing as well as culturally specific forms of artistic and creative expression. Additionally, a strong emphasis would be placed upon assisting students in engaging in rational dialogue and debate around issues they identify as being of concern to them and to the communities in which they live. Students would learn to respect the diverse opinions and perspectives of others while also learning how to develop and support their own perspectives and opinions with research and evidence. This would be augmented with exploration of culturally relevant examples of and opportunities to engage in creative, visual, and performing arts.

Finally, without a strong philosophical and ethical basis, much of the aforementioned curriculum would lose its anarchistic and ecological character and could easily be engaged without challenging the status quo of the centralized state, liberalist notions of democracy, corporate capitalism, and environmental devastation. Following from this, students would study and think through the philosophical, epistemological, and cultural underpinnings of contemporary society rooted as it is in liberalism, empiricism, and individualist consumerism.

The philosophical foundation of social ecology, dialectical naturalism, as a thoroughly and cogently developed philosophy of its own, would be engaged as a grounds for developing non-hierarchical and complementary relationships amongst humans and between humans and the non-human natural world.

Ultimately, the 'subjects' of the humanities would be integrated in a similar way as those of the natural sciences. Just as a thorough understanding of biology would be impossible without at least a rudimentary understanding of chemistry, so too an understanding of representative democracy would be impossible without an understanding of the political philosophy of liberalism. In addition to integrating the subjects, this approach to a liberal education with an anarchistic and ecological focus would require a high degree of commitment and collaboration from those involved in the educational endeavor – from teachers, to parents, to community members. It would require a commitment to a central focus but also a commitment to dialogue, shared decision-making, and equal participation of all those involved. Following from this, the school community would necessarily have to be small enough to allow for these vital characteristics. Again, to the pragmatic mind, much of this may seem utopian or simply 'unrealistic'. However, part of my purpose has been to move outside the confines of *what is* and toward *what could be*. I have further attempted to augment theoretical pondering with study and documentation of some of the historical and contemporary examples of attempts to enact some of these anarchistic and ecological principles in education and, of course, one explicitly organized around the framework of social ecology.

In all of this, a particular ideal of citizenship would be developed that was not oriented around the nation-state or necessarily the cosmopolitan global community. Rather, this ideal of citizenship would cultivate a resistance to domination and hierarchy. Through the study of social

ecology, it would help develop an understanding of the relationship between the individual or group and its environment. Through practice within the school and the community, it would nurture the desire and ability to debate, find consensus, and directly participate in making decisions that most directly affect those involved. It would foster a focus on community as the basic unit of social organization rather than the individual. Through identification of issues and development of local solutions, it would work to help students develop ecologically sustainable practices for providing for basic needs and desires and would place the highest value upon community autonomy, self-sufficiency, and self-determination as was documented in the previous chapter.

IV. Think Locally, Act Locally: The Municipal Agenda and Foundations of a Communalist Civic Education

In this section of the paper, I return to some of the ideas presented in Chapter Four but move on to suggest ways in which the undermining of direct democracy and citizenship education toward this end might be addressed. Taking as its basic unit of social organization groups living within the municipality rather than the nation, the communalist framework and libertarian municipalist agenda provide a means by which the forces of gigantism, centralization, hyper-individualism, consumer culture, and disempowerment of youth can be effectively counteracted. In constructing this vision of civic education, I briefly summarize the major premises upon which Bookchin's municipal agenda rests. Secondly, I connect these premises with the curriculum of place-based or community-centered education. Finally, I propose that the ideal structure for realizing this vision is within the decentralized, autonomous small school as described above.

A. The Libertarian Municipalist Agenda

In short, the libertarian municipalist agenda seeks to recover from history the free municipality in which politics is realized through direct, face-to-face management of the community by active citizens with a shared sense of civic commitment, interdependence, and mutual aid. The management and, more specifically, the policies of the municipality would be debated, discussed, and decided through popular assemblies open to all individuals. Going back to the Athenian principle of amateurism, one of the defining features of the popular assembly as the means by which to determine municipal policy is its assumption that every citizen is capable and, in fact, entitled to participate in its workings. This is not to say that every individual would be required to participate, but rather that the opportunity to participate would always be open.

It should be noted that Bookchin's municipalist agenda is not a misty-eyed attempt to return to a bygone era. He stresses throughout his work that while there is much to be admired in and learned from historical examples such as the ancient Athenian democracy, contemporary technology and culture have the potential to provide some of the necessary antidotes to the shortcomings of these earlier forms. For example, technological innovation and automation make it possible to eliminate much of the backbreaking toil that was required of those living even a mere century ago. Consequently, if used rationally and for the common good, this technology could make possible the leisure time necessary for more well-rounded individual development and active political participation. Additionally, contemporary culture, with its expanded inclusiveness and openness to difference could help to eliminate some of the parochialism and discrimination based on gender and status that confined direct democracy to certain sectors of the population in the past.

As Bookchin (1992/1995) explains,

> the recovery and development of politics must take its point of departure from the
> citizen and his or her immediate environment beyond the familial and private
> arena of life. There can be not politics without community. And by community I
> mean a municipal association of people reinforced by its own economic power, its
> own institutionalization of the grass roots, and the confederal support of nearby
> communities organized into a territorial network on a local and regional scale.
> (222)

It might be easier to imagine a small town or rural village functioning through the use of popular
assemblies and direct democracy, but what about the sprawling megalopolis of the contemporary
United States? Surely, it would be impossible to imagine a city like Chicago being organized
around and by popular assemblies and direct, face-to-face democracy. However, Bookchin's
argument is that a city like Chicago is precisely *not* a city in the classical sense. Rather, the
variety of neighborhoods that make up the city would be the rational units of organization for
popular assemblies. Often, these neighborhoods are inhabited by people with shared economic,
cultural, ethnic, and/or historical backgrounds and would be free to draw from these
commonalities to make decisions and propose policies. Again, Bookchin reminds us, there are
numerous historical examples to draw from where these forms of organization have worked and
could work again.

The formation of policy and the execution of policy, within the libertarian municipalist
agenda, are separate endeavors. That is, developing, debating, and deciding upon policy would

be the work of the popular assembly. Once decided, the individual members of the community that have experience and/or expertise in the given area could carry out the execution and implementation of those policies such as the development of infrastructure, the construction of buildings, or the implementation of forms of renewable energy. Connected to this idea, students within the community school(s) could be provided with exposure to and direct hands-on experience with the skills necessary for maintaining and developing these supportive structures.

As alluded to earlier, the rejuvenation of directly democratic and confederally organized communities requires not only certain structures (namely, the popular assembly) but also citizens that possess particular characteristics or, rather, a shared set of ethical commitments that render them capable of functioning effectively within these structures. The notion of the autonomous individual with no ties or responsibilities to the community would have to be augmented by the independently thinking but communally embedded individual. Rather than viewing the independent individual as one that somehow stands above or beyond community, we would be wise to return to the idea of the community as the only genuine forum for the expression of our full individuality. Moving away from the dominant western discourse around the autonomous individual, a meaningful and substantive civics education organized around the framework of communalism and the politics of libertarian municipalism would engender solidarity or *philia* through the course of political participation itself. As Bookchin (1992/1995) explains,

> *Philia* is the result of the educational and self-formative process that *paideia* is
> meant to achieve. In the absence of a humanly-scaled, comprehensible, and
> institutionally accessible municipality, this all-important function of politics and
> its embodiment in citizenship are simply impossible to achieve. In the absence of

philia or the means to create it, we gauge "political involvement" by the

"percentage of voters" who "participate" in the "political process" – a degradation

of words that totally denatures their authentic meaning and eviscerates their

ethical contents. (227)

Solidarity can be created and nurtured when individuals feel a sense of community. When

individuals feel a sense of community and solidarity, they will be more likely to engage in

meaningful political participation, further engendering their sense of community and their

feelings of solidarity.

The development of this form citizenship would be difficult to realize if confined within

the walls of the classroom; rather, it would benefit from spilling out into the community itself.

The civic curriculum would necessarily involve the discussion, deliberation, and management of

community affairs. Through a focus on localism, decentralism, and humanly-scaled institutions –

that is, a scale on which it is possible for individuals to fully grasp their political environment

and ability to act within it – it is possible, as Bookchin (1992/1995) explains

to envision a new political culture with a new revival of citizenship, popular civic

institutions, a new kind of economy, and a countervailing dual power,

confederally networked, that could arrest and hopefully reverse the growing

centralization of the state and corporate enterprises. (237)

Of course, this begs the question of what form a school might take and how it could be structured

so as to contribute to this movement toward the re-empowerment of municipalities and the

individuals that reside within them. I will complete this discussion by identifying what I believe are two fundamental characteristics of a school setting that would support and further a libertarian municipalist agenda, the direct democracy upon which it is based, and the ideal of citizenship upon which it depends. The first of these characteristics is a place-based curriculum and the second is 'small-school' restructuring and both of these are already well-established discourses in the educational literature.

B. Place-Based Education in a Small-School Structure

Place-based education is a distinct field that has emerged in the educational literature that has largely been inspired by the growing recognition that humans are: a) largely alienated from the environments in which they live; b) this alienation results in a certain disregard for the non-human natural world; and c) traditional schooling tends to reinforce this alienation and disregard. In the introduction to *Place-Based Education in the Global Age*, David Gruenwald and Gregory Smith (2008) argue that place-based education "can be viewed as the educational counterpart of a broader movement toward reclaiming the significance of the local in the global age" (xiii). In addition to pushing back against the trends of globalization, place-based education also seeks to offer an alternative to formal education isolated as it is from community life, driven by global economic imperatives, and primarily intended to promote nationalism and prepare a obedient yet skilled labor force for large businesses (Gruenwald and Smith, 2008).

Knapp and Woodhouse (2003) further identify a variety of principal characteristics of place-based education. These include using surrounding events as the foundation for interdisciplinary curriculum development with ecological, multigenerational, and multicultural dimensions; students and teachers freely moving across the boundary between school and

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community; learners that are expected not only to obtain knowledge but also to create knowledge; and students that are assessed on how their knowledge contributes to the well-being and sustainability of the community. Within this framework, a much stronger emphasis is placed upon one's preparation for and active participation in the life of the community than on their preparedness to make a living.

Gruenwald (2003) draws from phenomenology, critical geography, bioregionalism, and ecofeminism to identify five dimensions of place that can contribute to the development of place-conscious education. These include the perceptual, the sociological, the ideological, the political, and the ecological. As every individual and every phenomena is situated within a place, by examining these dimensions of place, one can better understand oneself, the groups of which one is a part, and the way in which place has shaped events that have occurred.

Due to a variety of social and economic reasons, many people do not live in a particular place long enough to develop a connection to the human and non-human environment. This phenomenon of 'placelessness', Gruenewald and Smith (2008) explain, "is associated with alienation from others and a lack of participation in the social and political life of communities. However," the authors continue,

> many people, families, and communities are resisting the experience and cultural trends of alienation and rootlessness by consciously deciding to stay put, dig in, and become long-term inhabitants of a place. The new localism is not only about creating the economic conditions that make staying put possible; it is also about conserving and creating patterns of connectedness and mutuality that are the foundations of community well-being. (xvi)

Place-based education is intended to immerse young people in the culture, history, and ecology of the communities in which they live. There is not necessarily a disdain for or avoidance of the discourses of globalization or cosmopolitan citizenship, but rather an effort to focus first on the immediate community and to draw connections to larger systems, structures, and trends that directly or indirectly influence that community. The primary thrust of place-based education is toward overcoming the disconnect between school and community life. In this effort, children are encouraged to get out into the community, to ask questions of its inhabitants, to identify its strengths, and articulate its weaknesses while also becoming involved in finding solutions (Theobald and Curtiss, 2000). In essence, the classroom becomes the community and the community becomes the classroom. Young people are provided the opportunity to see first-hand how their lives are directly connected to their schooling and vice versa. Restructuring a school so as to be centered upon place can provide students with a greater sense of belonging, make education more relevant, and simultaneously prepare them for active citizenship within their communities while also providing them with real opportunities to engage in this kind of work. I had the opportunity to see how this looked in practice at PACHS as described in Chapter Five, even though the school itself did not claim to be doing place-based education *per se*.

More specifically, place-based education may help youth connect more closely with the places they live. With guidance, they can begin to understand the forces that shape their lives and the lives of their communities. They can begin to unravel the relationship between domination, hierarchy, and ecological degradation and destruction. Most importantly, they can begin to develop the skills necessary for democratic participation in decision-making such as rational debate, deliberation, and educating themselves and others on topics of importance. As

Gruenewald and Smith (2008) argue, place-based education has the potential to teach young people not only skills but particular dispositions that have been occluded by the tide of global capitalism. These dispositions include the fundamental importance of collective effort and mutual aid; the ability to work with others; direct action, or moving away from dependence upon experts or politicians and learning to solve community problems within the community itself; familiarizing students with the notion that their health and well-being are intertwined with the health and well-being of everyone and everything around them; intimate knowledge of the commons, which Bowers (2005) describes as the relationships, systems, and resources that have not been commodified by the capitalist-industrial system; finally, issues of race, class, gender, and other area of difference can be examined through lived experiences rather than being explored as abstract concepts. This final point applies as much to other forms of oppression and exploitation that are often only explored theoretically in classrooms.

Ultimately, place-based education concerns itself with the material, ecological, and psychic sustainability of a community.

Following from the premises of libertarian municipalism and communalism, it is difficult to imagine looking to the large, factory-model school to implement a civic education rooted in place and organized around direct, face-to-face management of the community by its members. I think a much better model in which to imagine this form of civic education taking place is that of the "small school". Implicitly, the small schools movement has looked to embody many of the same characteristics of the communalist movement. That is, crowding kids into large and largely impersonal settings and forcing them to learn a curriculum that is distant at best and totally irrelevant at worst while providing them little choice or voice in how the school is organized or what the curriculum consists of and then assessing their development through

standardized measures is analogous to the gigantism, centralization, and hierarchy that exists in the broader society.

Small schools, on the other hand, aim to develop intimate relationships between teachers and learners; to put students rather than top-down mandates at the center of the learning process; to provide all involved in the educational endeavor with equal voice and the opportunity for direct involvement in the work of the school; making teachers and students accountable not to some distant bureaucrat but to the community in which the school is situated; and, finally, to intimately connect the work of the school with the development and betterment of the community, and vice versa.

According to Michael Klonsky (2000), small school restructuring focuses upon some fundamental ingredients. First, teachers work together in a professional community. Second, teachers remain with a group of students long enough to get to know them well. Third, there is a curricular focus chosen by those that work in the school and a clear sense of purpose is articulated and documented. Based upon extensive research into the small schools movement, G. Alfred Hess, Jr. (2000) explains that small schools possess faculties that are cohesive, self-selected, and share an educational philosophy. Families and students then choose small schools whose goals and philosophy they also share. This of course increases the probability that all involved – teachers, families, and students – will participate together in the school's growth and development. Of course, for a small school to develop a curricular focus and shared philosophy requires, to a large degree, that it be autonomous and decentralized. Finally, the size of the school is vital. By keeping the school small and maintaining a low student-to-teacher ratio, it becomes possible for the individuals involved to come to know one another on a more personal level. There can be more meaningful accommodations made for the diverse strengths and needs

of the students. And it can foster a greater sense of belonging on the part of students and, therefore, investment in their learning.

Direct democracy within a libertarian or communalist framework requires that we as citizens take action around the issues that most concretely concern our neighbors, families and fellow community members without dependence upon professionalized and distant politicians or bureaucrats. It also requires that we become re-educated in the arts of social interaction, rational debate and discussion, and collective decision-making. This, in turn, calls upon us as educators and citizens to reverse the trends toward hyper-individualism, consumerism, and the egoism and retreat into private life that the dominant culture reinforces. As an ethical undertaking, citizenship and citizenship education grounded in the philosophy of social ecology and the politics of direct democracy necessitates a radical reconsideration of what it means to be human, our social nature, and unique capability to creatively alter or destroy our environment, both the outer environment and the inner psychic landscape. In this sense, we must consider sustainability as not just a maxim for developing life ways that will allow life on this planet to continue in all of its diversity and richness, but also as a means of expanding our potentialities for freedom, creativity, and spontaneity. In short, I feel small schools focused upon place-based or community-centered education would be vital to advancing the libertarian municipalist agenda with its focus on direct democratic control of the municipality by the individuals that live and work there and the inherent self-trust these endeavors have the potential to cultivate within young people as active political agents and environmental stewards.

V. Concluding Remarks: Teacher Education, the 'Dangers' of Localism, and Questions for Further Study

In these concluding remarks, I briefly consider the implications of my theoretical project and empirical study for teacher education. I also highlight, and briefly address, some of the dangers inherent in thinking, acting, teaching, and learning locally and within a communalist framework. I end with a few questions related to this project that might be considered for further study.

It is not difficult to imagine how a movement toward schooling within a communalist framework and based upon the philosophy of social ecology might impact teacher education. In many ways, I would imagine the structure and content of teacher education for those interested in these pursuits would mirror some of the qualities described above. That is, instruction in content and pedagogy would be firmly rooted in the local cultural and environmental settings where pre-service teachers intended to teach. Pre-service teachers interested in working within this model would of course need to be intimately familiar with the physical, cultural, and historical make-up of the place in which their students are embedded. Getting to know a place would require spending time in it, talking to its inhabitants, and studying its physical geography. This would not necessarily preclude studying and thinking through other topics traditionally associated with teacher education such as theories of human development, the historical and philosophical foundations of education, and teaching methods specific to particular content areas.

Obviously, very few people involved in teacher education are interested in adding additional coursework and practicum experiences to what is an already overloaded course of study. However, I see teacher preparation for education within a communalist or place-based framework as being one option amongst others housed within a university college of education. Already, at places like Eastern Michigan University, pre-service teachers have the option of entering a program focused upon eco-justice education that shares many of the attributes I have

described in this study. Similarly, I can imagine a teacher preparation program that has as its focus and uses as its organizing framework the theory and philosophy of social ecology. Needless to say, these types of program would be intended for teacher candidates that had identified a commitment to and investment in the place where they would be teaching and learning. As one option amongst others, it would not preclude a college of education from also preparing teachers that were interested in being marketable across contexts in a more traditional manner.

Of course, it could be argued that focusing solely on local context in the teaching and learning process would be difficult, if not impossible, in our globally interconnected world. Ironically, it is this very 'global interconnectedness' and the processes of globalization that have brought it about that are largely responsible for the undermining of the fabric of community and disregard for one's surroundings, be they natural or social (Prakash & Esteva, 1998). That said, I believe it would actually be quite difficult to completely disentangle the local from the global. Beginning within the local context, it would be possible to expose students to their community's connections to the global landscape – through exploration of where things, people, and traditions within the local environment actually come from. Additionally, efforts toward greater community autonomy and self-determination would not necessarily preclude building connections with other surrounding communities through confederal association and sustainable economic development and relationships. In short, these efforts would not be aimed at fostering isolation or parochialism, but rootedness in place, relationships free of hierarchy and domination, and sustainable ways of living accompanied by understanding and empathy with the 'Other' of other places.

I believe one of the most fruitful areas for further study are investigations of living examples of education toward direct democracy and ecological sustainability such as that examined in Chapter Five. Because these living examples are context-specific, they would all offer unique interpretations of some of the concepts explored previously, different iterations of curriculum specific to their place, and different ways in which they foster relationships with other community members and organizations.[16] I obviously only scratched the surface of what teacher education might look like within this framework and feel it requires much more thorough collaborative examination and articulation. Fortunately, mine is not a cry in the wilderness as there are many others within the field of education and beyond who are exploring, thinking, and writing about similar topics (several of whom I have relied upon heavily for my own work and have cited throughout).

I hope my explorations have made clear that relationships free of domination and hierarchy, direct democratic control of communities by community members, and a more balanced relationship between the human and non-human natural world have been realized in the past and continue to be explored in the present. Learning from one another and from the natural world with which we are inextricably linked has always been vital to these efforts. Finally, the roadblocks of 'practicality' and 'efficiency' should not act as obstructions to the free use of human creativity and ingenuity, both inside and outside the halls of the academy. With that in mind, I would like to close by echoing the call of many a radical and anarchist of the great rebellion against the status quo of the 1960's:

<div align="center">

All Power to the Imagination!

Be Practical: Demand the Impossible!

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[16] As Esteva and Prakash (1998, 2008) point out, we in the Western 'developed' world have much to learn about this from the 'social majorities' of the 'developing' world.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW PROTOCAL FOR FACULTY

Tell me about yourself – how long you have been teaching at the school, what you teach, what other experience have.

Describe the content and/or curriculum of the courses you teach.

Could you talk about how you understand social ecology. What is the connection between social ecology and the subject you teach.

How do you understand the relationship between integrated science, social studies, social ecology and the movement toward self and social transformation.

Please describe the way you understand the relationship between the work you do at the school or education more generally and the values of self-determination, self-actualization, and self-reliance.

How are urban agriculture and social ecology related to the schools commitment to education for self- and social transformation?

Do you feel students are receptive to the school's approach to education?

How do Puerto Rican cultural traditions influence and support the mission and vision of the school? (local traditions of intergenerational knowledge, skill, values, ways of viewing the relationship between humans and the environment, and patterns of mutual support)

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW PROTOCAL FOR STUDENTS

Tell me about yourself. How long have you been attending the school? Where did you go to school before coming to PACHS?

Has your experience at PACHS been different from your experiences in other schools? How has it been different?

Part of your school's mission and vision is to "empower students to engage in critical thinking and social transformation…based on the philosophical foundation of self-determination, a methodology of self-actualization, and an ethics of self-reliance". How do you understand these ideas?

Do you feel like your teachers, classes, and general experiences at Albizu Campos have helped you become a more critical thinker and someone capable of self- and social transformation? If so, how have your teachers, classes, and general experiences at Campos helped you to do these things?

Try to describe some specific ways that you have been encouraged to think critically about yourself, about your community, about the world around you.

Try to describe some specific ways that you have engaged in self- and/or social transformation.

APPENDIX 3: DR. PEDRO ALBIZU CAMPOS RESPECT FRAMEWORK

The R.E.S.P.E.C.T. framework was created in an effort to ensure that all members of the learning community truly understand the mission of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School. Below are descriptions of behavior and language, which are how we can live our mission and vision.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T Benchmarks

Responsibility
• Prepared with all appropriate supplies and on time for ALL classes throughout the day.
• Accountability; We can count on you.
• Set and accomplish goals.
• Follow class procedures.
• Keep track of assignments using planner and binder. Avoid excuses for incomplete work. Get make-up work, and complete school/homework in a timely manner.
• Come in for extra tutoring/help. Complete homework with obvious effort.
• Complete TABE testing.
• Use appropriate language to communicate.
• Attend meetings and open houses.

Ethics
• Challenge racist, sexist, homophobic language or acts.
• Respect other's opinions and perspectives.
• Honor language and use it well.
• Seek challenges to push your intellectual boundaries. Engage in debates.
• Respect the freedom of speech. Respect each other's opinions and perspectives.
• Open to new ideas.
• Self-monitor your actions.
• Positive conflict resolution. Take responsibility for actions during conflicts.
• Participate in peer circle.
• Participation in Pana Program to support peers
• Support peers. Mentor your peers. Remind peers of school rules. Work well in a group setting. Support fellow students during times of stress.
• Young parents become support network for each other.
• Be non-judgmental regarding appearances of others.
• Help teachers explain topics to students.
• Organize student-led unity.

Sense of Self
• Be open to learning about your culture and history. Know your own roots.
• Share prior knowledge from your lived experience.

• Celebrate success; be proud to be successful.
• Actualize your strengths.
• Lead discussions and find solutions.
• Write a personal memoir. Read a memoir of your peer.
• Creatively express yourself, rooted in forms of resistance.
• Participate in Grito de Lares, Black Pride Day, Grito de Dolores, letter writing campaign to political prisoners, etc.
• Identify scientists, historians, mathematicians, etc. like yourself or in the community.

Puerto Rican Centric
• Celebrating culture.
• Make connections between the Puerto Rican experience and that of other groups.
• Understand who Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos, Lolita Lebron, Juan Antonio Corretjer, and other important figures were.
• Create a "Home Place" of Paseo Boricua.
• Support other students in their group struggles.
• Students understand La Borinqueña and how it relates to other's struggles.
• Learn what a Cimarron society is in relation to Puerto Rican identity. s.
• Students can articulate/understand the Diasporic experience of people of color.
• Learning the influence of world cultures in Puerto Rican culture.
• Connecting Bomba music to world history.
• Learn terms such as Resistance, independence and colonialism. Learn about what militarization does to a people.

Extended Education
• Able to have number sense, solve equations, write equations, deconstruct word problems, make and interpret surveys and graphs, makes accurate measurements and conversions, uses logic to interpret and infer.
• Extended reading, writing and research.
• Identify careers of interest.
• Students will seek support beyond PACHS
• Complete and make appropriate gains on the TABE Test.
• Successfully complete final exams in class.
• Participate in college visits and job/college shadowing
• Successfully place and complete dual enrollment courses
• Complete exemplary work in senior portfolio.
• 18 or higher on PSAE, 10.0 or higher on TABE.
• Use ACT training.
• Focus on following directions and information acquisition.
• Able to use the scientific method to solve problems.
Community Oriented
• Bring culture beyond the classroom.
• Create a plan of action for community service needs.
• Promote Public Health.
• Understand and respect community roots.

• Represent our community well and be an ambassador of Paseo Boricua.

• Participate in Urban Agriculture Program. Community Garden, Greenhouse, maintenance and beautification of Division and La Casita de Don Pedro etc.

• Analyze the needs of the community such as access to fresh food, diabetic care, battle against displacement, changing violent realities, etc.

• Participate with La Voz newspaper, Humboldt Park No Se Vende, etc.

• Graduates become employees/employers of community businesses, high school, and members of collectives in community organizations.

• Connect their strengths, talents, skills, training and education to the process of community building.

Transformation

• Graduation of PACHS students.

• Grasp the idea of restorative justice.

• Student Leadership/Council groups.

• Researching critical issues.

• Create "service learning" projects in the school and the community.

• Fight for what is right in our communities, in this nation and in our world.

• 'Making a dent' in our food desert community.

• Exercising the Scientific Method with regard to community issues.

• Creating events that change people's perceptions of what it means to be Puerto Rican, Mexican, Black, or the like

• Creation of support groups.

• Cultural comparison.

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