



Linking Gender and Race in Peace Education: Pedagogies to address difference in the classroom

Kevin Kester and Brigid Glustein

Abstract

This paper posits that gender, the most prevalent form of diversity in our lives, can be an important tool to promote racial consciousness and awareness of other forms of discrimination. Exploratory and qualitative research was conducted with educators in two diverse settings-Shizuoka, Japan and Kentucky, United States to assess the presence of gender and racial discrimination in their schools, as well as the relevance of homogeneous contexts in fostering prejudice. The findings indicate that educators blur the distinction between gender and sex (using the terms as synonyms) when compared to the use of the terms among peace scholars (who distinguish the terms, noting sex as a dichotomy and gender as a spectrum). This blurred distinction implies that, should educators wish to challenge prejudices that are based on ethnicity, race, or nationality, they could use gender as a platform from which to operate. Findings show that women educators in Kentucky, perhaps, have difficulty perceiving racial bigotry, due to unexamined experiences with sexual discrimination. The paper also explores the relationship between Eastern Asian conceptions of race and gender, as they differ from those in the US. Educators finally suggest pedagogies they use in the classroom to address racial and gender prejudices.

Author Profiles

Kevin Kester is Adjunct Lecturer at SolBridge International School of Business, Daejeon, S. Korea, and Sessional Instructor with the Civic Education Project of the Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University. He was a JET Fellow in Shizuoka, Japan, 2004-2006. He holds a Master's degree in Peace Education from the United Nations University for Peace, San Jose, Costa Rica, and a Professional Development Certificate in Peace Education from Teachers College Columbia University, New York and Tokyo. *Correspondence:* kevinajkester@yahoo.com.

Brigid Glustein is currently working with young refugee claimants in Montreal, Canada, in a program that aims to promote integration and assist in the delivery of basic services. She holds a Master's degree in Peace Education from the United Nations University for Peace, San Jose, Costa Rica, and a Bachelor of Arts Specialization in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, as well as a Certificate in Aboriginal Studies from the Université Laval, Quebec City, Canada. *Correspondence:* Brigid.Glustein@primus.ca.

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Introduction

“I’d rather shoot a nigger than a squirrel,” he said. He was a retired police officer from a small town in Southeastern Kentucky infamous for a history of intolerance and hatred toward minorities. I (Kester) was twelve years old. I have not forgotten these words, the dark, taunting ambience in which they were enveloped, or the snickers of those around me. This learning moment solidified my conviction that action must be taken to promote peaceful coexistence between groups. Through similar experiences later in Japan, and through my travels in Asia and Latin America, when I observed how race and gender inform global power structures and exclusionary policies, I decided to compare cases of discrimination in homogeneous schools to assess how homogeneous schooling might foster and perpetuate bigoted attitudes and behaviors.

Thus, this article discusses racism and gender issues in two homogeneous societies — Kentucky, United States and Shizuoka, Japan — and exposes and deconstructs popular beliefs of racial and gender inferiority. The paper examines classroom practices and how these practices may be used to perpetuate or subvert gender and race issues, inequalities and intolerance. The paper also examines the role of homogeneity in the formation and perpetuation of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in these two settings, with the central thesis that homogeneous schools, through monocultural privileges, nurture and perpetuate both gender biases and racism, through unquestioning adherence to authority, patriarchy and privilege of the dominant classes. This paper also suggests that classrooms in such schools limit students’ exposure to other cultures, languages and norms, and do not promote critical thinking capacities. The authors’ view of education is that in homogeneous societies, there is a pressing need for young boys and girls to question the power structures promoted by their societies, as well as examine their own interactions, to learn to work together in a respectful and equitable manner in their schools. The authors feel that unchallenged gender inequalities and racial prejudice in schools can be a catalysts for the development of other forms of intolerance and discrimination.

If young boys and girls can’t learn to work together in schools (when the greatest presence of diversity in their lives is the opposite sex), how shall men and women work cooperatively in society, later in life? And how will people react when confronted with greater diversity? Southeastern Kentucky and Shizuoka, Japan, are the selected research centers because of their homogeneous composition (though, as this article clarifies, there actually exist varied levels of homogeneity or perceptions of homogeneity).

Consistent with the perspective and practice of Peace Education as elaborated in the work of Freire¹, Boulding², Reardon³, Reardon and Cabezudo⁴, Harris and Morrison⁵, Jenkins⁶ and Kester⁷, the approach to research in this study is correspondingly qualitative and exploratory, seeking to learn from lived experiences, and to create knowledge and alternatives together with learners. The qualitative portion of this research was conducted through an open-ended questionnaire to assess the experiences of educators in Southeastern Kentucky and Shizuoka, Japan, with manifestations of gender and racial bias, additionally asking for rationale concerning the *problematique*. Due to geographical distance, the twenty surveys and questionnaires were completed over the Internet. Ten respondents from Kentucky schools completed the survey and ten educators in Shizuoka, Japan, also replied. The findings are further supported with theory from secondary data, which, at its core, includes four influential books: *Building a Global Civic Culture*⁸, *Multicultural Education as Social Activism*⁹, *Re-Inventing Japan*¹⁰, and *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*¹¹. In addition, the findings are supported by several intriguing journal articles, including “Rethinking School Reform in the Context of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Creating a Responsive Learning Community”¹², and “Confronting Prejudice (Literally): Reactions to Confrontations of Racial and Gender Bias”¹³.

The definitions of core concepts contained in this paper are identified below to provide a common platform from which to explore this *problematique*. The first three definitions are by noted Peace Educator Betty Reardon.

Gender — A device for classifying and categorizing for linguistic and social purposes. It differentiates between masculine and feminine, and has become a common usage term that distinguishes men from women and defines their respective roles. Gender does not refer to the biological, but to the social and cultural differences between the sexes.¹⁴

¹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (NY, NY: Continuum International Publishing, 2006). First printing in 1970.

² Elise Boulding, *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World*. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988).

³ Betty Reardon, *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*. (Paris: UNESCO, 2001).

⁴ Betty Reardon and Alicia Cabezudo, *Learning to Abolish War: Teaching toward a Culture of Peace*. (New York: Hague Appeal for Peace, 2002).

⁵ Ian Harris and Mary Lee Morrison, *Peace Education*, 2nd Ed. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2003).

⁶ Tony Jenkins, *Community-Based Institutes on Peace Education (CIPE) Organizer's Manual: A Peace Education Planning Guide*. (New York, New York: IIPE, 2007).

⁷ Kevin Kester, Peace Education: Experience and Storytelling as Living Education. *Peace and Conflict Review*, 2(2) (2007).

⁸ Elise Boulding, 1988.

⁹ Christine Sleeter, *Multicultural Education as Social Activism*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1996).

¹⁰ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation*. (NY, NY: M.E. Sharp, 1998).

¹¹ Betty Reardon, 2001.

¹² Eugene E. Garcia, *Rethinking School Reform in the Context of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Creating a Responsive Learning Community*. (California: University of California Berkeley, 2001).

¹³ Alexander M. Czopp and Margo J. Monteith. Confronting Prejudice (Literally): Reactions to Confrontations of Racial and Gender Bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(4), 2003, pp.532-544.

¹⁴ Betty Reardon, *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*. (Paris: UNESCO, 2001), pp. 36-37.

Sexism — Policies and forms of behavior that exclude women/girls [and some boys/men] from full participation in society and from enjoyment of all human rights; rationalized by the assumption that men [the masculine] are intrinsically superior to women [the feminine].¹⁵

Racism — The denial of human rights on the basis of race; rationalized by the assertion that some racial groups are superior to others.¹⁶

Homogeneous — An entity where at least 90% of the individuals represent only one race/gender/culture (Definition created by the authors for the purposes of this study.)

Commonly, the term homogeneous refers to a society of primarily one race and culture. Other issues of diversity, such as gender, class, sexuality and religion, are not explicitly explored within this paper, for practical reasons. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the authors refer to a group as homogeneous when 90% of the population represents one race and culture. However, there is no doubt among the authors that examination of other forms of diversity is necessary for a full deconstruction of homogeneity and schooling. Additionally, the authors also believe that while this first study reveals similarities in homogeneous schools and their effects on intolerance, further studies should compare homogeneous with heterogeneous schools to illuminate differences between the two contexts.

Exploring a Not-so-common Lexicon

Forty educators were given questionnaires and asked to respond to questions pertaining to gender and racial biases in homogeneous classrooms, based on the authors' assumption, and supporting statistical data, that these societies qualified as homogeneous (i.e. the research centers are composed of 90% one race and culture). The responses demonstrated that the educators themselves also define their contexts as homogeneous. Twenty educators in Kentucky and twenty educators in Japan were asked to reply to the questionnaires. The educators teach youth between the ages of sixteen to twenty-four. Of the forty questionnaires, fifteen were mailed back and an additional five Japanese teachers gave a concerted response via email. Of the twenty educators who responded, ten are from Kentucky and ten are from Japan, therefore giving the study a fifty-percent response rate. Of the Japanese teachers, three respondents reported holding a Bachelor's degree, five reported Master's degrees, and two did not indicate their level of education; from Kentucky, one respondent reported holding a Bachelor's degree, three reported Master's degrees, three others reported Doctorates, and three did not indicate their level of education.

Due to the geographical limitations imposed by conducting simultaneous research in Kentucky and Japan, questionnaires were chosen as a practical method to gather primary research data. In order to explore diverse conceptions of race, gender, and diversity, educators were first asked, in the introduction to the questionnaire, to define *gender*, *sexism*, *racism* and *homogeneous*. The

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 29.

¹⁶ *ibid.*.

varied definitions are insightful, especially when compared with the previous definitions by Reardon and the authors. The responses are listed here as illustrations of respondents' understanding of these terms. The responses from Kentucky educators and Japanese educators are listed below.

Select Kentucky responses to the definitions

Gender —

- what sex someone is. i.e. male or female gender
- whether male or female
- not necessarily male/female, considered affiliated to masculine/feminine
- differentiated between male and female of a species
- the difference between a male and female from a biological/anatomical standpoint

Sexism —

- bias/prejudice/discrimination towards people of a certain sex
- a sense of superiority of one sex over the other that may or may not result in some form of discrimination
- having bias for or against a certain sex; for example, assuming all males are macho, athletic, masculine and should act that way
- the act of discrimination based on gender
- the act of believing one gender is better than the other and treating people of the two genders to manifest this point

Racism —

- bias/prejudice/discrimination towards people of a certain race
- some form of discrimination based upon someone's skin color and/or heritage
- a sense of superiority of one race against another, that may or may not result in some form of discrimination
- having bias for or against a certain race of people
- believing members of a particular race are inferior and treating them in a manner to portray this belief

Homogeneous —

- sameness; all people in the group are very similar
- of one kind; sharing characteristics
- the same or extremely similar nature
- members of a group being the same, for example, a group of all girls might be considered homogeneous
- people of same characteristics, i.e. race, gender, culture, etc.

The responses indicate that the majority of Kentucky respondents believe that gender refers to the biological sex of a person, which contrasts with the definition of this term understood by many Peace Educators and exemplified by Reardon, who considers gender as social and cultural differences between the sexes, where there are two sexes (male and female) and many genders (that fall between masculine and feminine). Only one response from Kentucky mentioned masculinity and femininity. Sexism and racism are likewise seen as attitudes, an explanation that is also inconsistent with Reardon's definitions of sexism and racism as actions, behaviors, and institutions (informed by attitudes).

Select Japanese responses to the definitions

Gender —

- a socially defined label. The label is based on the biological sex feature. It is used to describe one's role in society
- the identification of differences of sex due to cultural perceptions
- one's sexual identity, whether male or female (or trans)
- gender is a social construct that is performed and perpetuated through language and social behavior
- a socio-cultural term, referring to a social construction of male/female roles

Sexism —

- treating people differently from the viewpoint of which biological group they belong to
- discrimination based on gender, especially against women
- a power asymmetry based primarily on one's gender
- discrimination of a person relating to gender. Unfair judgmental standards
- discrimination by one sex against the other, usually understood to be male against female, but this is not always the case

Racism —

- treating people differently from the viewpoint of which social group they belong to
- discrimination or prejudice based on race
- a power asymmetry based primarily on one's race/ethnicity
- discrimination of a person relating to race, color of skin, superficial identification of perceived race
- discrimination by a power majority against a power minority. Difference-based, mostly aimed at those who appear physically different (skin color, etc.) from the majority

Homogeneous —

- nearly the same
- all of one, of the same kind or similar nature
- an adjective used by some to usually describe a situation, language, society, etc., that they perceive to have no differences (racial, ethnic, class, etc.)

- the idea that race and sex are not factored into judgments of people and that male and female and people of different racial backgrounds are equal in all societies
- a term that is understood to refer to a society composed of one major ethnic group with similar values

These answers show that Japanese educators consider gender to be primarily a social construct, contrasting with the views of Kentucky educators. One potential explanation for this difference in perception is explained by Screech, quoted in Morris-Suzuki:

Europeans [Westerners] have always assumed that there were only two clearly defined sexes, but have accepted the multiplicity of races. Japan, according to Screech, saw gender as complex and multiple — being ‘male’ or ‘female’ was inherently related to position in the family, and those outside families...could be seen as occupying a range of intermediate sexes.¹⁷

Five of the Japanese teachers defined sexism and racism as discrimination or power asymmetries, while the other five offered this telling concerted response: “We are unconscious about gender, sexism or racism...besides, it's a very delicate problem and it takes much time to answer.” The two components of this response apparently negate each other — that, on the one hand, ‘we are unconscious,’ and, on the other hand, ‘it's a very delicate problem.’ This response suggests that the teachers are conscious to some degree of the “problems” of gender, sexism and racism, but hesitant to discuss the issues.

The definitions given by educators from Kentucky and Japan highlight the need for teachers in these contexts to receive training to understand differences between gender and sex, male and female, masculine and feminine, to encourage their own understanding and teaching about these issues in relation to societal power structures and oppression. A deeper understanding of these concepts, and of the realities lived by members of society who are not in positions of power, could act as a catalyst for critical thinking around contemporary social issues and commitments to transform social dilemmas. There is a particular need for education that explores the multiple types of violence present in society, identified by Galtung in his typology of violence. Galtung originally included two categories of violence in his typology: direct violence, inflicted upon others by one or more persons, and structural violence, inflicted upon others by an institution or structure. Each of these types of violence affects the survival, well-being, identity and/or freedom of its victims. Galtung later added a third category, cultural violence, in 1990. He defined cultural violence as aspects of culture that justify or legitimize the use of violence. “If the opposite of violence is peace, then the opposite of cultural violence would be ‘cultural peace,’ meaning aspects of a culture that serve to justify and legitimize direct peace and structural peace.”¹⁸

Deconstructing Homogeneity

While the US is, on whole, 80% White (White is defined by the US Census Bureau as “having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa”, including

¹⁷ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation*. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1988), p. 81.

¹⁸ J. Galtung, “Cultural Violence,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (1990), pp. 291-305.

Available from <http://www.wiscomp.org/peaceprints.htm>

“Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab or Polish,” and “Latinos”¹⁹), Kentucky is 90% White, and the population of the rural areas of Kentucky are sometimes more than 98% White.²⁰ Thus, the population in Kentucky is primarily White, with very little racial diversity, except for small communities of predominantly black homes. The issue of the segregation of peoples of African and Afro-Caribbean descent raises questions around contemporary forms of social apartheid, as discussed within multicultural literature.²¹ In a study on homogeneous schools, social apartheid must be factored into the discourse on diversity in communities that are largely considered uniform, because in reality, the notion of monoculturalism is exaggerated. In a similar exaggeration of monoculturalism, the definition of white, as given by the US Census Bureau, is astoundingly diverse, and by grouping all the cultures together, diversity is masked and individual cultures are stripped of their uniqueness and value.

In commenting on the ‘uniqueness of Kentucky,’ the Kentucky Secretary of State, Trey Greyson, referred to Kentucky as ‘a somewhat homogeneous society.’²² Kentucky’s population is composed of 90.4% White, 7.5% black, 1% of persons reporting multiple races, approximately 1% Asian, and, when extracted from the White population, 2% Latino.²³ Hence, these statistics, in tandem with the comment by the Secretary of State, demonstrate that while Kentucky does, in fact, fall within the bounds of the definition of homogeneous, it is actually more multicultural than social concepts of homogeneous allow. Glorifying the state as ‘unique’ because of its homogeneity supports an atmosphere of singularity and encourages a sense of racial superiority.

Garcia, in discussing diversity within cultures, says:

This population identifier, “culturally diverse”, is a relatively new education-related term. Of course, it has little appreciation for the diversity among such identified U.S. populations. That is, it is quite evident that such identified populations (African-Americans, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Chicanos, Latinos, Southeast Asians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, Chinese, etc.) are quite heterogeneous, linguistically and culturally, both within and between such identified categories.²⁴

In the US, groups are often defined as belonging to a common culture that represents the Other, while still being classified as US nationals, for example African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, Jewish-American, Native-American, etc. Each group is defined, by the White ruling class, as being homogeneous within itself, and the group is valued for its ability to assimilate US customs and speak the majority language, English, while at the same time being different from the White ruling class which defines mainstream culture, language and politics.

¹⁹ US Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21000.html>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Paul Street explores such discussions on social and educational apartheid in *Segregated Schools: Educational Apartheid in Post-Civil Rights America*. (NY: Routledge, 2005).

²² Trey Greyson, “Uniqueness of Kentucky,” Kentucky Land Office website, <http://www.sos.ky.gov/land/journal/articles/bryant/article1.htm>.

²³ US Census Bureau.

²⁴ Eugene E. Garcia, *Rethinking school reform in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity: creating a responsive learning community*. (California: University of California Berkeley, 2001), p. 2.

Japan is apparently more homogeneous than Kentucky. The 2007 census claims that 98% of the population of Japan is of Japanese ethnicity²⁵, and common rhetoric promotes the homogeneity of Japan. According to Hayes, as quoted by Morris-Suzuki: In the words of a more recent study, “the surrounding ocean serves as a protective moat” shielding Japan from invasion and migration, so that, since the third or fourth century A.D., there has been “very little infusion of other ethnic groups, resulting in a contemporary population that is fundamentally homogeneous.”²⁶

Similar to Kentucky government officials, the Japanese Education Minister, Bunmei Ibuki, also described Japan as an ‘extremely homogeneous nation’ and his statement was supported by then Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe.²⁷ This was said while denouncing the ‘Western-style’ individualism that these Japanese officials believe motor the United Nations’ concept of Human Rights, thus imposing Western ideals on the Eastern world. Additionally, an article in the Inter Press News Agency, concerning xenophobia in Japan, commented on the perceived homogeneous nature of Japanese society: “Surveys indicate that more Japanese — over 70% in a poll — believe that the influx of foreigners into Japan is posing a threat to the country’s famed domestic peace...where pride in national homogeneity is deep-rooted.”²⁸ In Japan, as in Kentucky, there are people who represent other nationalities, and indigenous peoples who have been assimilated (as opposed to integrated) into Japanese society. The notion of homogeneity minimizes the existence of other Asian minorities: Koreans, Japan-born Koreans, Chinese, Japan-born Chinese, South American immigrants, Brazilian-Japanese and indigenous peoples (Ainus, Ryukyuan). The assumption of homogeneity also negates the existence of socially marginalized groups such as *burakumin*, the physically challenged, and gay and transgendered people. In her seminal work *Re-Inventing Japan*, Tessa Morris-Suzuki deconstructs the notion of “Japaneseness.”²⁹ On the issue of Japan as a homogeneous society, she writes that at the end of the Pacific War, large disparities among different segments of the Japanese population demonstrate the large extent of the country’s multiculturalism. She suggests that the widely held pride in Japan as an advanced civilization was an important factor in assisting the advancement of assimilation policies where the groups at the Periphery (Ainu, Okinawans, Koreans, Chinese, and Discriminated Groups) were pressured or forced to adopt the behaviors of the Center where the ruling class lived. Morris-Suzuki suggests that in fact, the Japanese were not a homogenous group and that the ultimate goal at that point in history was to make the Margins like the Center, to assimilate, and to therefore, try to become monocultural. Today, while the goal is no longer to force the populations living in the Margins to emulate the cultures and lifestyles of Center, these people are socially and economically marginalized and have virtually no political power.

Diene explains the composition of the nation:

²⁵ According to the 2007 Census of the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/figures/index.html>; and Doudou Diene. *Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and All Forms of Discrimination: Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, and related forms of intolerance*. (United Nations: Economic and Social Council, 2006).

²⁶ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation*, p. 9.

²⁷ The Japan Times, “Abe fine with ‘homogeneous’ remark,” *The Japan Times*, February 27, 2007.

²⁸ Suvendrini Kakuchi, “Xenophobia may hamper economic growth,” *Inter Press Service News Agency*, May 8, 2007.

²⁹ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation*.

Japan has a population of 127.7 million, out of which 98.45% are Japanese nationals. The Japanese population includes one indigenous population, the Ainu, estimated at between 30,000 and 50,000 people: they live predominantly in the island of Hokkaido. Amongst the foreigners, who do not represent more than 1.55 percent of the population, Koreans are the largest minority (607, 419 in 2004), followed by the Chinese, Brazilians and Filipinos.³⁰

While the percentage of minority cultures in Japan may look small compared to countries that pride themselves on the multiculturalism of their population, it is also important to remember that these statistics represent only a fraction of the country's actual multicultural reality. There are increasing numbers of non-registered non-Japanese citizens across the country, especially in some of the larger cities. Hamamatsu-city in Shizuoka prefecture (where this study was conducted), for example, has a registered foreign population of 4%, most of which are Brazilian nationals of mixed Japanese and Brazilian parentage, employed in automobile factories.³¹ The Japanese *problematique* is largely that cultural and ethnic diversity is not recognized. Some Korean-Japanese, for example, have been so deeply assimilated, that it is virtually impossible to identify them; one reason for this could be levels of discrimination against Koreans that probably encourage them to hide their heritage and change their names to Japanese monikers.

Two important contradictions in practice emerge in this analysis of Kentucky and Japan. First, it is a commonly held belief among US citizens, and taught vehemently in the school system, that the US population represents tremendous diversity. The country's history is taught as a mixing of various groups, ethnicities and religions, a 'melting-pot.'³² Though this picture may be more completely realized in metropolises such as New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles, small homogeneous towns in Kentucky also teach this image as an accurate depiction of the entire country. The reality, however, is that certain areas of the country do not reflect this harmonious vision of the US as a mixture of races and cultures (as seen above in the case of Kentucky). This exaggerated notion of multiculturalism creates a false sense of diversity and thus, hyperbolic claims of pluralism, tolerance and understanding. Japan, conversely, suffers from hyperbolic notions of homogeneity that underestimate discriminatory practices, particularly highlighted by the absence of an anti-discrimination law for the protection of minority groups.³³

Second, deconstructing ill-supported social identities must be taken seriously. If Japanese and Kentucky societies perceive themselves to be homogeneous and multicultural, respectively, then it is safe to assume that much of the rest of the world also identifies these communities in a

³⁰ Doudou Diene. *Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and All Forms of Discrimination: Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, and related forms of intolerance*. (United Nations: Economic and Social Council, 2006), p. 5.

³¹ HICE, "A move toward an interdependent relationship with foreign residents," Hamamatsu-city International Education Center, http://www.city.hamamatsu.shizuoka.jp/hamaEng/kouhou/htm_0603/special.html.

³² 'Melting pot' was a term commonly used throughout the 1980s and 1990s as the authors were going through public schooling. Today, the term often preferred by educators and policy-makers is 'mosaic.' 'Mosaic' emphasizes the notion of cultural coexistence as opposed to the assimilation policies of a 'melting pot.'

³³ Debito Arudou, *Japanese Only: The Otaru Hot Springs Case and Racial Discrimination in Japan*. (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2004).

similar regard. The first step toward ‘conscientization’³⁴ is raising awareness of false popular beliefs before examining misdirected social policies and actions. The denial of difference in an exaggerated expression of homogeneity, without respecting diverse cultural expressions and languages, is exacerbated in state policies of assimilation and one-language laws. Hence, one route of action is to facilitate an exploration of discrimination to raise social consciousness, while taking steps to change the misinformation perpetuated in schools, communities and governing bodies.

In January 2006, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, indeed, concluded that there is racism in Japan, and that it affects three groups: national minorities, descendents of former Japanese colonies, and foreigners from the rest of the world.³⁵ Racism and sexism are practiced widely in Japan.³⁶ Racism is also a fact of life in the US,³⁷ though many people operate under the assumption that racism is a thing of the past due to the successes of the women’s and civil rights movements.³⁸ Moreover, not only are racism and sexism still phenomena of present day society, according to a study in Kentucky concerning violence, gender and race, discrimination is so well-developed that it takes on certain norms.³⁹ The superiority of the White male is an undercurrent in the teachings of US institutions, and this group’s monopoly of power and wealth is commonly accepted. It is common for a man to execute an act of gender prejudice against a woman, or for a White to show prejudice toward people of color. According to Czopp & Monteith⁴⁰, the prejudices between people of different races or sexes are more socially accepted than prejudices displayed within a group. For instance, a Latino is less likely to administer oppressive measures against another Latino than perhaps toward a person of different racial or gender group, and similarly, a woman might accept prejudice from a man that she would not otherwise accept from a woman.

As the research supports, violence is manifest in Kentucky and Japan, and it must, therefore, also be present in the schools. Reardon states, “when these symptoms [of violence] exist in the community, they probably exist in the schools.”⁴¹ Additionally, Joan Burstyn, et al, said, Violence in schools mirrors the violence in society and is exacerbated by the availability of guns, urban and rural poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, suburban anomie, and the media’s celebration of violence. Each of these must be addressed if people want to end violence.⁴²

³⁴ ‘Conscientization’, a concept developed by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, describes the process of becoming aware of a social problem and consequently taking action to solve that problem. It relies on praxis of reflection and action.

³⁵ Doudou Diene. *Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and All Forms of Discrimination: Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, and related forms of intolerance*.

³⁶ Ibid; and Joanna Liddle and Sachiko Nakajima, *Rising Suns, Rising Daughters: Gender, Class, and Power in Japan*. (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2000).

³⁷ Pat Farren (Ed.), “Racism and Active Anti-Racism.” In *Peacework: Twenty years of Nonviolent Social Change*. (Fortscham: Rose Hill Publishing, 1991).

³⁸ Paul Street, *Segregated Schools: Educational Apartheid in Post-Civil Rights America*; and Christine Sleeter, *Multicultural Education as Social Activism*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1996).

³⁹ Alexander M. Czopp and J. Margo Monteith, “Confronting Prejudice (Literally): Reactions to Confrontations of Racial and Gender Bias,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(4), 2003, pp. 532-544.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Betty Reardon, *Tolerance*. (New York: UNESCO Publishing, 1998), p.20.

⁴² J. Burstyn, G. Bender, R. Cassella, H. Gordon, D. Guerra, K. Luschen, K. Stevens, and K. Williams, *Preventing Violence in Schools: A Challenge to American Democracy*. (NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001), p. 255.

Homogeneity, Gender Bias and Racism in the Classroom

Questionnaire respondents were also asked to approximate the degree of racial/cultural homogeneity of their schools. The answers they provided are very near official statistical data of their respective regions. Kentucky educators estimate Kentucky to be between 85-88.88% White, and Japanese educators estimate Japan to be 96.4% Japanese. The responses show that some educators perceive their schools to reach as high as 99% White in Kentucky, or as low as 50% and between 95% and 100% homogeneous in Japan. Assuming the schools are, in fact, microcosms that reflect the demographic makeup of their respective societies, this suggests that educators are aware of the degree of racial similarity and lack of substantial diversity in their learning contexts.

Pertaining to reactions on gender bias, the research results show that all of the Japanese respondents are aware of incidents of gender discrimination in their schools, while most classroom teachers in the Kentucky schools did not report such discrimination. The proportion of respondents from each sex is approximately equal, suggesting that the sex of the individual does not factor into the likelihood of perceiving gender bias. Of the twenty educators teaching youth ages sixteen through twenty-four, nine answered that they felt there was gender bias in their schools, six did not report being aware of any such bias, and five said “it’s a very delicate matter and it takes time to discuss.” The majority of positive responses support the possibility of a correlation between schooling in homogeneous settings and the perpetuation of gender bias.

In reaction to inquiry on racism, questionnaire data affirms that four of five Japanese educators are aware of racism in their schools, with an additional five Japanese educators stating that “it’s a very delicate matter,” and six of ten Kentucky educators reported awareness of racism in their setting. Surprisingly, all of the male respondents in Kentucky agreed that racism is prevalent, whereas all of the female teachers from Kentucky disagreed. This suggests that in the Kentucky context specifically, awareness of racism may be influenced by the sex of the actor, where males may be more likely to identify racial bias than females. In contrast, when examining the Japanese responses, the analysis of sex on the likelihood to identify racial bias becomes irrelevant. Sleeter comments that from the Western perspective (since it was the Western women educators who perceived sexism but not racism), awareness of sexism may “block a substantive analysis of racial oppression.”⁴³ She says, “women’s *unexamined* experience with sexism limits their understanding of social stratification by encouraging them to believe they understand discrimination.”⁴⁴ Her research may provide a theoretical rationale for the lack of women educators in Kentucky to acknowledge racial discrimination (because they have ‘unexamined’ experiences with sexism that hinder their understanding of racism). Clearly, this analysis pertains to Western women educators who, as Sleeter suggests, may consider further ‘examining’ their experiences with sexism to draw links between sexism and racism.

In conclusion, ten of twenty educators said that they were aware of racism in their schools, five said they could not discuss the topic because it’s too sensitive, and five stated that racism was not

⁴³ Christine Sleeter, *Multicultural Education as Social Activism*, p. 17.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 83.

in their schools. This buttresses the hypothesis that schooling in a homogeneous context may correspond with the perpetuation of racist attitudes.

The responses analyzed above strengthen the theory stated earlier in this paper, that Japanese educators are more aware of gender constructs than racism, and Kentucky educators are perhaps more cognizant of racism than gender oppression (though this conclusion may depend on the sex of the educator). The research results also show that educators in rural Kentucky, where the Kentucky population is most homogeneous, were the most likely to report that gender discrimination and racism do not exist in their schools while there are no obvious factors that would make these schools less likely to be susceptible to gender discrimination and racism. This, therefore, further supports the thesis that homogeneous settings are at risk of being blind to discrimination that may be taking place in their schools.

The objective was, however, not to prove the existence of intolerance in these societies but to explore teachers' perceptions of bigotry in the face of their realities. By matching the perceptions with actuality, and through referencing the definitions given by a number of the educators, it is clear that raising awareness to these phenomena is essential. To this end, the authors propose that in-service teacher training on gender and racial awareness is necessary to facilitate comprehension and to inspire remedial action to address the problematic.

The authors' concern that education in homogeneous settings is likely to reproduce the status quo appears to be supported, especially given that the data suggests educators in the most homogeneous settings may be more susceptible to blindness when reporting on classroom-based power asymmetries. Given this concern, what are the appropriate interventions that can be undertaken by the school community to deconstruct stereotypes and biases?

Discrimination in schools is then mirrored in society. Thus, addressing the biases in schools is a form of intervention in society. Used in this way, education is a tool for social change. Education can be an important tool in the intervention to defend the interests of minorities against those who hold a monopoly of power. Critical education recognizes that we are subject to a host of conditioning factors, including genetics, culture, economics, language and environment, and that our interaction with these elements is the basis of our understanding.⁴⁵ Peace Education promotes the idea that education can lead to more just and peaceful societies when such education is conducted in a manner conducive to peace. Peace Education is critical, reflective, challenging and hopeful, and recognizes the possibility of education to reinforce dominant ideologies as well as unmask them.

Park and Rothbart⁴⁶ write that stereotypes are developed due to an individual's tendency to overestimate the homogeneity of other groups, as opposed to the perception of heterogeneity in traits of people in their own group. Accordingly, Johnson & Johnson⁴⁷ state that prejudice and

⁴⁵ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).

⁴⁶ B. Park and M. Rothbart, "Perceptions of out-group homogeneity and levels of social categorization: Memory for the subordinate attributes of in-group and out-group members," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42 (1982): 1051-1068.

⁴⁷ D.W. Johnson and R.T. Johnson, "The Three Cs of Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination," in S. Oskamp, (Ed.), *Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination*, (Lawrence Elbaum Associates, Publishers 2000), pp. 239-267.

discrimination are most effectively reduced when members of the majority group and those at whom they direct their discrimination and prejudice have positive interactions with each other, dialogue about lived experiences, and commit to developing anti-discriminatory views and behavior. The authors support the concept of a school-based intervention to develop interpersonal relationships, explaining that “educators...have a unique opportunity to create the conditions for promoting in most [if not all] children, adolescents and young adults, the types of interactions, relationships, competencies and values that decrease stereotyping and prejudice.”⁴⁸ Their model, *The Three Cs of Reducing Prejudice*, consists of developing a cooperative community that resolves conflicts constructively, and internalizes civic values. They define a cooperative community as people living in a given locality as well as all stakeholders on a given issue working toward achieving mutual goals, and working within a culture of positive social interdependence where all people in the community can learn together through frequent, accurate and open communication toward the understanding of all perspectives. A cooperative community is created by learning negotiation and mediation tools that support constructive conflict resolution, and by a commitment to values that support success for the community as a whole.

Recommended Pedagogies to Address Gender and Racial Biases

This manuscript proposes in-service teacher training, peace and conflict curriculum, and peace pedagogy as means to combat discrimination. The study, therefore, compiled information of current pedagogies educators are using in classrooms (in Kentucky and Japan) to engage gender and racial biases. The respondents identified multiple approaches for gender affirmation and anti-racism education as listed below.

1. *Suggested pedagogies to raise awareness of gender bias in Kentucky schools (i.e. gender sensitivity and equal participation)*
 - Direct questions to both male and female students equally and allow for equal speaking time in the classroom. Assign similar tasks to both genders.
 - Discuss the different opportunities and different needs of males and females in professions.
 - In general, make sure that all students are involved in equitable amounts. It is a great method to promote better education, and at the same time, eliminates any possible discriminatory acts. Do your best to not promote games or other activities that put boys against girls, for example.
2. *Suggested pedagogies to educate against racism in Kentucky schools (Empathy-building activities and case studies)*
 - Racism is an issue that one may not truly understand unless they experience it; therefore, a simulation exercise can better allow one to understand what it is like to experience racism.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 239.

- Use case studies to address the cultural differences and needs of the various races and populations we encounter in the clinical setting.
 - Make it a point to teach and discuss as many cultures around the world as possible. Use examples from places the teachers and students have traveled to, in hopes of promoting a more positive attitude and respect from some unfortunately “sheltered” students.
3. *Suggested pedagogies to raise awareness of gender bias in Japanese schools (Mixed groups and personal opinions)*
- Attempt to break down gender isolationism by partnering males and females for discussions. Try to observe and eliminate any visible forms of gender discrimination between students; and comment on rooted perceptions in a social/historical context. Devote a segment of the course to the use of gender-neutral language.
 - Use a lot of group activity work. Tell the students to always introduce themselves to others in the group, and that everyone is included and no one is excluded. Make sure that everyone gets an equal chance to respond in the group activities.
 - When something concerning gender discrimination comes up in class, make it a point to express your own opinion as well as elicit student opinions.
4. *Suggested pedagogies to educate against racism in Japanese schools (Personal stories, case studies and mixed groups)*
- In terms of promoting a racially inclusive classroom, occasionally there are ethnic Korean or Chinese or Okinawan students in classes...value their different perspectives and call on them more frequently in class to talk about issues (if viable) in order to give other students a sense of diversity.
 - The issue of poverty be addressed in case studies that show that poverty is a form of racism aimed to repress the [global] South.
 - Encourage foreign and Japanese students to mix and require them to talk with each other.

The proposed pedagogies above are informative, yet problematic. They are situational, often reactionary, and for the most, part lack the planning and foresight necessary to create a situation that will encourage dialogue aimed at revealing power, political, social and economic structures. The pedagogies identified by respondents aim often to structurally force students to work together with others, but without engaging them in critical discussions on social issues. Congregating people is a necessary first step, but if the space is not facilitated well, it may reinforce stereotypes and misunderstanding. As stated by Johnson & Johnson, “Within a school community, physical proximity in and of itself is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the formation of caring and committed relationships.”⁴⁹ In classrooms, a comprehensive and complementary approach needs to highlight both the psycho-cultural and structural manifestations of the monopoly of power, in order to discover the links between various forms of oppression. This deeper and more critical analysis has greater potential to achieve a real

⁴⁹ ibid, pp. 239-267.

understanding of power structures and messages promoted in society that reinforce a culture of violence.

Accordingly, an intense examination of those societal forces that reproduce power asymmetries and oppression should be at the core of purposeful discourse about racist and sexist structures, and explicit links need to be made with what students experience at local, national, regional and global levels. In exposing structural violence, Bell Hooks stated:

Much of my work with feminist theory has stressed the importance of understanding difference, of the ways race and class status determine the degree to which one can assert male domination and privilege, and most importantly, the ways racism and sexism are interlocking systems of domination which uphold and sustain one another.⁵⁰

With respect to teaching strategies, Reardon provides a comprehensive list of classroom pedagogies for addressing prejudice that concerns both the structure and content of education.⁵¹ She suggests: readings and discussions of other cultures, cultural interpretations of the arts and literature of other peoples, position-taking on issues, policy simulations, alternative solutions exercises, keeping journals on personal experiences, studying international standards on women's rights, and conducting role-plays. There are also numerous other methods teachers could use to mitigate discrimination and intervene against prejudicial acts; therefore, educators should continue to share with each other their own experiences and tools for managing homogeneous and diverse classrooms.

Concluding Without Ending: No Cause is Deterministic

In this paper, sexism, racism, the relationship between the two and the challenges of homogeneous contexts have been explored. The major postulate throughout has been that schooling in homogeneous classrooms perpetuates notions of entitlement, sexist perspectives, uncritical race awareness and an indiscriminate acceptance of the status quo. The research appears to support this hypothesis. This discrimination is sustained, in part, because of hyperbolic notions of homogeneity (in Japan) and multiculturalism (in the US), both of which are often facades. The research results have supported the hypothesis that homogeneous contexts have an impact on the development and nurturance of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. However, a cautionary finality: this research and its conclusion do not suggest that by merely living and growing up in homogeneous communities, a person will be destined to possess racist and/or sexist behaviors. It does indicate, however, that homogeneity — or moreover, the lack of recognition of diversity that does exist — may correlate with the subsistence of racist and sexist biases. Homogeneity is not a fatalistic force; it does not necessarily cause racist and sexist beliefs and actions, but may assist in the breeding and endurance of prejudice.

Keywords: *Homogeneous schooling, Racism, Sexism*

⁵⁰ Bell Hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1990), p.59.

⁵¹ Betty Reardon, *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*, pp. 158-161.

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