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Separate but Equal: Segregated Religious Education in Egypt's Public Schools

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Abstract
The Arab Spring exposed the hidden secrets of Egyptian society to the global community. In spite of the insatiable media attention paid to the Mubarak regime and the toll it took on the entire country, Egypt's education system received little attention. For decades, Egypt's public schools have forced students to attend segregated classes, based on an individual's religious and ethnic background. Egypt's Coptic community constitutes approximately 10 percent of the population yet members of this community must designate their religious affiliation and, as a result, students adhering to the Christian faith are given a separate religious education. Also, students identifying as Muslim must attend a course on Islam. This dichotomous system instills a sense of other in students at a young age, thereby promoting tension between the two communities. Phronetic research methods will be utilized in this study to chart a new direction for Egypt's public education system.

Keywords: Religious Education, Arab Spring, Egypt's education system,

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Introduction

In 1896 a Supreme Court decision known as Plessy vs. Ferguson determined that public schools within the United States could provide a separate education for White and African American students. This arrangement was acceptable to the courts as long as efforts were being made to ensure that the education provided was equal. Nearly fifty years later, the Supreme Court reversed this decision in the landmark case, Brown vs. Board of Education, ultimately deciding that by its very definition, separate invariably meant unequal. Conversations began to move away from superficial notions of equality and gravitate towards the concept of educational equity for all students. After the decision, Chief Justice Earl Warren described segregation as, "a deprivation of equity in educational opportunity" (Neal & Moore, 2004, p. 8). The events that followed helped change the course of American history. Not only were schools integrated, but in the years that followed, society itself removed numerous barriers that had previously ensured unequal treatment for African Americans. This advancement of basic human rights occurred in spite of the fact that many in American society had initially refused to accept the court's decision (Baldwin, 2002). In modern day Egypt there is a debate raging which revolves around the manner by which students are taught about religion in government funded schools. Due in part to the efforts of Habib Guirgis, Egypt's public schools have allowed Christian students, mostly members of Egypt's Coptic community, to take courses on Christianity (Saad, 1998). Egypt is recognized by the United Nations to be located in a part of the world known as North Africa. Numerous agencies also characterize Egypt as being part of the Middle East due to its large Arab population. Christians constitute only ten percent of the population with members of the Islamic faith making up the other ninety percent (Rowe, 2001). This results in ten percent of the population being forced to take courses separately from the other ninety percent based on their religious background.

Egypt's public school system, even in the post-Mubarak era, has yet to make any mention of integrating the mandatory religion courses. Muslim students are forced to take courses on Islam while Christian students must attend courses on Christianity. Provisions are not made for students who consider themselves to be either atheist or agnostic. Nor are there provisions for Muslim and Christian students who do not want to learn about religion in public schools. Further compounding this issue is the small population of students who claim a religion that does not fall under the categories of Islam and Christianity. All of these points allow for controversies when discussions surrounding religious education in Egypt come to the forefront. One of the main issues that point to unequal weight given to the separate classes is the fact that educational standards and requirements for the Islamic courses are significantly higher than those for the courses on Christianity. For example, courses taught on Islam are typically taught by graduates of Al-Azhar which is known to be one of the most conservative Islamic institutions of higher education in Egypt (Cook, 1999). These graduates of Al-Azhar typically hold Master's Degrees in Islamic Studies or higher and are only required to teach courses on Islam within Egypt's public schools. Those who teach the courses on Christianity are not allowed to teach these courses as their primary assignment (Neill, 2006). As a result, instructors hoping to teach Christianity in public schools must major in a subject matter that can be taught within the education system that is not tied to religion. Typically, these

courses are taught by individuals who are trained to teach core subjects such as language, mathematics or science.

Judith Cochran (2008) eloquently describes the set of circumstances faced by the people of Egypt in her book, *Educational Roots of Political Crisis in Egypt*, as such:

> President Muhammed Hosni Mubarak came to power in 1981 having no Vice President, presumably grooming his son Gamal as his successor. His power has endured longer than all but two of the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt and almost as long as that of Muhammed Ali in the 1800's. Under the stewardship of Hosni Mubarak, Egyptians have experienced little economic and education change despite the political rhetoric to the contrary. Those who can, leave for other countries, where they seek any type of employment, working as professors or garbage collectors in order to help their families survive. Meanwhile, Egypt's population and poverty increases. The average Egyptian family lives on approximately $140.00 a year and survives on government subsidized housing, food and transportation. (p. 1)

Regardless of race or creed, the above passage does not instilll any comfort or confidence in the recently deposed Mubarak administration or the current state of affairs in Egypt. Rather than tackle these issues head on, the Egyptian government preferred a divide and conquer approach in order to perpetuate its hold on power.

Theoretical Perspectives

The specific challenges faced by Coptic students in Egypt's public schools will be analyzed through two separate research lenses. Positioning theory will be utilized in order to expose the disadvantages suffered by Coptic students as a result of the forced separation from the majority of their classmates in order to take religious courses. Positioning theory, specifically the mode of interactive positioning, addresses the social effects that can develop when students are positioned in various learning environments as a result of decisions made by those in positions of power (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991; Yoon, 2008). By positioning students based solely on religious affiliation, those in power are identifying the minority group as something that is other, thus weakening their social standing and limiting their opportunities.

In addition to positioning theory, the four guiding questions posed by the phronetic social science research methodology will be utilized in order to put forward a plan that could lead Egypt's efforts to revolutionize their educational system. Phronetic research was first brought forward by Bent Flyvbjerg (2001), currently a professor at Oxford University, and based on the Aristotelian principle of phronesis, widely translated to mean practical wisdom, or as Michel Foucault defined it in his third lecture of 1984, practical reason. The four guiding questions of phronetic research as adapted for the current analysis are (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 145):

1. Where are we going with democracy in Egypt (location modified from original text)?
2. Who gains, and who loses, by which mechanisms of power?
3. Is it desirable?

4. What should be done?

The Arab Spring of 2011 has caused great social upheaval for the people of Egypt. The above questions must be addressed if Egypt is to get past the pain inflicted upon it from three decades of authoritarian rule at the hands of President Hosni Mubarak. Flyvbjerg addressed the barriers to democracy in a separate article in which he wrote:

> Clearly, if presently we are to build anything - and something as important as democracy - on the concept of civil society, we need to deal with the problems of exclusion, difference, diversity and the politics of identity. (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 211)

Egypt's Various Faiths

The Coptic community in Egypt, also known as Copts, is one steeped in ancient tradition. A majority of Copts are Christian, most of them belonging to the Coptic Orthodox faith. The Coptic Orthodox Church has its own patriarch, Pope Shenouda III, who resides mostly in Egypt and takes annual trips around the world to meet with the large Coptic diaspora in nations such as the United States, England, Australia, Germany, France, Canada and numerous other countries in South America and Asia. There are also Coptic Catholic and Coptic Protestant communities in Egypt as well. Copts can typically trace their ancestry back to the ancient civilizations of Egypt, before the Arab invasions, leading many members of the Coptic community to boast that they are indeed the indigenous people of Egypt, having held prominent positions in civil society since the establishment of the early church until well into the reign of the Fatimid Period (Shenoda, 2007). Copts have always placed a high emphasis on education as there is evidence that the earliest members of the church of Alexandria were teachers and their students (Wilson, 2003).

Denominations do not only exist among Egypt's Christian communities. The Islamic community is also divided into those who identify as Sunnis and those who identify as Shiites. Egypt is made up mostly of Sunni Muslims but also is home to a small Shia population. As we have recently witnessed in Iraq, there are a number of disagreements between the two lines of Islam and tensions can run rather high at times. The following passage sheds light on the various points of view:

> Although individuals and groups can reach their own conclusions, it may be difficult to reach consensus on such issues. This only reminds us that there is not a single, monolithic version of Islam, and it is not appropriate to condemn or applaud Islam based only on the actions of one group that identifies itself as Muslim. (Ginsburg & Megahed, 2002, p. 293)

This shows that in Egypt, not only is there disagreement between Muslims and Christians over the issue of religious education in public schools but also within the Muslim community and within the Christian community. This intrafaith nature of the debate is a clear difference between the argument for religious education in the West and in Egypt. One researcher described the divide within the Egyptian community as, "not characterized by polar differences between believer and nonbeliever, as is the case in the West, but rather between believer and believer" (Cook, 1999, p. 351). In Egypt, the argument is also just as fierce within the faith-based communities over

how much religious education should be provided to students. Currently, Egyptian students who attend government run schools receive two to three hours of religious instruction per week (Hilgendor, 2003). Ultra-conservative Muslims are calling for more religious instruction at all levels, including higher education, whereas moderate members of the community believe that the amount of time spent on religion in public schools is adequate (Cook, 2000; 2001).

One issue that is rarely discussed in Egypt is the atmosphere that exists within its public schools. This atmosphere often limits the amount of critical thinking that is allowed to occur both during school hours and as a result, outside of school. Coptic students do not thrive academically in this atmosphere and neither do Muslim students. For Coptic students there is the added effect of cultural dissonance that occurs due to the fact that Coptic Christians are taught early on that all forms of knowledge should be questioned. Coptic students yearn for pedagogical methods that would mirror critical pedagogy in that there is the feeling that they live in an oppressive society which does not allow students to question the status quo. Even when looking back at the earliest Coptic societies, "fourth-century Alexandria was a place where even the most uneducated laborer had an opinion about esoteric questions such as whether Jesus was God or was subordinate to God, the subject of the Arian controversy" (Wilson, 2003, p. 224). Arianism shook the Coptic community to its core yet Coptic leaders never resorted to violence, intimidation or oppression in order to weed it out. Led by St. Athanasius, the Coptic Church simply provided thoughtful argument that dispelled the teachings of Arius.

The early church read passages from saints that helped instill these concepts of peace and tolerance within the Coptic community. It is common to hear a sermon in the Coptic Church wherein the priest is quoting St. John Chrysostom saying, "If thou seest a poor man, take pity on him! If thou seest an enemy, be reconciled to him! If thou seest a friend gaining honour, envy him not!" (Schaff, 1886, p. 359). Another well-known quote within the community is from St. Basil, which urges Christians to always remain calm because "anger is the intoxication of the soul" (Schaff & Wace, 1885, p. lxi). These quotes are easily accessible to members of the Coptic faith via numerous volumes written in Arabic and in widely read English translations. In addition to works by the Early Church Fathers, Copts also read texts quoting spiritual sayings of the Desert Fathers, one of which was translated into English by Sister Benedicta Ward (1987) in a book simply entitled *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. This is the history that Coptic students know. Due in part to this history, Coptic students are shocked when discourse is removed from the learning environment. For if discourse is allowed within their own church, why is it then not allowed in school? The answer to this question is quite simple. According to Cook (1999), al-haqiqa al-mutliqa, or absolute truth, is to blame. He goes on to cite a report by the Egyptian Ministry of Education, which states:

> The perception of absolute truth (*al-haqiqa al-mutliqa*) becomes deeply rooted in the minds of the students, who eventually come to believe there is only one possible solution or answer to any problem, and that in every situation there is only one answer or truth, in spite of the fact that there might be several correct answers. We have suffered a lot from the idea of absolute truth. It has for many years confined our thinking and has resulted in paving the way for

extremism (*a-tataraf*), bigotry and addiction. (Arab Republic of Egypt, 1996, pp. 52–53)

A majority of Coptic culture has been lost due to the crushing effects of this oppression, which not only targets one's ethnicity but also one's indigenous culture and religious affiliation. When speaking of the Coptic people, it is important to keep in mind that all three are typically intertwined. Against the wishes of the Egyptian government, the Coptic community self identifies as the indigenous people of Egypt. Peter Canby (1994) writes in his book, *The Heart of the Sky*, about how difficult it can be for an indigenous population to pass on its culture from one generation to the next. For the Coptic people, this has proven increasingly difficult with each passing generation. The first aspect of Coptic identity to disappear was the use of the Coptic language, which went from being widely used in Egypt to what is today a dead language that is only used in church services (Cochran, 2008). Once the language was eradicated and officially replaced with Arabic, it was easy to dismantle all other aspects of Coptic society and force individuals of Coptic descent to either conform to Arab norms or blend into society by adopting some form of cultural hybridity. In his seminal book, John Watson observes the challenges faced by the Copts, utilizing the words of Kenneth Cragg in saying that Christianity in the Middle East is, "bound over to a language that is bound over to Islam" (Watson, 2000, p. 10). Unfortunately, cultural hybridity in any society takes on more of the culture of the dominant group, which is why it was detested in America by leaders such as Malcolm X when it was offered to the black community (West, 1993). Oftentimes, cultural hybridity relies on the minority groups to assimilate, thereby taking on the characteristics of the dominant groups, which in and of itself is detestable. The mere hypothesis that one group is naturally superior to all others and thus has permission from on high to subjugate anyone and everyone who elects to be different in one way or another is completely unacceptable (McLaren, 1997).

Habib Guirgis and the Assault on Structural Violence

In the early twentieth century, Habib Guirgis led a push to provide Christian education in public schools in an effort to remedy the issues described above. Habib was a professor of theology and later a principal at the Clerical College of the Coptic Orthodox Church (Saad, 1998). Egypt's schools at the time were not secular in that they were already providing an education deeply rooted in Islam. Before the reforms pushed by Habib Guirgis, the only religion taught in Egypt's public schools was Islam. Copts believed that not having a course wherein students, many of whom viewed themselves as the indigenous people of the land, could learn about their history, culture and religion, constituted an injustice to individuals of Coptic descent. Egypt adopted the changes and provided courses on Christianity for Coptic students to enrol. It is worth noting though that these changes were made during the times of Egypt's monarchy, before the revolution of Nasser. Since Egypt became a Republic, no progress has been made to provide equitable educational opportunities for the Coptic community. Until the People's Revolt of 2011, the criticism of government policy was extremely dangerous in Egypt in part due to the emergency laws that were in place, effectively barring descent. While Egypt is currently in a state of transition, the hope amongst the Egyptian people is that the government becomes a true democracy. One basic tenet of democracy is that the government should always aim to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority (West, 1993).

Structural violence is a term we see in the literature describing events that occur both in Western as well as Eastern societies. Structural violence knows no boundaries, often choosing its victims based on race, gender, class, and religion. Ginsburg and Megahed (2002) define structural violence in the following way:

> At a macrolevel, structural violence could involve governmental or other institutional policies and practices that create or perpetuate hunger, illness, illiteracy, or environmental degradation or otherwise cause premature death and/or diminish the quality of people's life.
> (Ginsburg & Megahed, 2002, p. 291)

By providing religious education to one group of students without accommodating students of other faiths, the Egyptian government was, and still is, guilty of structural violence against students of Coptic descent.

Once emancipated from the shackles of Egypt's structural violence against its citizens, Copts are able to reach their potential and make significant contributions to the global community. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the grandson of slain Egyptian Prime Minister Boutros Ghali, was able to use his educational opportunities outside of Egypt to rise above the fray and become the first Egyptian Secretary General of the United Nations. In the United States, a high-ranking official in the Bush Administration, Dina Powell, was born in Egypt to Coptic parents and raised in Texas. Another Copt who benefited from opportunities provided outside of Egypt is Dr. Magdy Yacoub, a world-renowned cardiothoracic surgeon, practicing in London, England. Currently, the Coptic Diaspora is finding success around the world, all the while the Coptic community within Egypt is facing the type of familiar discrimination that is often practiced against indigenous populations. As a result of the Coptic community's cultural tendency to suffer in silence, these stories are rarely heard. Members of the Coptic Diaspora have taken it upon themselves to make sure that the stories of their brothers and sisters back home are heard but thus far, their pleas have fallen on mostly deaf ears (Rowe, 2001).

Separate but Equal or a Government Sponsored Agenda?

It is well documented that public education in Egypt has been on the decline since the early 1980s, coinciding with President Hosni Mubarak's ascent and that many in Egypt have taken to the streets in protest (Hedges, 1993; Friedman, 2004). Mubarak became president of Egypt after the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981 after having been his Vice President. This assassination was so brutal in nature that many refer to the event as more of a public execution. A proper investigation was never conducted dealing with the events surrounding Sadat's murder and as a result Mubarak's presidency had always been viewed with a certain degree of skepticism among the Egyptian people. Thomas Hobbes once wrote that society is often artificially held together by, "a combination of rational self-interest, violence, intimidation and deceit" (Campbell, 1981, p. 71). Dr. Martin Luther King once wrote during the era of separate but equal that resulted from the Plessy doctrine, that society focused on the separate with little intention of enforcing the equal (Baldwin, 2002). The issues facing African Americans during this period of American history went beyond the segregation they faced in the public school system. In the same way it

would be naïve to posit that the separation of students based on religious background is Egypt's only major issue plaguing both public education and overall social harmony. Under Mubarak, Egypt often violated the basic tenets of humanity when dealing with its own citizens. Ironically, Egypt was practicing cultural imperialism within its own borders at the same time Edward Said (1994) was skewering the West for employing those very same practices towards the entire Middle East.

As history has shown us, a suffocating political climate will invariably affect education in the process. During the 1930s and 40s, the rise of the Nazi Party almost single handedly crippled the prestigious German education system, specifically its universities. The German model for higher education influenced education systems around the world, including the American colleges, which shortly after the founding of Johns Hopkins University, adopted many aspects of the German university (Thelin, 2004). As a result of the deterioration of Egypt's political and educational climate, we have seen Egypt's public schools become even more Islamic in character along with class sizes approaching 80 students (Neill, 2006). In a speech dated September 1st, 2004 Mubarak states:

> The educational process is basically a social one. This requires promotion of private and non-profit sectors and the civil society's role in providing the infrastructure needed for education and its management within the framework that would realize national objectives and is subject to the uniform criteria of education in Egypt (Mubarak, 2004).

This address never clearly states which national objectives Mubarak is referring to nor does it discuss which private and non-profit sectors will be promoted.

It was in the Mubarak administration's best interest to separate Muslim students from those of other faiths as much as possible. This does not differ fundamentally from the strategy employed by members of America's political conservatives during the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections wherein the term Rovian Politics was coined. Driving a wedge through the population often leads to a divide and conquer mentality and in a society as oppressed as the one in Egypt happens to be, dividing the lower classes becomes essential. Since Egypt's economy is set up in a way that leaves little room for a strong middle class, the country is left with a small but functioning upper class and a frighteningly large lower class. By creating an atmosphere wherein non-Muslim students are seen as different, it becomes easier to blame Egypt's economic hardships on the success of a handful of Coptic Orthodox Christians who have defied the odds and created successful business ventures. Merely prodding the Muslim community to tolerate Christians does very little to develop a mutual respect between the two communities (DeLue, 1997). It is often easier to discuss emotional issues within a foreign or historical framework rather than deal with relevant contemporary problems which may lead to an increase in critical thinking among students that is in direct opposition to the concept of nationalism being promoted by the Egyptian government (Ginsburg & Megahed, 2002).

Envisioning a Brighter Future

A society which values its future will inevitably look to education in order to secure its position in the global economy. India, a nation not too far from Egypt

geographically, and with a shared history of foreign occupation by the British, long ago invested its resources into education and has reaped the spoils over the past decade with the creation of the Internet and the spread of globalization. India benefited because its leaders had positioned it to be a leader in the global community through the proper academic preparation of its citizenry. Apparently, albeit a few decades too late, these very lessons had begun to dawn on Egypt's previous leaders. In the same speech that was given on September 1st, 2004, President Mubarak stressed the importance of forward planning by stating the following, listing the necessities for the progress of the Egyptian education system:

> This includes the establishment of national and private universities, model cooperative schools and other educational establishments that would promote education integration in the ongoing development and modernization movement in the society. This, doubtlessly, necessitates a shrewd futuristic vision of the way of effective social participation with the government to achieve the needed expansion to make available the educational institutions needed for facing the growing population increase, that would account for 94 million by the year 2017, unless current increase rates drop, and to guarantee quality and equality in the educational process despite the growing pressure resulting from this increase. (Mubarak, 2004)

In this portion of his speech, Mubarak stressed the need for more physical buildings due to the booming population. According to the numbers he was quoting, Egypt will experience a growth of 25-30 percent between the years 2004 and 2017. Mubarak could have easily used this platform to push for the development of brand new, state of the art schools, which would utilize a cutting edge curriculum to go along that happens to be completely secular. Parents would then have a simple choice to make, either keep their children in one of the existing schools with the outdated curriculum or send them to one of the new schools and by doing so, one's acceptance of the new curriculum is implied. According to Rahman and Bukhari (2006), the building of new schools could offer a viable alternative to religiously influenced madrasas.

Another option for Egypt's education system could be to simply base the new curriculum on Ancient Egyptian principles. The Ma'at are basic principles that were used during the time of the Pharaohs and are the basis of any compassionate society (Hilliard, 1997). The Ma'at principles are, "truth, justice, harmony, balance, order, reciprocity, and righteousness" (Delpit & White-Bradley, 2003, p. 285). By segregating students based on religious background, the Egyptian government violated most, if not all, of the Ma'at principles. The new schools could also inject elements of critical theory into the curriculum, which would help promote truth and justice. Once the curriculum is put into practice, critical pedagogy would help alleviate the tension that invariably exists between the oppressed and the oppressors and would allow the element of schooling to be separated from the education process (Freire, 1970). The Egyptian government claimed that its schools function in a free, democratic society but according to Cook (1999, p. 352), "The question of freedom arises when there is a contrived religious agenda, tending toward constraining people's belief along a narrowly conceived or doctrinaire line." The Egyptian government, specifically the Mubarak administration had resisted all types of transparency and open dialogue for the past 30 years. This behaviour even drew the ire of the Bush administration in America, an administration often criticized for its own issues with regards to transparency (Shapiro, 2007).

Practical Implications

Assuming that the Egyptian public can be convinced that it is in their best interest to promote equality within their public schools, it is worth spending some time examining the implications that may arise from such a movement. The Egyptian government, through educational reform, stands to improve its image both domestically and among the international community. The anything goes mentality that permeates the Egyptian education system recently showed up in a study measuring Machiavellian tendencies in college students. This study showed that female students in Egypt showed a much higher tendency to do what it takes to succeed compared to their male counterparts than in Western countries (Mostafa, 2007). The researchers concluded that this discrepancy is occurring in Egypt due to the fact that women are often made to feel that they are not as qualified as men and as a result go to great lengths to prove they are just as capable. A similar attitude can be seen in women who were severely condescended and discriminated against in the workplace in Chicago during the late 1800s and early 1900s (Fine, 1990). If this discrepancy exists in Egypt between Islamic male and female students, further research is needed in order to ascertain what may be happening to the psyche of non-Muslim students who must face periods of segregation and are subject to discriminatory practices at the hands of fundamentalist teachers on a regular basis.

By stressing the importance of each and every student regardless of religious affiliation and ethnicity, Egypt will draw nearer to the international community and become a leader in the Arab world. The education system would also be able to get past the practice of positioning minority students through systemic segregation. Once the divisive indoctrination is greatly reduced, progress can be effectively spurred not only in Egypt, but the model could also be used across the entire Middle East. Prior to the political upheaval of 2011, the Egyptian government had been able to convince its Muslim population that any demands for fairness in regard to Christian students that were brought up were in reality an attack on Islamic principals themselves by the West (Rowe, 2001). This not only allowed the Egyptian government to cement the status quo, but also forced Egypt's working poor to turn a blind eye to rampant government corruption. It is this segment of the population that stands to gain the most from a truly democratic Egypt. A recent research study conducted in Egypt asked that the Egyptian government adopt the following three principles, written from the standpoint of its students and reading similar to an abbreviated Students' Bill of Rights:

1. We have a right to education to the highest degree.
2. We have a right to freedom of expression.
3. We have a right to avoid physical punishment.

(Abdeen, 2008, p. 48)

These three principles, along with the ancient Egyptian principles of Ma'at, once properly enforced, would be a shift in the right direction for the Egyptian education system. Egypt's minority populations, which have sought educational opportunities abroad, could once again find success within their homeland. The Ma'at principles also allowed the Egyptian people to find educational opportunities in nature by using the Nile River and its delta as their teacher. Unfortunately, the policies of the Egyptian government have left the Nile far too polluted for direct human contact. To

borrow the words of esteemed environmentalist, Rachel Carson (1962), a silent spring awaits Egypt on the educational front as well as on an environmental level if the nation's policies do not shift. This silent spring is prohibiting the blooming of innovative thought within Egypt and is creating a dearth of intellectuals, particularly within the social sciences.

The Egyptian Ministry of Education finds itself in a peculiar situation in that the nation's elite prefer to instill a great sense of pride in the country's young students without an explanation as to the sad state of affairs currently facing the Egyptian people. After describing the hyperbolic boasts that the Egyptian Social Studies textbooks make regarding the superiority of Middle Eastern culture and intelligence, an article examining the portrayal of Christianity in Egyptian textbooks explains the situation as such:

> It then becomes quite difficult to explain how the West could develop its socio-economic and political dominance, and why it is able to maintain this power up to the present. In the Social Studies textbooks of preparatory schools and the History and Geography textbooks of secondary schools, students are taught that the Europeans took possession of the superior culture of the Orient through the Crusades and the highly developed Islamic cultures in Spain and in Sicily. These gave Europe its "Renaissance". Later, Europe got direct access to India and the Far East, bypassing the Middle East and taking over its most important resources and revenues. The decline of the culture of the Orient was the consequence, and the development was cemented in the time of the colonialism. The Middle East was divided in different colonies and regions of hegemony and "protectorates". The aim of the division, the colonies and protectorates was to crush the power of the Middle East, to exploit the countries, and to force their economy and policy into total dependence.

<div align="right">(Reiss, 2005, p. 124-125)</div>

The above passage exemplifies the manner by which the Egyptian government, through the Ministry of Education, absolves itself from the numerous sins it has committed against its people. Everything has been blamed on the West, specifically the Christian West, thereby creating a xenophobic atmosphere wherein outsiders are guilty of plunder, thereby rendering Egypt's anemic leadership helpless in the face of such a powerful imperialist force. I am in no way exonerating the West and the painful wounds that were inflicted on Egypt as a result of centuries of imperialism (Said, 1994). Reiss (2005) suggests that a good start to moving the country forward would be to allow a committee of scholars from across the various faiths in Egypt to play a role in shaping the educational curriculum. This is often the way curriculum is shaped in the western educational systems when it comes to incorporating the various faiths and ethnic backgrounds into Social Science courses at all levels.

Conclusion

After decades of blaming both the West and Egypt's minority populations for the failures of the Mubarak Administration, the Egyptian government has created an entirely new problem for itself. After Israel, Egypt is the second largest recipient of American foreign aid, taking in over a billion dollars annually, while doing very little to show any measures of accountability. The Mubarak Administration positioned itself in the unenviable position of blaming the West in an effort to stir up nationalism

while at the same time battling political groups accusing the administration of being a puppet government. If the Egyptian government had spent more time using the money provided by Western governments to build new schools that promoted equity and equality for all students instead of squandering the foreign aid on ventures that are difficult to track, the Egyptian people would have had less reason to detest both Mubarak and the American government. The constant scapegoating of Christians in general has already muddied the democratic waters in Egypt by allowing more extremist groups to rise in influence among Egypt's working class. While it is important to be aware of the political climate in Egypt, members of both the Coptic community and Egyptian society at large should be careful not to allow the hateful rhetoric to consume them. Cornel West touched upon this topic when speaking of oppression:

> That which fundamentally motivates one still dictates the terms of what one thinks and does…but it is crippling for a despised people struggling for freedom, in that one's eyes should be on the prize, not on the perpetuator of one's oppression.

> (West, 1993, p. 99-100)

Of course Dr. West was referring to the struggles faced by African Americans in the United States but I would venture to say that it safely applies to oppressed minority groups throughout the world. It is worthwhile to point out the injustice that occurs at the hands of the oppressor but a great deal of time should first be spent gaining a critical perspective of the society one encompasses.

A nation that stifles its education system for the political gain of a few people at the top brings upon its people great calamities. At the very least, public education should teach students about religion rather than indoctrinate them with the religion itself (Cook, 1999). The Coptic people of Egypt have been colonized time and again throughout history. Although they may suffer in silence, they, as many other indigenous populations have, found ways to get along with their oppressors while clinging to a certain amount of dignity in the process. The Coptic Orthodox Church has repeatedly been criticized by activists for not doing enough to give voice to the plight of its members (Tadros, 2009). The following passage sheds light on this process:

> Because the colonized, as is often the case with oppressed people, pays extremely close attention to the smallest details of the behaviour of the dominant society, because he is prepared to engage all of his sensitivity in an anodyne exchange, he infallibly picks up these tiny details which incline him towards either complete trust or hostility. The words or gestures which seem to us most conventional – greeting, shaking hands, smile – are here signs of recognition: breaking with reciprocal avoidance and the inequality of the customary relationships, they have something miraculous about them.

> (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 16)

In Egyptian public schools, children learn early on that they are different, then subsequently positioned, for a litany of reasons ranging from gender to class and finally to religious/ethnic background. A just society should never subject its young to such segregation. A monumental court case followed by the Civil Rights Movement helped end this practice in America. Sadly, it is difficult for grass roots movements to gain momentum in de facto dictatorships such as the one that existed in Egypt wherein racism, specifically anti-Semitism, is not only accepted within small social circles but also within the government controlled media (U.S. State Dept., 2007). These media outlets are perfectly willing to pause numerous times per day for the traditional call to prayer, but are vigilantly opposed to discussing any topic that relates to social justice for either Muslims of low socioeconomic status or oppressed Coptic Christians. Education, used in the proper way, with a curriculum based on fairness and social justice, has proven to help build communities and encourage tolerance (Carrol, 2008).

The Coptic community will continue to suffer in silence while awaiting their own civil rights movement and a leader similar in vision and spirit to that of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The chances of this occurring independent of the support of moderate members of the Islamic community are nearly nonexistent. Under Mubarak, the climate in Egypt with regards to social unrest was similar to the climate in the United States for African Americans during the dark era of openly supported lynchings in the South. To protest in the streets against the injustices being perpetrated by both fundamentalists in society and the members of government who protect them would have been a death sentence for progressive groups in Egypt prior to the mass uprising that drove the president out of office. Even post-Mubarak Egypt has proven to be a dangerous environment for those who exhibit public discontent, as evidenced by the Maspero Massacre, wherein protesters were both gunned down and run over by Egyptian military vehicles (Kirkpatrick, 2011). Just as it took the understanding of middle class White America that their destiny was tied to African Americans receiving fair treatment (Baldwin, 2002), justice for non-Muslims in Egypt's public schools and public squares alike will require an understanding by Egypt's working class Muslim population that a just and humane society must begin by taking care of all its citizens. Consistently revisiting the guiding questions posed by the phronetic research model, which shaped the previous sections of this analysis, would allow the Egyptian sociological paradigm to shift in the right direction. Plato's idea of a "just society" was one in which the search for truth took precedence over anything else (DeLue, 1997). Unfortunately for Egypt's public schools, the truth currently takes a back seat to politics and religion.

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The Relationship Between the Individual Values and Critical Thinking Skills of Prospective Social Sciences Teachers

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Abstract
The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between the individual values and critical thinking skills of prospective social sciences teachers. The sample of the research is composed of a total of 298 prospective teachers, who are first-year, second-year, third-year and fourth-year students. These prospective teachers were randomly selected using the stratified sampling method which is one of the random sampling methods via the maximum variation sampling method in purposive sampling. The data of the study have been obtained using a Personal Values Scale and Critical Thinking Scale. In view of the research findings, a positive significant result has been obtained among the scores for the critical thinking and personal values factor perceived by the prospective teachers. Moreover, it has been observed that personal values factors collectively predict 42% of the critical thinking score.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Personal Values, Prospective Teacher

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Introduction

In many fields of social sciences, "value" and "measuring the values" has long been the subject of research. That is because "value" is an important concept in understanding human behaviors (Asan et al., 2008). Values are important factors in guiding and shaping the behaviors of people throughout their lives (Ünal, Deniz & Polat, 2008; Yel & Aladağ, 2009). It is necessary to be aware of the value concept and value perceptions of people in order to discover and understand people (Altunay & Yalçınkaya, 2011). There are values that lay behind an individual's decisions, evaluations, choices, relationships with people, in sum, his/her behaviors (Yılmaz, 2007).

Along with their values, the thinking skills of individuals are also influential in guiding their behaviors. Individuals utilize their mental processes, reason and come to a conclusion when they are required to make a decision in the light of any new circumstances they come across. Critical thinking is an approach that can be employed from the range of thinking processes that include the use of decision making and problem solving skills (Genç, 2008; Kökdemir, 2003; Özden, 2008).

When the studies of critical thinking are examined (Demirkaya, 2008; Elias & Kress, 1994; Özdemir, 2005; Seferoğlu & Akbıyık, 2006; Tok, & Sevinç, 2010), it is seen that the relationship between a great number of different variables have been examined. However, it cannot be said that the research, in which the relationship between critical thinking and personal values has been studied, is adequate.

In view of this, the present research aims to examine the relationship between the personal values and critical thinking skills of prospective social studies teachers, and the degree to which personal values predict the critical thinking of prospective teachers.

Personal Values

"Values" are the preferences of individuals which people consider significant in themselves and for others, and the values shape a schema for action. Values play an indispensable part in the lives of individuals (Dökmen, 2000). Every aspect of an individual's daily life is affected by values (Pakizeh, Jochen & Maio, 2007). Schwartz (1994) defines values as the ideas that set human beings in motion and as the behavioral patterns that lead and guide their actions (Schwartz, 1994). Values serve as a basic principle for evaluating behaviors, people and events (Collins et al., 2007). To sum up, value is defined as the tendency to prefer a certain course of action based on one set of ideas above another (Genç & Eryaman, 2007).

Aspin (2007) regards values as the ideas, conventions, principles, rules, objects, products, activities, practices, procedures or judgments that people accept, agree to, treasure, cherish, prefer, incline towards, see as important and indeed act upon. Values are important tools in that they are used as tools to sanction behaviors and in the sustaining of such behaviors. That is because values serve as the controller of behaviors, that is, the attitudes and thinking patterns of individuals (Özkan, 2011).

Values have such a great effect on the lives of individuals that they do not doubt their values unless they meet with an objection or a question. Indeed, individuals are not even aware of their values most of the time. However, values are the determinants of an individual's behaviors, choices, evaluations, relationships and many other forms of social actions (Yılmaz, 2008). Imparting individuals with the competencies related to knowledge, skills and values helps to maintain an effective social participation (Öztürk, 2009a).

Since the values of individuals are not innate, they are only developed over the course of life (Gömleksiz & Cüro, 2011). A formal part of elementary education is the imparting and development of non-negative personal and social values (Öztürk, 2009b). "Elementary" is an important level of formal education in which minimum and common basic knowledge and skills are taught, which are required of all citizens in society (Sahin, 2010). The knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, which are acquired during the education process, diversify the individual's character. When given properly and effectively, value education brings significant contributions to an individual's development (Yel & Aladağ, 2009).

Values, which guide human behaviors and which are formed as a result of learning, just like other feelings, attitudes and manners, are significant in terms of teaching and education since there can be no education stripped of values, i.e. one that does not incorporate values. As an individual in society, the teacher brings with them to the school his/her values, attitudes, manners, emotional sides, life philosophy and behaviors. While the school is guiding students through the process of acquiring the behaviors that are defined by educational objectives, the teacher is the one who will affect the individual's behaviors and who will be held up as an example in this process (Güney, 2010). It can be stated that the teacher is the most important factor in the school life of a student. The teacher not only teaches the content for which he/she is responsible in the course, but also affects the mental, emotional and social side of the students (Yalmancı, 2009).

Critical Thinking

The requirements of the modern world have necessitated that today's individuals should possess thinking skills. Instead of information exchange, learning how to think has gained in importance in education. Critical thinking is the most important indicator of high level thinking (Akbıyık & Seferoğlu, 2006; Doğanay, 2009; Genç, 2008).

Today, it is a commonly accepted view among all countries of the world that a society in which critical thinking does not prevail, cannot be a developed society (Karabağ & İnal, 2009). Being a developed society in the twenty first century, in which information flows rapidly, is possible through the presence of individuals who can use the information in a critical manner via a questioning technique while making a decision on any matter without simply accepting the information at face value (Şenşekerci & Bilgin, 2008).

Critical thinking is an important attribute that should be taken into account in order to be successful in all areas of life (Güven & Kürüm, 2006). Critical thinking basically depends on the skill and inclination to effectively acquire, evaluate and

utilize information (Cantürk-Günhan & Başer, 2009). Critical thinking skill, which refers to the skill of examining something, commenting and making decisions via a questioning approach, is thinking in which the person guides, disciplines and verifies himself/herself (Acun, Demir & Göz, 2010; Paul & Elder, 2007).

Critical thinking should be regarded as obligatory educational goal. That is because critical thinking is an ethical right that should be possessed by every individual (Şahinel, 2007). Having critical thinking skills is regarded as both the result and an important indicator, of high quality education (Korkmaz & Yeşil, 2009). All societies aim to raise citizens who can create new values for both their countries and the entire world by questioning current social values, and by thinking critically and creatively though education (Gömleksiz & Cüro, 2011). Individuals must definitely acquire critical thinking skills during their education in order to understand information clearly, correctly and wholly and to put their knowledge into practice by blending new information with their prior knowledge fully and meaningfully. Teachers should be fully cognizant of this subject and must prepare the learning environment accordingly; this is of considerable importance for students to be able to acquire this skill (Çalışkan, 2009).

A good critical teacher must embrace critical thinking in his/her life, too (Özden, 2008). Although encouraging critical thinking and questioning is regarded as one of the important duties that requires a great effort from the teacher, great successes are achieved in the classes where there are teachers who value different opinions and encourage their students to think independently (Demirkaya, 2008).

Method

Research Design

A relational scanning model has been used in this research which aims to determine the relationship between the individual values and critical thinking skills of prospective social sciences teachers. The relational scanning model is a research model that aims to determine the existence and degree of mutual change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2003).

Universe and Sample

The universe of the research is composed of a total of 650 prospective teachers who were studying in the Department of Social Studies Teaching at Atatürk University, Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education, Department of Elementary Education in the 2009-2010 academic year. Stratified sampling method, which is among random sampling methods, has been used in order to determine the sample of the research. A total of 298 prospective teachers, who were first-year, second-year, third-year and fourth-year students, were randomly selected from the related department, and they constituted the sample group of the research. Information on the demographic features of the sample group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage Distributions Regarding the Demographic Information on the Sample Group

Options		1	2	3	4	Total
Gender		Male	Female	-	-	
	n	116	182			298
	%	38.9	61.1			100
Number of Siblings		1-3	4-6	7-9	-	-
	n	19	208	71		298
	%	6.4	69.8	23.8		100
Academic Year		First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	-
	n	75	71	77	75	298
	%	25.2	23.8	25.2	25.2	100

Data Collection Tools

Personal Values Scale: The PVI (Personal Values Inventory) scale developed by Roy (2003) has been reviewed via an exploratory factor analysis method by Asan, Ekşi, Doğan, and Ekşi (2008). The scale is composed of 47 items which have 5-level Likert type options (1. It does not characterize me at all, 2. It rarely characterizes me, 3. It characterizes me at times, 4. It usually characterizes me, 5. It always characterizes me) and five sub-dimensions (Discipline and Responsibility, Trust and Forgiveness, Honesty and Sharing, Respect and Candidness Sharing and Respect). Cronbach's alpha value, which has been used in calculating the total reliability value of the scale, is 0.63. Values of the sub-dimensions range from 0.60 to 0.71.

Critical Thinking Scale: The California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) was formed in 1990 via the Delphi project organized by the American Philosophical Association. The necessary processes were undertaken by Kökdemir (2003) in order to adapt the scale into Turkish. The Turkish form of the scale is composed of a total of 51 items and 6 sub-dimensions (Analyticity, Open-Mindedness, Inquisitiveness, Self-Confidence, Truth-Seeking, Systematicity). The scale has been designed as a Likert type (1. I completely disagree, 2. I disagree, 3. I partially disagree, 4. I partially agree, 5. I agree, 6. I completely agree). Cronbach's alpha value, which has been used in calculating the total reliability value of the scale, is 0.88. The values of the sub-dimensions range from 0.61 to 0.78 (Kökdemir, 2003). Both scales' number of items, average scores, standard deviations and reliability coefficients are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Reliability Coefficients, Averages and Standard Deviations of Personal Values and Critical Thinking Scales

	Number of Items	Alpha	$\overline{X}$	SD	n
Sharing and Respect	4	.84	17.24	2.912	298
Respect and Candidness	6	.61	19.86	2.869	298
Honesty and Sharing	9	.68	36.54	4.792	298
Trust and Forgiveness	12	.63	34.83	6.419	298
Discipline and Responsibility	16	.83	65.42	7.964	298
Analyticity	10	.71	39.96	5.497	298
Open-Mindedness	12	.65	42.79	5.088	298
Inquisitiveness	9	.70	33.47	5.342	298
Self-Confidence	7	.76	23.69	4.495	298
Truth-Seeking	7	.58	21.96	4.465	298
Systematicity	6	.62	21.40	4.130	298
Critical Thinking (Total)	51	.84	183.32	19.16	298

Process

Frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis and Multilinear Regression Analysis techniques have been utilized in analyzing the data obtained in the research.

Findings

Correlation Findings Regarding the Relationship among Prospective Teachers' Critical Thinking and Personal Values Scores

The results of the correlation analysis, which has been conducted to evaluate the relationship between prospective teachers' critical thinking and personal values, are given in Table 3.

When the table has been examined, it has been detected that there is a positive significant relationship among prospective teachers' scores for personal value sub-factors, namely sharing and respect and analyticity [r= .40], open-mindedness [r= .32], inquisitiveness [r= .24], self-confidence [r= .23], truth seeking [r= .20] and systematicity [r= .25]. It has been detected that there is a positive significant relationship among prospective teachers' respect and candidness factor their scores for and analyticity [r= .25], open-mindedness [r= .13], inquisitiveness [r= .24], self-confidence [r= .28] and systematicity [r= .21]. It has been detected that there is a positive significant relationship among prospective teachers' honesty and sharing factor and their scores for analyticity [r= .41], open-mindedness [r= .27], inquisitiveness [r= .25], self-confidence [r= .36], truth seeking [r= .14] and systematicity [r= .29]. It has been detected that there is a negative significant relationship between only the trust and forgiveness factor and systematicity [r= -.15]. It has been detected that there is a positive significant relationship among prospective teachers' discipline and responsibility factor and their scores for analyticity [r= .55], open-mindedness [r= .25], inquisitiveness [r= .43], self-confidence [r= .52], truth seeking [r= .22] and systematicity [r= .46].

Table 3
Correlation Findings Regarding Personal Values and Critical Thinking Factors

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sharing and Respect	-										
Respect and Candidness	.40*	-									
Honesty and Sharing	.54*	.47*	-								
Trust and Forgiveness	-.08	-.06	-.04	-							
Discipline and Responsibility	.40*	.31*	.49*	-.10	-						
Analyticity	.40*	.25*	.41*	-.06	.55*	-					
Open-Mindedness	.32*	.13*	.27*	-.02	.25*	.38*	-				
Inquisitiveness	.24*	.24*	.25*	-.07	.43*	.48*	.21*	-			
Self-Confidence	.23*	.28*	.36*	-.03	.52*	.38*	.12*	.52*	-		
Truth-Seeking	.20*	.08	.14*	-.09	.22*	.18*	.40*	.08	.21*	-	
Systematicity	.25*	.21*	.29*	-.15*	.46*	.41*	.33*	.30*	.39*	.36*	-

η=298, *p<.01

Multilinear Regression Analysis Findings among Prospective Teachers' Personal Values and Critical Thinking Scores

The results of the multilinear regression analysis, which has been conducted to evaluate the power of prospective teachers' personal values factor scores to predict their critical thinking scores, are given in Table 4. A VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) test has been conducted in order to see whether or not there is a multilinear dependence among explanatory variables, and it has been understood that all dimensions have values that are close to 1. This result indicates that there is no multicollinearity in the regression model (Özdamar, 2009).

When the table has been examined, the power of personal values factors to predict critical thinking level has been found statistically significant [$F_{(5-292)}$=43.068 $p<.01$]. Accordingly, this shows that personal values sub-factors (Discipline and Responsibility, Trust and Forgiveness, Honesty and Sharing, Respect and Candidness, Sharing and Respect) collectively explain 42% [R=.65, R^2=.42] of critical thinking scores. In view of this finding, it has been found that a 58% change in critical thinking scores can be explained by other variables. Furthermore, upon the respective examination of personal values sub-factors, it has been observed that the discipline and responsibility factor is the variable that predicts the critical thinking scores at the highest degree [R=.62, R^2=.38].

Table 4.
Results of the Multilinear Regression Analysis among Critical Thinking and Personal Values Factor Scores

Application Level	*B*	*SH$_B$*	*β*	*t*	*p*
Constant	74.794	9.965		7.506	.000
Sharing and Respect	1.029	.361	.156	2.850	.005
Respect and Candidness	.277	.344	.041	.803	.422
Honesty and Sharing	.348	.236	.087	1.472	.142
Trust and Forgiveness	-.140	.134	-.047	-1.046	.296
Discipline and Responsibility	1.184	.126	.492	9.385	.000

η =298, R=.65, R^2=.42, F=43,068, $p<.01$

Discussion

Based on prospective teachers' perceptions, it has been observed that there is a negative significant relationship between the trust and forgiveness factor and the systematicity factor among the factors of personal values (discipline and responsibility, trust and forgiveness, honesty and sharing, respect and candidness, sharing and respect) and factors of critical thinking (analyticity, open-mindedness, inquisitiveness, self-confidence, truth seeking and systematicity). It has been observed that there is a positive significant relationship among all the other sub-factors.

Although there are many studies conducted on the relationship among different variables related to values (Costaa & Goodwinb, 2006; Collins, Steg, & Koning, 2007; Gömleksiz & Cüro, 2011; Lietz & Matthews, 2010) and critical thinking (Akar, 2007; Korkmaz & Yeşil, 2009; Özdemir, 2005; Serefoğlu & Akbıyık, 2006; Tok & Sevinç, 2010) in the literature, there is no research in which the relationship between the two factors is analyzed.
Human behaviors are the patterns of values, attitudes and beliefs of individuals.

We can foresee the attitudes and behaviors of the individuals to a great extent by getting information about their values (Elkatmış, 2009). Values, which are influential on the decisions of the individuals, are abstract in essence but they can be seen or sensed in the behaviors of the individuals (Karaköse & Altınkurt, 2009). Personal values are influential in the formation of an individual's attitudes and the individual's presenting a certain behavior accordingly, and people present behaviors in line with their values (Ünal, Deniz & Polat, 2008). Values may be looked to when the individual comes across a conflict or a decision making process (Yalmancı 2009). Thus, it is important to know the values held by teachers for an understanding and explanation of teacher behaviors, which may be defined as one of the most important factors for fulfilling the objectives of the education system (Dönmez & Cömert, 2007).

According to the results of the multilinear regression analysis among the sub-dimensions of the personal values and critical thinking scales, it has been found that personal values predict 42% of the change in the critical thinking scores. This finding shows that 58% of critical thinking can be explained by different variables.

Katz defines value as the element that regulates and combines the perception of the individual regarding his/her characteristics and social powers, and he proposes that the values of the individual should be closely examined when they play a role in decision making (Kuzgun, 2000). Every reaction exhibited by someone is based on a value (Yılmaz, 2009). However, values explain only a part of the causes that underlie behavior (Karalar & Kiracı, 2010). The fact that 42% of the change in the critical thinking scores obtained in the present research can be explained by personal values supports the findings in the literature.

More than the cognitive skills or abilities of the individual, it is the individual's willingness to take intellectual risks and to think critically that makes him/her an individual who can think effectively (Serefoğlu & Akbıyık, 2006). The need for people who have acquired critical thinking skills in terms of behaviors of choosing, organizing and using information, rapidly increases (Genç, 2008). That is

because individuals whose critical thinking is of a high standard, are expected to use more of the information that is given to them and to choose more rational decision making methods compared to those individuals whose critical thinking levels are low when making decisions in ambiguous circumstances (Kökdemir, 2003). The solidity of a teacher's system of values is effective in solving problems and balancing roles that conflict with each other. Moreover, this system of values is the product of both the teacher's personal and professional development (Turan & Aktan, 2008).

According to findings obtained in the research, it has been observed that there is a significant relationship among personal values and critical thinking. The teacher has a very significant function in the development of students' critical thinking skills. The most important role of the teacher in developing students' critical thinking skills is to shape the teaching environments and create applications that will support students in thinking creatively (Özdemir, 2005). In this regard, family and educators have important tasks to perform in order to increase the relationship among personal values and critical thinking.

Opportunities must be presented in order to develop and support the prospective teachers' personal values and critical thinking skills throughout the course of their education. Academicians must give their lessons in such a way that they can be taken as role models for prospective teachers in this respect. Teacher training is one of the most important stages of encouraging thinking skills in education. First of all, teachers must acquire thinking skills and apply those skills in real life situations. After teachers have acquired these skills, they can create activities to develop these skills for their students. For that reason, enabling teachers to acquire thinking skills is an important stage in educational studies. It is possible that a prospective teacher, who thinks critically and who is efficient in problem solving, may rather prefer thinking-based environments while forming educational environments (Tok & Sevinç, 2010). It is vital to nurture individuals to analyze what they hear, read and accordingly learn; to study those inputs from a critical perspective; filter those inputs in their minds; and question those inputs (Özkan, 2011).

It is very important for prospective teachers to have adequate knowledge and skills in those subjects in order to raise future students as individuals who will be inclined to think critically (Güven & Kürüm, 2008). That is because students' learning to think critically is related to the fact that teachers are educated in this subject (Demirel, 1999). Therefore, prospective teachers must be given the necessary training on critical thinking and values both before the service and during the service. Prospective teachers, who will work in schools, must not be individuals who only do what they are told; rather, they must be individuals who take responsibility by collectively using their personal values, critical thinking and decision making skills.

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Book Review

A Review of Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future.* **NY: Teachers College Press.**

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The Flat World and Education: A Review

According to the National Association for Multicultural Education (2003), the aims of multicultural education are to resist oppression, respect cultural differences, teach the stories and perspectives from the diverse range of human experiences, and seek equity because their morality demands it. Commitment to the mission of multicultural education rests at the heart of Linda Darling-Hammond's *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine our Future*. Her work is a broad examination of American multicultural education in a global context. Her conclusions tie the moral obligations at the root multicultural education to the decline of American competitiveness. For Darling-Hammond, addressing the inequities in the American education system is more than just the right thing to do, it is an economic imperative. Her exploration, spurred on by Friedman's (2005) assertion that the twenty-first century has witnessed the dawning of unprecedented international economic competition, juxtaposes descriptions of broken and inequitable American educational institutions with case studies of practices from equitable policies from school systems around the United States and in diverse, high-achieving nations. Darling-Hammond asserts that America's destiny rests on its ability to make the same capital and intellectual investments in the education of minority culture groups as it does for white and affluent children.

Exploring Global Contexts: Darling-Hammond on Equitable Education Policy

Linda Darling-Hammond's *The Flat World and Education* is a call to action targeting American education policy makers. Her premise extends Friedman's (2005) contention that the wide disparities in resources and influence that existed among powerful and weak nations during the 20th century are rapidly closing. Darling-Hammond contends that this is especially true for education, where American policy is inherently flawed. The most pronounced faults include inequitable access to resources among various populations of American students, a system of punishment and reward for schools and teachers that bears little relevance to improving instruction, and the absence of a cohesive national policy for preparing quality teachers. These elements conspire to undermine American achievement and create vast achievement gaps among racial, cultural, and socio-economic groups in the United States.

A new audience for the multicultural message.

Darling-Hammond begins by outlining student achievement data comparing American children to students from other high-achieving nations. Her depiction suggests American students are rapidly losing ground, a source of alarm for liberals and conservatives alike. She examines this problem under a microscope by paralleling the stagnation of the American educational system with the success enjoyed by Finland, Singapore and South Korea. According to Darling-Hammond, these three nations invested in their children's' education by building systems that ensure all of their children had equitable access to quality instruction.

After describing how far American students have fallen behind, a point agreed on by both liberals and conservatives, Darling-Hammond clarifies the policy solutions that have been proposed to solve this problem. She explains that most conservative educational policy groups believe the problem can be addressed by deregulating education policy, doubling down on punishments and rewards doled out to schools based on their standardized test performance, and making it easier for talented individuals to enter the teaching profession. Darling-Hammond disagrees with this position. For her, the chief problem is a truculent refusal by American education leadership to commit to addressing the wide disparity in resources invested in poor and minority students versus more affluent white American children. Darling-Hammond believes that this inequitable policy is unsustainable. She argues, "We can ill afford to maintain the structural inequalities in access to knowledge and resources that produce persistent and profound barriers to educational opportunity for large numbers of our citizens" (p. 25). Where many authors of multicultural texts root their arguments in morality and social justice (Banks, 2007; Kozol, 2005; Sleeter, 1996), Darling-Hammond expands this plea to a wider audience, including conservatives, by explaining the destructive effects of inequitable education policy on American economic competitiveness.

The origins of inequity.

Darling-Hammond argues that structural inequities in the American education system cause the wide disparity in achievement among wealthy, poor, black, and white American children. She suggests the persistence of the myths of a "culture of poverty" and "inadequate genes" among poor and minority children (p. 30) are used as excuses by policy makers to defend their refusal to provide resources to poor or minority children. According to Darling-Hammond, white and affluent children are much more likely to receive adequate program funding, access to quality instruction from well-trained teachers, and a curriculum that promotes critical thinking. At the same time, many of America's most vulnerable children languish in crumbling school buildings, receiving stale instruction from dispassionate teachers aimed at allowing them to meet proficiency on uninspired multiple-choice standardized assessments. Darling-Hammond suggests racial re-segregation, as well as a reticence by many school systems to abandon the 20th century factory model of instruction, are also causes of the achievement gap.

Solutions for Solving Educational Inequity

Darling-Hammond argues that increasing America's supply of quality teachers is an important first step in addressing structural inequity in the American education system. She upends over-simplified solutions like merit pay. According to Darling-Hammond, "this approach does not offer a strategy to ensure that teachers will have opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be effective, nor that all schools will have access to entice and hire the best teachers" (p. 195). She suggests that the United States should follow the lead of the world's high achieving by investing in teacher education.

Darling-Hammond's proposed changes include increasing the rigor and selectivity of pre-service university training. She also suggests radical revisions to in-service professional development modeled on the practices of high-achieving nations. These practices include enhancing opportunities for organized collaboration among teachers, increasing planning time, implementing improved systems for in-service teacher development, and affording more opportunities for teachers to explore new pedagogical methods and to conduct research. To this end, Darling-Hammond advocates for long-term apprenticeships for pre-service teachers under specially trained and vetted in-service teachers, the creation of professional development schools, and increasing the prominence of teacher performance incentives. For each of these proposed solutions, Darling-Hammond argues the need for national leadership to ensure cohesive and unified improvements to teacher quality across the United States.

Policy reforms.

Darling-Hammond's work is wide in scope and she proposes a suite of reforms aimed at addressing institutional inequities. The results are often complicated, but nuanced. Her stance on achievement testing offers an excellent case-in-point. She explains that the wave of standardized testing that followed NCLB reform made improvements for some students by introducing academic standards-based reform. She is particularly complimentary of the NCLB mandate to isolate and draw attention to achievement gaps among socioeconomic classes and races by forcing schools to chart and report their scores independently. She also offers praise for elements of NCLB that forced schools to ensure that their teachers meet minimum qualifying criteria to work in schools. However, she critiques elements of NCLB policy that fail to promote social equity. Her strongest criticisms of the policy include the absence of student performances as indicators of achievement, the narrowing of the curriculum experienced by many students as schools attempt to meet rigid guidelines, and the emphasis on punishing schools and students rather than using achievement data to target investments.

Darling-Hammond takes similarly sophisticated positions in other contentious education debates throughout her work. The changes to teacher preparation and in-service development she proposes challenge the positions of small-government conservatives, who might decry the expansive role played by the federal government, as well as local teacher unions, whose contracts frequently make the types of reforms advocated by Darling-Hammond impossible. She makes controversial, but reasoned and well-supported, appeals to limit class and school sizes, enhance collaboration

among teachers, increase the rigor of work assigned to students by shrinking standards and encouraging more complex and deep explorations of concepts, allow individual schools more autonomy to innovate, and allow parents more choice in deciding which schools their children attend.

Conclusion

Darling-Hammond rejects the residual racism that drives America's current inequitable policies and tolerates the wide disparities in the resources committed to rich, poor, white, and minority children. While deriding President W. Bush's call to end the "soft bigotry of low expectations" during the debates over No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy, Darling-Hammond critiques, "No comparable complaint was registered about the hard bigotry of egregiously poor education, which has allowed students to be victimized by both the lack of resources devoted to their learning and the denial of a diploma that would open up productive options after high school" (p. 78).

Darling-Hammond's ability to cross ideological boundaries in each debate indicate her willingness to let her arguments follow the evidence. The result is a book that outlines a cohesive set of policies aimed at resisting inequity. Darling-Hammond rejects the covert bias and racism that rests under the surface of some arguments made in debates over the causes of the achievement gap that separates white, minority, and poor American children.   Instead, she argues that American education policy creates an opportunity gap that separates these groups. For Darling-Hammond it is the wide disparity in the resources committed to each group that explains the differences in achievement among groups of American children. Her work suggests that addressing these inequities is both a moral and economic imperative for the United States.

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Miscellany

Scope of the IJPE

International Journal of Progressive Education (IJPE) (ISSN 1554-5210) is a peer reviewed interactive electronic journal sponsored by the International Association of Educators and in part by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. IJPE is a core partner of the Community Informatics Initiative and a major user/developer of the Community Inquiry Laboratories. IJPE takes an interdisciplinary approach to its general aim of promoting an open and continuing dialogue about the current educational issues and future conceptions of educational theory and practice in an international context. In order to achieve that aim, IJPE seeks to publish thoughtful articles that present empirical research, theoretical statements, and philosophical arguments on the issues of educational theory, policy, and practice. IJPE is published three times a year in four different languages; Chinese, Turkish, Spanish and English.

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