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THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

Its Development and What Is Needed for the Future for Advocacy Leadership in a Post-Racial America

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INTRODUCTION

A plethora of issues related to finance, diversity and equity, accountability and other challenges has shaped the context and field of the politics of education. In the broadest sense, politics permeates education (Cooper, Cibulka, & Fusarelli, 2008). This occurs at several levels, ranging from forms of political relationships with special interest groups, to social and economic contexts which have a political impact K-12 and higher education. The intent of this chapter is to provide an overview of the politics of education both in the ways in which this has played out in the political and policy arena, and how it has also developed in the field itself. The politics surrounding issues such as NCLB accountability and standards-driven reform, the increasing privatization of public education, legal issues, and civil rights claims of students of color and low income students, gender inequality and discrimination against LGBT students, anti-immigrant backlash, shrinking budgets affecting teachers and curriculum, all have emerged as contentious political topics of debate regarding the direction of educational policy in the United States with global implications. Part of this chapter will examine these issues within the broader context regarding how political trends influence the direction of education and policy development and implementation. We will also make a connection to how politics of education scholars have tried to make theoretical and empirical sense of these political issues and place them in various strands of analysis. This leads us to also discuss what is missing from both the politics of education, and as it is studied as a field; and for this perspective we rely on critical race theory as an example of what needs to be included and address the ways in which this analysis is important to the study of the politics of education. Finally, we will make recommendations in terms of combining this new addition of critical race theory (CRT) to the politics of education. We posit that by bringing CRT into the discussion about the politics of education, it will help serve the purpose of linking it to advocacy leadership. This type of leadership has important

implications for educational leaders in terms of making political and policy decisions for the benefit of students and communities who have faced political and social barriers to full and equitable educational attainment and achievement (Alemán, 2006, 2007; Anderson, 2009; Lopez, 2003; Marshall & Olivia, 2009). Education and politics fundamentally involve the study of interactions among interest groups at the macropolitics (e.g., educational organizations) and micropolitics (e.g., schools and students) levels. Given the aforementioned contentious political issues affecting education, we believe that educational leaders are at a strategic point in time where they can review the previous theoretical work in the field, take what it has to offer, but also incorporate newer theoretical frameworks such as CRT in order to provide a perspective around critical political decisions that impact students and families in a diverse society.

The purpose of this chapter is to review some of the important issues in the field of the politics of education, to offer an overview of how government has played a direct role in affecting education, and to present some of the conditions or considerations that are needed for successful advocacy leadership in a post-racial America. The first section looks at how the politics of education has developed as a field of study—from the early calls for more systematic study of schools as political systems, to the more current applications of critical political perspectives of educational organizations and how social, economic, and political trends affect student equity at both the macro and micro levels. We will also present education politics and policy as a heuristic device for understanding this relationship and navigating it successfully. Education in itself is a multidisciplinary field. By understanding how politics and policy have historically shaped education we get a better sense of where education is headed. The second section takes a brief historical look at how the politics of education became intertwined with education policy; from debates about major pieces of legislation such as the passage of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965 by President Johnson and the U.S. Congress, to more current debates about NCLB accountability and standards that are rooted in political arguments. Section 3 offers an explanation about some of the frameworks that have emerged to guide the field and recommends the addition of CRT as framework that would enrich the dialogue within the field. We must also keep in mind that this chapter will not present a definitive solution or model, but rather will contribute a recommendation for how to achieve successful advocacy leadership at a time when it is definitely needed.

SECTION 1: A BRIEF TRACING OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

The article by T. H. Eliot (1959) entitled *Toward an Understanding of Public School Politics* marks the starting point of when the contemporary movement of political science and politics considered education as an area of research within its field. There has always been a central tension within larger political debates around issues such as the common good or pluralistic government. However, the article by Eliot is the first of its kind to call on political science to examine the schools as political institutions, as places originating ideologies, as the root of interest group formation, and as the basis of shaping decision-making and voting behavior. Eliot posited that exposure to all significant relevant factors in schools as political systems would lead to more rational and effective government control. This belief in the schools as political systems came in sharp contrast to the

typical perspective of schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that considered schools as apolitical institutions. Additionally, the rise of the modern school district bureaucracy, where schools were led by a school board and central superintendent, followed by principals and teachers, ended the typical urban political machine politics where the mayor and political parties controlled a majority of urban school policy and daily operations (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). After Eliot's landmark article, political scientists increased their interest in education as a field of political study. In addition, economists began to study political areas such as: (a) fiscal dependence on local taxes and connections to student outcomes; (b) state aid formulas and state aid allocations; (c) the duties and performances of school boards and the political role of the superintendent; (d) the intersections and conflicts among, federal, state, and local bodies of government related to education; (e) the concept of power and school district decision-making; and (f) race, the political economy, and community control (Cross, 2004).

Formalization of Politics of Education as a Field

The politics of education as an official field got its start as a special interest group at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in 1969. This is especially important to note because it highlights the historical disconnect that education and politics, at both the practitioner and scholar levels, has had. Note that political science officially embraced education and politics in 1959 and that it would take education ten years before they would officially embrace education and politics in 1969. The main issue that the special interest group struggled with was how to develop a broad inclusive field of study and how to appreciate of the broad inclusiveness that emerges when studying the politics of education.

In 1997, the Politics of Education Association (PEA) called for the formation of a new division within the AERA and today, that division is known as Division L: Policy and Politics (for PEA history see <http://www.fsu.edu/~pea/history.html>). Now in its 42nd year, PEA is working to foster and support the dissemination, discussion, and application of research on the political functions and outcomes of education. Branching from the formation of this special interest group in the AERA, the field of politics of education has embraced contributions from an array of fields and disciplines that naturally lend explanation to the various phenomenon and processes that the field of education embodies.

Two Strands of Analysis

Contributions to the politics of education as a field of study enabled two strands of analysis to develop. First, the influence of political science as a field was brought to bear on the study of educational organizations and institutions and second, the education field dealt with the use of administrative science principles and the study of principals and superintendents. Both approaches to this research emphasized specific concepts of science and stressed the importance of "factual to theoretical" orientation. While contributions from various disciplines have added a great deal of diversity in theoretical perspectives and research inquiries, there has been a generally underdeveloped methodological base, little to no consensus on the meaning of concepts, and no real set of overarching narratives that set the research agenda in the field of politics of education. Educational administrators in the field and in educational leadership programs expressed concerns that the research lacked relevance in the day-to-day political operation of schools, and

to their respective departments. Political scientists Frederick Wirt and Douglas Mitchell (1982) characterized politics of education as having a weak theoretical foundation which leads to contradictory findings.

While little to no improvement toward a paradigm, or at least consensus, was made in the 1980s, there were efforts to broaden the field and welcome dialogue from individuals who could appropriately contribute. From 1978 to 1988, there was an emphasis on practicing school administrators and research findings relevant to their work situations in terms of the politics of school leadership (Cross, 2004). This in turn created a clearer sense of the direction that politics of education was headed in. A nice compliment to stabilizing the presence of this field was the publication of politics of education year books (see, for example, Boyd & Kerchner, 1987; Mitchell & Goertz, 1990). Furthermore, the emergence of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration and the University Council for Educational Administration's call for the establishment of a politics of education group and for the field to develop a body of knowledge that all administrators should know solidified a politics of education field.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS GUIDING THE FIELD

The emergence and direction of politics of education over the last 25 years has created paths leading to a number of different and very important strands of analysis that ultimately lead to a unifying body of knowledge. Simultaneously, however, other perspectives (e.g., rational traditionalist, structural-functionalist, culturalist, and post-structuralist) sought to disrupt this movement within the politics of education.

RATIONAL TRADITIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

The importance of the rational traditionalist movement in the politics of education can be seen in terms of the influence of the David Easton (1965) and his landmark book *A Framework for Political Analysis*. His work proposed taking an empirical look at the way institutions function as political systems and at an examination of inputs and outcomes within a framework of the "black box" of decision making. For quite some time the field of the politics of education was governed by this empirical theoretical framework. Kirst and Wirt (2009), however, added more of a structuralist emphasis on this original model with their work on the flow, influences, and policy consequences in the school as a political system. Under their theoretical framework, one had to look at the environment from a national and/or international perspective as well as the impact of stressors on schools. These stressors would then be seen as inputs and demands on schools that would effect a school's political system. It is important to understand, though, that Easton's (1965) work represents a shift toward understanding the critical role that institutions play in shaping the inputs that we make. Furthermore, this scholarship is important in that it gives us a method for analyzing behavior through systems theory (Ball, 2007). Following David Easton's contributions, Kirst and Wirt (2009) bring us a little closer to understanding the processes within the institution of education.

Within this structural system one can view organizations and bodies, such as federal/state authorities, school boards, the superintendent central office, school site professionals and voters, as part of the system. These demands would be converted into school outputs, such as a state statutes, court decisions, executive orders, or superintendent

memos. The implementation of this output could come in forms, such as plans to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP), the creation of local parent advisory councils to advise schools, or district responses to equity audits. The outcomes would be in the form of accountability gains (or not), more state control, or increased conflict over school policy. Eventually, the feedback loop would come back to the overall political environment. Under this model, modes of analysis are seen as governed more by an interaction between individual human behavior that is externally conditioned by institutions rather than solely coming from the internal goals of the special interests and policy actors.

STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALIST AND CULTURALIST PERSPECTIVES

From a political standpoint, schools have also been seen as institutions that have, on the one hand, promoted equality while, on the other hand, adapted to inequality. The field has studied this trend from both a structuralist and cultural perspective. Structural-functionalism attempts to explain how social institutions meet social needs. It is important, though, to note that this theory was inspired by Emile Durkheim who concerned himself with the questions of how societies maintain internal stability and survive (Durkheim & Coser, 1997). Labaree (1997) provides an example of this work through his outline of three distinguishable goals and political purposes: democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility.

Under democratic equality, there is a strong ideological tradition in the United States that sees schools as an expression of democratic ideals and as a means for preparing youth to play active roles in a democratic society. Labaree looks at the function of school as the institution to create Americans (as a homogenous people and a single workforce) so that the needs (e.g., future politicians, future service-sector workers, etc.) of the society can be fulfilled. Education figures like Horace Mann were the first to call for a common school curriculum to adequately prepare all children. In 1983 the *Nation at Risk* report called for improving schools for excellence and for better preparing students as future workers to compete against the United States' economic competitors. Others, like culturalists, are interested in how specific phenomenon are influenced or conditioned by matters such as social class, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, and/or gender.

Culturalists argue that the culture each one of us and our actions predicts behaviors and outcomes. Tied to this idea is the argument by Anderson (2009) who says that privatization for the individual political mindset serves to enhance the position of upper-middle-class and wealthy Americans to better keep and control educational resources for themselves and to keep and enhance the economic and social position of their children, which comes at the expense of students and families of other races and social classes. However, whatever the questions about and the contradictions within a culturalist perspective, culture and education, and the politics that surround these two sites at the micro- and macro-levels, bears a great deal of influence on the phenomenon and processes that exist in education.

Post-Culturalist Perspectives

Blase (1991) and Blase and Anderson (1995) examined how micropolitics influences school governance. His work took issue with the rationalist perspective that failed to account for complexity and instability in organizations. This research presented how politics and political power formed ways in which authority was controlled by others.

The major trend in this area of the politics of education dealt with what goes on in schools in terms of political power relationships between principals and teachers, on the one hand, and the political school culture, on the other.

William Foster's (1986) landmark work, *Paradigms and Promises: New Approaches to Educational Administration*, opened the door for postmodernism in educational leadership and administrative theory. Foster used postmodern theory and the works of Foucault to argue against claims of "truth" and objective administrative science that could be applied to the field of educational leadership. He argued that the politics of education is always symbolic and that there are forms of unspoken control that school leaders use to control teachers and students. He also made the case for critical theorists in educational administration to work toward creating schools as communities rather than schools as organizations.

Coupled with the postmodern perspective of educational leadership and politics, the post-cultural perspective has also evolved regarding issues of gender and politics in education. For example, one of the major figures in this field is Catherine Marshall (Marshall, 1997; Marshall & Oliva, 2009). Marshall paved the way for many women to enter the scholarly field of educational leadership and the politics of education. Other women who also considered gender or feminist perspectives in their scholarship include Diane S. Pollard, Lois Andre-Becheley, and others whose contributions are likewise important. Marshall is highlighted, here, because of her push to use more qualitative research methods to study how schools work from a feminist perspective. Also, she is important because her scholarship opened the field of educational administration to women and she showed how to study the politics of women in schools. Her research and support of younger female scholars (e.g., Gerstl-Pepin, 2006) has led to an infusion of feminist analysis in the area of educational policy and the politics of education and women's leadership. A major component of culturalist theory, still remains in understanding the role race plays.

In addition, Larson (1997) has used racial analysis to study the politics of schools. For example, in her study of the history of racial politics, she argued that administrators who ignore racial dynamics pay a political cost to themselves and their positions. The political cost to administrators who ignore racial dynamics lies in the inability to interpret and respond to a politically savvy, race-oriented community group. Furthermore, a price is paid in not hiring top-level talent that presents itself. Using Murray Edleman's (1977) work on political language and the way it is used to defuse situations and provide cover for bureaucrats who are at a loss for substantive action to address a crisis, Larson's case study of race relations in a mid-western district showed that when pushed into a corner due to racial tension within a school, administrators will often rely on standard operating procedures in the attempt to bring order into schools. Larson's work demonstrated that the politics of race and racism are at the heart of many conflicts over, but not limited to, discipline and achievement and that school leaders need to face these issues.

Jay Scribner is another post-culturalist who uses race and applies it to understanding urban situations. Race and school achievement in urban areas was the focus of Scribner's (1977, 1995) work as he examined the role of micro-level politics and organizational political change in schools. His work looked at large urban areas, such as Philadelphia, when he was the chair of the educational leadership and policy studies department at Temple University; Los Angeles when he was a professor at UCLA; and Texas when he was department head at UT-Austin. Scribner was noted for engaging in studies related

to the effects of political culture on state policy making. He also produced and influenced a number of graduate students and assistant professors whose work has had significant impact on the field of educational administration, politics, and policy (Alemán, 2006, Hood & Parker, 1991; Lopez, 2003; Scheurich, 1998; Young, 1999).

Contemporary Perspectives

Some of the even newer scholarship in the field of the politics of education investigates the shifts in governance and power alliances that have taken place since the 1990s as well as how this has shaped new configurations of special interest groups and their influence on state and federal education policy (Innaconne, 1991). These works also examine the increasing importance of the governor in taking control of education as a political agenda in both K-12 and higher education, the influence of the president and the U.S. Congress in shaping the national political education agenda, and the role that money and lack of resources play in forming the political context of conflict around school finance (e.g., Cibulka, 2001; Fusarelli 2002; Opfer, 2001; Wong, 1999). For example, the *Handbook of Educational Politics*, edited by Bruce Cooper, Jim Cibulka, and Lance Fusarelli (2008) focused on the role of government institutions, the goals of the U.S. political system, special interest groups, and the reasons the political behaviors of these new special interests matter. In addition, DeBray-Pelot and McGuinn (2009) build on previous works done by political scientists to map out how the political landscape for federal education K-12 policy has changed in the post-No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era. Tracing the role of traditional special interest groups, such as teachers unions and their lobby efforts in Congress, the authors showed how these groups and others were pushed aside in the educational policy process for political reasons related to the Republican agenda in the mid-1990s. They also described how former President Bush and the Republicans captured the education political agenda from the Democrats and how NCLB has altered the national politics of education, including the growth and diversification of the think tank sector. DeBray-Pelot and McGuinn's scholarship offers an important nudge for the field of politics of education to consider the role policy, and all the actors who influence it, play.

The great influence in the later 1990s came with Lugg's scholarship (1996). Lugg's work shaped the field of the politics of education through defining the difference between policy and PR-olity. She defined policy as what is typically thought of when one thinks about how policy is made; that is through negotiation among legislative bodies and the executive branch of government to craft negotiated compromise legislation. However, the term "PR-olity" means that policy discourse is overtly and covertly political and that political interest groups not necessarily tied to the political process get to use the media outlets, blogs, and research from think tanks to shape the political discourse and agenda around the public policy debates in education. Lugg focuses on how the Christian conservatives used PR-olity to enhance their political agenda. Apple (2006), however, took this one step further by maintaining that the politics of education now as has been largely dominated by right-wing causes and has a real populist element to it that has appealed to a loose alliance of neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, and religious activists with deep hopes that connect to real cultural struggles around the political purpose of schools. While scholars in the field of education made incredible strides in defining the field of politics of education, considerable work and progress was made by scholars in the field of political science.

This progress made through the field of political science has come by means of transforming politics of education from a focus on political science as a discipline applied to the study of educational organizations to a field in which specific political themes of external influences are studied within their own right as ways to look at what influences schools and colleges as political systems (see, for example, Ball, 1987; Blase, 1986; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Boyd, 1974; Johnson, 2003; Lindle & Mawhinney, 2003; Malen, 1995). The emphasis in the field so far has been on exploring various definitions of “political literacy” or the study of power, influence, and authority in the allocation of scarce and valued resources at various levels of the education sectors (Johnson, 2003, p. 51). This takes on even more importance when one looks at the politics of education from a global perspective and what Brooks and Nomore (2010) see as leaders who are familiar with the formal and informal processes by which people engage in local and national issues and know how to act as an empowered influence on local, national, or international decisions (p. 56).

SECTION 2: BRIEF HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION DEFINED BY PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Public policy issues surrounding education have been political issues since the inception of the U.S. educational system. For example, the GI Bill of 1944 represents a key piece of federal legislation with a major economic, political, and social impact on U.S. citizens. The GI Bill was a benchmark of opportunity for veterans as it provided educational benefits, such as funding to go to college or obtain training to enter the workforce. This GI Bill provided some economic social justice by making higher education affordable to less wealthy citizens. However, it was still problematic because most GIs who benefitted from the bill were men, not women and underrepresented minorities. In fact, according to Molly Merryman (1998), although Women Airforce Service Pilots of WWII flew and trained gunnery recruits, they were not recognized as military personnel and therefore were not eligible for veterans’ benefits. African Americans also struggled to secure their right to education benefits. Hilary Herbold (1994) explained that “staffed almost entirely by whites empowered to deny or grant the claims of black GIs, the VA [Veterans Administration] became a formidable foe to many blacks in search of an education” (p. 106). In addition, this macro-level policy never really gave autonomy of implementation to the micro-level. Since the VA acted as the gate keeper to education, the schools only autonomy with this policy was to admit and educate the GI’s who came through their doors. It is this type of injustice that gave rise to restructuring how civil rights are viewed.

Dwight Eisenhower’s presidency marked a period where the politics of the civil rights movement could no longer be avoided by the federal government. In the 1952 presidential elections, education was a key issue on Eisenhower’s platform, a bold move given that in 1950 the members of the Topeka, Kansas, Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) challenged the “separate but equal” doctrine governing public education. That challenge soon found its way into the U.S. Supreme Court docket as *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka*; this case resulted in a 4-year battle that ended with the unanimous decision by the Court to desegregate all schools (*Brown v. Board of Ed.*, 1954). Met with angst and an escalation of violence at some schools, the recently elected Eisenhower (with the assistance of the National Guard) forcefully executed the Court’s decision. This highlights the great disconnect between

the macro- and micro-levels of education. While federal policy mandated desegregation, district policy mandated segregation. This landmark U.S. Supreme Court holding would trigger a socially tense environment of racial political resistance and an uneasy climate that would need to address both civil rights and the future of education. In response, President Lyndon B. Johnson argued that citizens, regardless of race, should be allowed their constitutional rights and believed in the power of the Federal judiciary to interpret civil rights law (Nichols, 2007).

President Johnson also worked with Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, thus making the unequal application of law based on race illegal. For schools, this meant that education was to be free of racial discrimination, and it further emphasized the need for desegregation that was initially mandated by *Brown*. Monumental for its time, the Civil Rights Act faced many criticisms before and after its passage. Because President Kennedy's popularity, before and after his death, was among the highest for any president, there was sufficient support for this controversial, yet significant, legislation. Riding off of that support, Johnson had an approval rating of 80% in March 1964 (the year that the Civil Rights Act was passed).

Among the key policies affecting education was the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act of 1965 (ESEA) which created government funding of public education for economically disadvantaged students and specifically allocated funds to schools in which a significant proportion of the student population received free or reduced lunch. According to Thomas and Brady (2005), the mission of ESEA was to provide "equitable educational opportunities to the nation's disadvantaged, this legislation provides financial resources to schools to enhance the learning experiences of underprivileged children. Since its inception, ESEA has consistently remained the single largest fiscal source of federal support for educationally vulnerable schoolchildren" (p. 51). However, since its creation, ESEA has been revisited nearly every five years, and its present form is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. This is the first piece of major educational legislation that highlights not only the need to address inequalities in education, but also highlights the role special interest groups, like the National Education Association, play in the development and implementation of education policy.

With the passing of the Civil Rights Act (1957 and 1964), though, the politics surrounding race had been mitigated briefly after the passage of these pieces of legislation. Nonetheless, with the simple extension of ESEA failing to pass in 1969—subsequently passed in 1970—political tensions brewed as President Nixon sought to tackle the school bussing issue. The Nixon administration did spend considerable energy promoting the Equal Educational Opportunities Act which prohibited the segregation of students on the basis of race, color, and national origin, but the act also sought to restrict the bussing of children to achieve racial balance and proposed not to deny the assignment of a child to a neighborhood school. While the legislative language seemingly sought to promote equality and racial balance, the act did not deal with issues of disparity between different communities and allowed for significant segregation to continue in this manner. Eventually, the act passed in 1974, but not before tackling other key issues related to education.

The Nixon administration also pursued Title IX legislation in 1972 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended discrimination based on color, this legislation took those ideas a step further by requiring that all school-based programs that received federal funding could not discriminate against students based

on race, color, or national origins. Additionally, since 1975, significant changes have occurred in U.S. education policies for children with disabilities, all aimed at providing equity of educational access and outcomes for these children, with these changes including major improvement in mainstreaming and inclusion of students with disabilities. The passage of PL 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, mandated that, for institutions receiving federal funding, the development and implementation of policies to provide children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education must be implemented. Yet, while policy was geared toward fostering access, the 1970s ideology seemed to want the nation's education system to take a different philosophical approach.

Munitz and Lawless (1986) pointed out that "The seventies saw a shift away from the philosophical foundation that viewed learning as a means to enriching the total life experience, to a view that placed far more emphasis upon education as a 'value added experience'" (p. 67). The "value" of an education is often associated with enhanced socioeconomic mobility, with added social-cultural attainment, and with opportunity to obtain a myriad of careers. By emphasizing this type of philosophy, constituents, educational administrators, and politicians have added pressure to deliver the promises associated with "value" as well as transparent accountability. In addition to all of this, as the national economy suffered and greater cries for tax relief ensued, it was inevitable that Reagan administration would need to make drastic changes to attempt some amount of relief for constituents.

The election of President Ronald Reagan in 1980 marked a significant political turn in education policy as he used his office as a bully-pulpit to spearhead the cause of reducing the role of the federal government services and limiting the role of government involvement in public policy, including education (McDonnell, 2005). In 1981, the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act deregulated Title I while keeping its purpose to provide for disadvantaged students. With the public education system perceived to be failing, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, which outlined the need for higher education standards and the restructuring of how teachers are trained.

The subject of Title I and educational standards continued into 1988 and 1989 with President George H. W. Bush placing this high on his priority list. In 1989, the president and state governors held an educational summit. The goal of the summit was to develop national goals for education and raise student academic achievement (Jennings, 2001). Furthermore, this shift toward prioritizing education a little more by creating goals would shape the Clinton administration.

President Clinton was perhaps most known, in terms of his education policy, for Goals 2000. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227) was signed into law on March 31, 1994. The legislation provided resources to states and communities to ensure that all students reach their full potential. Symbolic of the standardization movement, this act moved the country towards a more standardized view of education in which the federal government played a more pronounced role. This act, consequently, represented a federal effort towards "improv[ing] student learning through a long-term, broad-based effort to promote coherent and coordinated improvements in the system of education throughout the Nation at the State and local levels" (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Title III, Sec.302). The act encouraged states to develop standards that articulated what each child in that state would be capable of doing. In addition, it also supported state

and district-wide implementation of school improvement plans that incorporated those standards. The act called upon states to accomplish these tasks through competitive state-wide grants (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Executive Summary). This intrusion into what was largely considered a local issue was widely opposed by conservatives and the Republican Party. Thus, there was much resistance to the Goals 2000 legislation; however, after the election of President George W. Bush, many elements of Goals 2000 resurfaced in the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind NCLB. According to NCLB, the improvements to the educational system would result from higher accountability for teachers and schools by requiring 100% proficiency by 2013 of all subgroups. This system standardized assessment and instruction in order to create a better educated student body that understood the standardized curriculum.

While promoting the standardization of instruction, the law did not standardize the resources or experience of the students; in fact, NCLB has since been politically challenged as an "unfunded mandate," which was a commentary made by the late Senator Kennedy on the Senate floor (May 6, 2001) when the fiscal needs of Title I and IDEA were ignored by Congress in the NCLB legislation. Accordingly, the fiscal re-authorization problems related to accountability have been one of the major points related to the enforcement of NCLB (Henry, 2004). Even though this legislation greatly reflected the contents of Goals 2000, it was embraced by the conservative (and liberal) members of Congress and passed overwhelmingly. While the Congressional coalition building passed NCLB in 2001, there is evidence that this brief agreement is now in peril as more conservative House members who have been elected in the recent 2010 midterm elections threaten to cut any extra federal spending on programs in education.

The Courts

The general legal promise of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) was to end the dual system of segregated schooling. The equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution offered hope to fulfill that promise. But, as Ryan (2003) has noted, the U.S. Supreme Court, starting with *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) began to reduce the role of the federal role of the courts to address the remedy issues surrounding school desegregation. This, coupled with demographic changes and the intractable problems of structural racism in the form of vast pockets of chronic poverty in urban and rural areas, poor health facilities, lack of progress for jobs and meaningful employment (Wilson, 2007), have led the courts and the general public to refuse to deal with these public policy problems (Tushnet, 1996).

This political shift has given way to the changing interpretation of court decisions and definitions of discriminatory intent vs. effects within a "color-blind" society. Increasing racial and ethnic diversity coupled with a rise in immigration has diversified the U.S. population to some extent, but still has not resulted in truly integrated schools, neighborhoods and workplaces. This position set the 2007 U.S. Supreme Court decisions in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District* (2007). While a majority of the Justices concluded that school districts can continue to take steps to pursue diversity and/or avoid racial isolations in schools under voluntary desegregation plans, the plurality opinion held that the Seattle and Louisville plans were not narrowly tailored and that school districts in voluntary desegregation plans should be enjoined from using crude racial categories and racial classifications when designing programs to achieve a diverse student population or avoid racial isolation in schools. The Court

did recognize the constitutional standard of a compelling interest that exists in avoiding racial isolation in schools, but as Justice Kennedy (who voted with the majority) noted in his individual opinion, "the enduring hope is that race should not matter; the reality is that too often it does" (p. 7). Yet, while the judicial process interprets and navigates the direction of legal and political matters, their inability to forcibly carry out interpretations means that it is up to schools to do so. As history has shown, schools are not always able or willing to comply based on either the educational costs of programs vis-à-vis raising taxes, or administrative resistance to equal educational opportunities at the local levels (Larson & Olvando, 2001). The school is the first gate-keeper to a child's ability to receive their "value added" experience, and when race or other social issues are placed in the conversation, situations easily become problematic.

For example, race, social class, and inequitable educational services played a problematic role in the California litigation in the *Williams v. State of California* litigation and eventual settlement (Oakes, 2004). The plaintiffs argued that California failed its constitutional obligations to educate all students on equal terms. The plaintiffs argued that monetary and classroom/school resources were critical in the hope of providing an adequate education for all students. In the complaint, the plaintiffs posited that more qualified teachers, more advance placement (AP) course offerings in poor districts, sufficient instructional materials, and more adequate school plant facilities were a necessary step to ensure that all students obtained an adequate education in the state to meet the increasing state and federal demands for accountability. The state countered this line of argument by stating that California's educational standards and test-based accountability system were sound and that if inequities did occur, it is due to the families or communities or local conditions over which the state had no control over. A negotiated settlement was reached in August 2004 in which the state of California agreed to adopt new standards and accountability measures for all students and nearly \$1 billion for dealing with school infrastructure problems (Oakes, 2004). However, the problems still remain in terms of turning the settlement agreements into tangible results given the extensive problems of most state budgets where education is currently being seen as one of the places to cut spending (Mehta, 2009).

The political issues of school segregation and tracking also came to a head in the *People Who Care v. Rockford Board of Education School District No. 205* (1994). Welner and Oakes (1996) discussed the legal and political aspects of litigation surrounding race and ability grouping, which continues to be a major issue in terms of political challenges to equity and student achievement. In the *Rockford* case, evidence was found that the Rockford school board engaged in purposeful discrimination by Federal District Judge P. Michael Mahoney. For example, African American and Latino students were crammed into overcrowded schools; also, these schools were given subpar equipment; discipline and punishments were differentiated by race; Latino students were not given proper bilingual services; and African American and Latino students were tracked into separate classes from White students, and once students were placed in these tracks it was virtually impossible to move up into a more academically challenging track. Kolley (2009) reported that these problems still plague the district as enrollment has dropped and the students who are left have tremendous educational and social needs. Rockford has few resources to rely on to address these problems, as evidenced by recent figures that show that 3 out of every 10 African American students failed to graduate high school in the city's schools.

The *Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State of New York* (2001) was another example of a case that has been shaped by legal issues and has taken on a political context regarding education funding. In this case, the trial court held that New York City's racial minority students were disproportionately disadvantaged by the funding plans in the city and state of New York under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and state constitutional adequacy of education standards (Ryan, 2003). Later, in February of 2005, the New York State Supreme Court also ruled that New York City needed an additional 5.6 billion in operating costs to provide students with their constitutional right to a sound and basic education. In the next year, the New York Court of Appeals (2006) ruled that the state had to increase funding based on its constitutional responsibility, and in 2007 the state education budget and reform act was passed by the legislature to layout \$7 billion over four years.

In the U.S. education system, states are responsible for structuring the financial formulas that fund public schools within the state, and, thus, not surprisingly, every state's funding system is different as is every state's constitutional education clause. There are primarily four different primary funding structures, but foundation funding structures are the most common. A foundation structure establishes a foundation, or minimum base amount, that is guaranteed by the state for each student. However, this amount must be agreed upon in legislation at the state level. Even if a specific amount is known to benefit children, that amount must be approved by committee and then by the entire state legislature, further complicating the issue. Once the foundation level is set, that only guarantees the minimum. Local property taxes provide the bulk of the revenue to the school, and those tax levels are established by municipal governments in which the school resides in all states but Hawaii. School board elections at the local level and local tax referenda are heavily politicized and often function outside the traditional two-party system. The negotiations that are forced to occur between the local school system and the state are only further complicated by federal interventions, and fiscal problems that many states have undergone in terms of budget reductions in education, and elected governors who have had more political clout to enforce a fiscally conservative agenda (Fusarelli, 2002).

Further, state governments both execute and enforce federal programs, which are, in turn, implemented in schools by local officials. The court cases highlighted in this section show that the courts indivertibly create local politics that in turn can profoundly shape equity and diversity. Additionally, in between the Court and the local politics, it is important to consider that since the 1960s higher education coordinating boards have also played the role as intermediary of the federal and local politics so that adequate coordinating of federal mandates and planning for the growth of higher education within a state could be executed. These few examples in the areas of desegregation, school adequacy and equity for all children, tracking and ability grouping, and educational finance show that politics and education are inseparable particularly regarding how legal decisions politically impact schools. The political context of legal decisions around various civil rights issues also lends itself to exploring how this impacts the politics of education as a field and further, what other critical perspectives can be utilized to address the intractable challenges for school leaders making political policy decisions.

Furthermore, the direction in which scholarship in politics of education is headed in the future remains to be seen. There has been tension around the issue of whether the politics of education should focus on the political study of schools in terms of interest

group theory, power, etc., or if it should focus on administrative science and provide applied policy responses to practicing administrators. Regardless of the direction, one of the missing perspectives of analysis that would add depth to the dialogue is CRT.

SECTION 3: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS CONNECTION TO POLITICS: CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP

In this section we propose that since many of the key legal issues address fundamental questions of race, the politics of education as a field should build on the previous work of Lopez (2003) and Alemán (2007) and utilize critical race theory as one many new forms of race-based analysis of educational policy and politics. While the political discourse shifted swiftly after the election of the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, in November 2008, it became evident that race and racism are topics typically silenced, muted, and/or reframed toward a discussion of colorblindness. Yet, the historic election of the nation's first African American president has prompted increased calls to "move past race." As the nation's electorate have been praised by some for "not seeing color" in their support of President Obama, discussions of systemic and institutionalized racism and subsequent inequities have been displaced by claims of a new "post-racial" society. Although proclamations of an end to race and racism or claims of a "post-racial" society are prevalent today, the educational experience for a majority of students of color continues to be mired in inequity and a lack of educational opportunity.

In the study of educational politics, race, and inequity, it is necessary to recognize how political discourse is framed by elected officials, political commentators, and educational scholars. Some of the major questions that should be asked about the politics of education for educational leaders concerned the state of educational politics within the context of an Obama presidency (Alemán, Salazar, Parker, & Rorrer, 2011).

Some of these new fundamental "post-racial" questions can be addressed through CRT.

Critical Race Theory Defined

CRT was developed as a critique of racism in the law and society, and this theory holds current applications to the politics of education. CRT has emphasized the importance of viewing policies, practices, and laws within a proper historical and cultural context in order to deconstruct their racialized meanings (Bell, 1995; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). The writings in this area have been developed mainly through the legal and education scholarship of Derrick Bell (1995); Richard Delgado (1989); Delgado Bernal (2002); Kimberlie Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Pellar, and Kendall Thomas (1995); Tara Yosso, William Smith, Miguel Ceja, and Daniel Solóranzo (2009); Harris (1993); and Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995). CRT has its roots in previous discipline-based critiques related to the history, philosophy, politics, and the social construction and the reality of race and discrimination. This framework challenges dominant liberal concepts such as colorblindness and meritocracy and shows how these ideas operate to disadvantage people of color while further advantaging Whites. Originally developed by legal scholars of color, CRT is grounded in a "social reality" that is defined by our experiences and the collective historical experience of our communities of origin. Race and racism are central constructs that intersect with dimensions of one's

identity, such as language, generation status, gender, sexuality, and class. (For people of color, each of these dimensions of one's identity can potentially elicit multiple forms of subordination), yet each dimension can also be subjected to different forms of oppression. Given this foundation, CRT has evolved around a number of general themes: (a) racism is a normal daily fact of life in U. S. society, and the ideology and assumptions of racism are so ingrained in the political and legal structures as to be almost unrecognizable. Legal racial designations have complex, historical, and socially constructed meanings that ensure the location of political superiority above racially marginalized groups; (b) as a form of oppositional scholarship, CRT challenges the experience of White European Americans as the normative standard; rather, CRT grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive contextual experiences of people of color and racial oppression through the use of literary narrative knowledge and story-telling to challenge the existing social construction of race; and (c) CRT attacks liberalism and the inherent belief in the law to create an equitable just society. CRT advocates have pointed to the frustrating legal pace of meaningful reform that has eliminated blatant hateful expressions of racism, but has kept intact exclusionary relations of power as exemplified by the legal conservative backlash of the courts, legislative bodies, voters, etc., against special rights for racial groups (Solórzano, 1997, 1998).

The Centrality of Race and Racism in Education

CRT acknowledges as its most basic premise that race and racism are a defining characteristic of U.S. society. In American higher education, race and racism are imbedded in the structures, discourses, and policies that guide the daily practices of universities (Solórzano, 1998). A critical race analysis in the politics of education challenges us to analyze race, class, and gender privileges within both formal and informal structures and schooling process. In addition, CRT in education has direct implications for identifying and transforming traditional notions of the objectivity of law and administrative regulation as it applies to K-12 and postsecondary settings. CRT in education can be defined as a framework, or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the subordination of students of color. CRT hopes to foster ways to engage in critical race praxis and positive change with regard to racial justice in educational institutions.

CRT literature that examines the politics of teaching looks at the practices and beliefs of teachers in K-12 classrooms. This body of work has used CRT to explore the experiences of teachers and students of color in U.S. classrooms. CRT scholarship argues for tapping into the knowledge that teachers of color possess to construct "critical race pedagogies" as a critique of racism in education, while also putting forth ideas about how to address race and racism in classrooms. CRT challenges the claims of objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity in schools. This theoretical framework reveals how the dominant ideology of color-blindness and race neutrality act as a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in American society (Delgado, 1989; Lopez, 2003). For instance, Solórzano (1997) uses CRT to explore teacher education by linking the historical racial context as a contextual analysis to discussions of the state of teacher education. He offers important recommendations in teacher education classrooms regarding the ways teachers can challenge the "racial stereotyping" of K-12 students of color.

Additionally, Ladson-Billings (1999, 2005) used CRT as a means to review the “teaching for diversity” literature in teacher education. She argued that while the “teaching for diversity” literature had a number of strengths, issues of race were not at the forefront of many of those discussions. The works of critical race pedagogues in education, who attempted to openly and consistently address issues of race in their work, are left out, and this work further relegated race to be a marginal factor as opposed to a central issue. By exploring the work of teacher educators, she situated teacher education within a critical race analysis that not only offered a critique of practices that ignored or demonized race and racial dialogue, but also outlined the specific ways in which some teacher educators—namely Black women teacher educators who employ critical perspectives on schooling and inequality—teach in ways that acknowledge and take stock of issues of race and racism in education. This work, along with her work on culturally relevant pedagogy (1994, 1995), opens the door for forthcoming discussions about the important links between CRT and liberatory teaching practices. Another example is Lynn’s (1999) use of CRT as a framework to explore the political beliefs of “progressive” African American teachers. He found that teachers’ beliefs about the necessary links between race, class, and gender; the importance of confronting racism in their schools and in their classrooms; and their commitment to utilizing their classrooms as spaces through which they could help children appreciate their culture were consistent with themes in CRT. These themes relate to interconnections between race and other axes of domination as well as CRT’s political/activist commitment to ending racial inequality.

Furthermore, borrowing from the work of Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995), Foster (1997), and others, Lynn (1999) coined the term “Critical Race Pedagogy” as a way to describe the nature of pedagogical practice that is grounded in the struggle to end racism and other forms of subordination. Also, Lynn (2002) used CRT as a tool to explore (a) how the literature on teachers and teaching has viewed African American teachers, males in particular and (b) how African American male teachers envision teaching as a political change strategy. In short, he argued that African American male teachers view teaching as a form of “racial uplift” (Ladson-Billings, 1995). He discussed how this view of teaching is consistent with those of earlier Black women activists who viewed teaching as part of the struggle for social and political change on behalf of all African Americans. Morris (2002) looked at African American teachers’ critical race perspectives on enactment of desegregation policy in St. Louis, Missouri, public schools. In doing so, he examined the way African American teachers were affected by school “integration” and how this may have caused more harm to the African American community than we may have understood. He argued that school leaders must look to African American teachers when making important decisions about how to best improve schools.

Incorporating perspectives of previous scholars on CRT and pedagogy, Writer (2002) draws on CRT as a tool to explore the history of American “terrorism” against Native Americans and then proposes specific pedagogical strategies that can help educators use CRT as a tool to help students become critical of media representations of Native Americans. In addition, Writer makes suggestions about how teachers can help students rethink notions about terrorism in order to more fully understand the Native American condition in the United States. In relation to the research on teachers, Lopez (2003) explored how CRT can be used to help rethink traditional models of educational leadership by focusing on how race is “silenced” in schools. He argued that a fuller engagement between educational leadership discourse and the “politics” of race in schools

would help to develop better leadership practices. In addition, Ladson-Billings (2003) examined policies that impact the teaching of Social Studies in U.S. classrooms.

This volume is designed to make race a centerpiece of our understanding about social studies. The contributors discuss the way the curriculum, the profession, the policies and even the new embrace of technology conform to a racial script. By employing critical race theory, the contributing authors prevent readers from casting their gaze [in] some other direction to explain the persistent inequities we find in our schools and in the society. (p. 8)

The work of Ladson-Billings is crucial in that it asks readers to consider the role race plays in schools and society.

In general, critical race studies in education call attention to racist classroom practices that not only marginalize students of color but also address the ways in which local and national policies impact teaching in America's diverse classrooms. These studies ask important questions: How does racism shape and influence how principals, superintendents, and teachers interact with students and families and communities of color? How can a critical interrogation and understanding of race and racism transform our classroom practices? Hence, the development of an understanding of critical race theory in the politics of education can be a way of addressing diversity and inequalities in classrooms as well as providing information about the best way to move forward to transform our classrooms into places where students of color might thrive.

Considering CRT and Successful Advocacy Leadership

A focus on race and racism is also important for understanding the politics of education at a local and national level and ways to act as an advocate for students, especially students of color. For example, Scott and Martino (2007) mapped out how White philanthropic interests in cities such as New York have imitated the political practices of turn-of-the-20th-century elite political progressive school reformers. These new political special interest groups have succeeded in introducing choice and charter schools as viable options for a handful of urban parents of color with promises of a better type of schooling for their children. While choice is being pushed by this group, the politics of education is controlled by centralized power in the mayors' offices because they "know" what is best for urban families and students. The politics of race in educational leadership should, therefore, focus on helping future educational leaders, and the field itself, see how the political perspectives of low income and marginalized students of color are greatly compromised by this strategic political co-optation.

CRT has an important role to play in terms of reshaping the thinking around the politics of education and advocacy leadership in educational administration. This can be seen through the consequences of administration inaction through the lens of CRT and educational risk taking; as well as school issues surrounding racial incidents. For example, a racially offensive incident at an annual spirit rally at a Utah high school occurred in the spring of 2011. The incident involved a White student running across a high school gym in a KKK outfit, which subsequently ignited other forms of racial conflict at the school in the community. While efforts have been exhausted in the school district's investigation over the incident and other forms of racial bias at the school (Winters, 2011), we posit that CRT can be used to focus on how political language and

silences from education leaders shapes beliefs about actions that administrators take, rather than how they are (or are not) actually coping with and responding to the chronic racial problems they are supposed to deal with (Larson, 1997). Horsford (2010) also uses CRT as a framework for successful leadership by calling on the ways in which African American school leaders relied on the Black experience to create a supportive learning environment that challenges Black students to succeed despite the racism in the segregated south during the Jim Crow era. In addition, she uses this as a way to show how this type of leadership style is needed today to help students of color succeed. This framework is one example of what can be utilized to transform the politics of education toward successful advocacy leadership.

Advocacy leadership in general is one of the more potentially effective ways for educational leaders, and the field of educational leadership would benefit greatly from political analysis related to such advocacy. Accordingly, Anderson (2009) argued that educational leaders and the field of educational leadership should act in more of an advocacy capacity to effect change. For example, the advocacy leader provides political and cultural leadership in addition to providing academic steering; they also provide cultural navigation for both parents and students. In addition, advocacy leaders can help students acquire and use effective study tips and strategies, while culturally help students cope, negotiate, and navigate through issues of racism and prejudice within the academic system. Furthermore, advocacy leaders can help students “negotiate” school as they broker with teachers and parents. This type of political leadership places an emphasis on how school leaders can engage in social change and organize push-back reactions to the increasing accountability movement and the centralization of elite political control of schools.

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the evolution of the field of the politics of education. A brief review of the salient literature and key scholars in the field was necessary for understanding where the field has gone and its new directions and implications for future educational leadership. The politics of education has been a part of the accountability movement with NCLB and specific areas, such as school desegregation, tracking, school finance, and state provisions for an adequate education for all students. Many of these issues involve race and the study of racism in various forms. CRT offers one framework that addresses the politics of education by centering its focus in consort with other analysis, such as gender and social class, to help educational leaders become more aware of how important race and racism is regarding its impact on students. In this sense, CRT offers an additional mode of comprehension of the macro-level (the system that is creating policy) and the micro-level (the system that is implementing policy).

However, education policy and politics interact in no clear-cut manner. The historical contexts in which the highlighted policies occur, the manner in which the field emerged, the defining characteristics of people (race, ethnicity, etc.), the judicial recommendations, and other important issues should serve a heuristic function by identifying areas where further research is needed. One clear conclusion from this chapter is that there are numerous points of interface among the federal and state political systems, the judiciary, and educational institutions. A second clear conclusion is that the long held belief in separation of politics and education does not exist. Knowing this, it is crucial that

politics and advocacy leaders act in concert for purpose-driven political ways. Accordingly, it is our hope that future advocacy leaders will act in purpose-driven political ways in order to resist and change powerful educational special interest groups who feel they know what is best for students, particularly students of color who continue to experience extensive educational inequity.

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