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Resist (6/96)
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RESISTANCE TO THE MULTICULTURAL AGENDA IN HIGHER EDUCATION*

Current writings about U.S. higher education make it clear that these organizations are a central arena for the struggle with discrimination and with the challenges of diversity and multiculturalism. Numerous recent books and conferences have explored this domain and have suggested ways of introducing and institutionalizing multicultural changes in university and college operations (Association for Higher Education; American Association of Colleges and Universities; Altbach & Lomotey, 1991; Bowser, Auletta & Jones, 1993; Cheatham, 1991; Evans & Wall, 1991; Schoem, Frankel, Zuniga, & Lewis, 1993), focusing on matters as diverse as student and faculty recruitment and retention, curricular and pedagogical change, administrative restructuring, and new relationships with local communities. And other books and conferences have attacked this challenge to the traditional forms and contents of higher education, suggesting ways to resist the multicultural agenda (Heterodox; National Association of Scholars; Bernstein, 1994; DeSouza, 1991; Kimball, 1990; Steele, 1990).

Underlying this contest, and making it even more confusing for friends and foes alike, is a variety of definitions of multiculturalism - including varied terminology such as equal opportunity, affirmative action, diversity, anti-isms, etc. To be sure, the U.S. is a multicultural society, in the sense that many cultures are represented and tolerated within our nation. But some cultures and identity groups are tolerated more than others, and respect, resources and power are disproportionately accorded to those groups and people who have assimilated most closely to white (Northern and Western European), male, Christian, and heterosexual lifestyles. Moreover, our institutions of higher education are decidedly less multicultural than our society at large, not only in terms of un-diverse representations of faculty and students, but also in terms of curricular and support activities. We know that this is the result of multiple forms of discrimination: (1) "passive" or "indirect" discrimination elsewhere in the society (e.g., in elementary and secondary school systems, in housing, in generationally reproduced poverty and economic oppression) that have an effect on collegiate preparation, admissions and retention; and (2) "active" or "direct" discrimination - whether intentional or not - in higher education policies of exclusion or stratification (of people, of materials, etc.). We need remedies to these sorts of discrimination.

In this context, the kind of multiculturalism I am advocating is not focused on acknowledging or celebrating differences, *per se*, nor solely on creating more diverse collegiate populations. I also am concerned with challenging the dominating power of a limited set of cultural symbols and standards, and the social and economic injustice and inequality that accompanies them - this is, in essence, a concern for advancing social justice. This version of the multicultural agenda is broad and deep, and is the only interpretation likely to counter the varied forms of discrimination and privilege that are prevalent in our U.S. society. However, while this version of multiculturalism acknowledges and addresses multiple forms of oppression (racial, class, religious, sexual orientation, age, etc.) I recognize that all forms of oppression are not uniform. I especially

do not wish to shield or draw attention away from the paramount problem of racism - institutional white racism (Terry, 1996).

Resistance to change efforts such as multiculturalism is normal. It is most likely to be heated and prolonged when change involves deeply held values and traditions, such as those involved in organizational racism, sexism and other forms of privilege and injustice. Thus, we should expect that there is and will continue to be disagreement, conflict and struggle about multicultural and social justice efforts in higher education. Institutionalized forms of racism, sexism and classism, and the symbols, interests, values and people benefitting thereby, resist changes that might alter these benefits. In addition, multicultural programs and policies themselves often provoke and surface conflict and opposition. Efforts to advance this agenda that fail to anticipate and plan for such resistance fall prey to naive assumptions about the universal appeal of multiculturalism, the existence of a normative consensus on social justice issues and pathways, the moral rightness of this agenda, or the general good will of U.S. educators, students and the general public.

I wish neither to reify nor demean such resistance; rather, I try carefully to understand its claims and tactics and to distinguish between the rhetoric of resistance, or the shape of public debates, and its underlying sources. Many people have quite reasonable questions and disagreements about the meaning and value of multiculturalism. Many others worry that their own self-interest and comfort, their current privileges and powers, will be diminished by multicultural advances. And still others resist for reasons that are not conscious or obvious to themselves, or that they barely understand. The purpose of this analysis is not to eliminate dissent from the multicultural struggle, but to try to understand (and in some cases appreciate) it. But appreciating and understanding resistance does not mean tolerating or accommodating it; it also means learning how to overcome it. In order to be effective, the change tactics we use must be tuned to the nature of our goals, the character of the local institutional environment and culture, and the types of resistance we encounter.

How may we think of resistance?

The literature on social and organizational change suggests several different ways to conceptualize problems of resistance to change, especially changes of the sort with which we are concerned. Each of these frames identifies and conceptualizes the problem at a different level of analysis: individual, organizational, political or institutional/societal. These different approaches are by no means exclusive, as both the multicultural agenda and resistance to it operate at and across these levels of analysis and action.

One frame helps identify resistance occurring in the hearts and minds of individuals. For instance, in discussing personal attitudes and attitude change, Katz (1960) argues that people hold the attitudes they hold because they satisfy one or more core functions, each protecting a different kind of self-interest (intellectual, moral, psychic-emotional, material). People who view the racial or sexual playing field as level may resist efforts at affirmative action or multiculturalism because it challenges their sense of the fair way this society is currently ordered. They may be ignorant of the facts of inequality, or see current forms of inequality as merited and fair, but either way their intellectual ordering of reality is at stake. People with a strong belief in treating everyone as an individual, and every individual the same regardless of social background, may feel that the multicultural focus

on identifiable categories or groups of people, and their group rights or concerns, violates important values or principles of individual rights and compromises their own sense of moral integrity and fair or just behavior. In addition, defending one's psyche or ego involves avoiding insecurities and anxieties and protecting self-esteem. Personal anxiety may be escalated by the challenges of change in general and especially by stimulation of deeply held fears or guilt about racial and sexual interaction or about the personal discomfort involved in coming close to "the other". And finally, some people feel (consciously or unconsciously) that threats to their material status may accompany advances made by members of previously oppressed groups. It matters little in this last context whether the advantages so threatened are quite specific, as in job location or promotion, or rather general, as in the expected loss of power and privilege generally associated with the superior cultural and economic status of white people and males in this society.

A second frame comes from the literature on how powerful organizational interest groups may resist innovation or challenge. This literature focuses on how organizations are basically composed of groups simultaneously in conflict and cooperation with one another (in the case of higher education, students, faculty and staff) and how middle management responds to challenges from above or below, how the dominant coalition resists initiatives from below or from sources external to the organization, and how lower status groups respond to new managerial demands from above. When the anti-racist or multicultural agenda is generated by students, typically with substantial noise and protest, faculty members and administrators may act as the prime resisters. In these cases the resistance may be as much to the challenge itself, to threats to their power and decision-making privileges, as to the specific (racial or other) content of proposed or demanded changes. In some colleges and universities the multicultural agenda also is being instituted or championed by senior administrators. Then middle-level administrators and faculty may feel squeezed from above and below, from Deans/Chairs and from student groups. In addition, of course, less powerful white and male employees, staff and faculty or students may resist any senior administrative agenda; they also may feel threatened by the advances (real or imaginary) of women and people of color, and this direct threat (once again real or imaginary) to their already marginalized status and interests in the organization.

Two scholars writing about organizational resistance to change discuss the commonly used tactics of absorption and intimidation (Leeds, 1969; O'Day, 1974). Leeds discusses absorption as a managerial weapon that invites people advocating organizational changes around multiculturalism to put their energy to use in solving the organization's "minority recruitment or retention" problems, or in planning a conference to "explore" the issues of sexual harassment. Absorption "not only (seeks to) eliminates the pocket of nonconformity but also strengthens the organization by providing it with the services of an energetic, devoted group (p. 201)." O'Day also classifies various forms of intimidation management may use to encourage challengers to cease their activities. "Indirect intimidation" includes the nullification or invalidation of various change efforts or challenges, and the separation, transfer or isolation of change-agents from those peers or resources that might enable them to pursue their agenda more forcefully. "Direct intimidation" includes active defamation of the character or motives of challengers and, if necessary, their expulsion or dismissal from the organization. Faculty and administrators

resisting the multicultural agenda also may exploit some of the traditional cross-race or interethnic tensions that exist in the U.S. society and its educational systems. Such action may take the form of publicly escalating the threat multicultural programs may pose for white males, setting African-Americans and Latinos/as or men of color and women in competition with one another for scarce resources, or otherwise frustrating the development of coalitions across race, class or gender groupings.

A third theoretical frame comes from the literature on social movement and counter-movement activities. Any substantial movement for change creates "the conditions for the mobilization of countermovements. By advocating change, by attacking established interests, by mobilizing symbols and raising costs to others...(Zald & Useem, 1987, p. 247-248)." Thus, to the extent that a multicultural effort is visible and at least minimally successful it presents a potential challenge to the symbols and interests cherished by others, and these others can be expected to mobilize to resist further advance and to create a counter-attack. We see such counterattacks expressed in the language of "multiculturalism is balkanization", "affirmative action is reverse discrimination", "Black/Latino/a students/faculty are not competent", "special curricular programs are detroying the canon", etc., as well as in mobilized political power and funds. In the socio-cultural context of the U.S. society, supported by the individualistic belief system that explains powerless or oppressed groups' problems as caused by themselves (e.g., genetic inadequacy, personal laziness, cultural deficits) and powerful groups' successes as the result of individual merit (e.g., superior talent, hard work), these ideational or ideological resources have not been hard to come by. And given the skewed location of organizational power in the hands of white male constituencies, corollary material resources also have been easily generated and used.

A fourth frame is rooted in studies of the culture and structure of institutionalized discrimination/oppression in the U.S. society and organizations (see Feagin & Feagin, 1986; Omi & Wyant, 1986; among many others). Racism (and sexism and other forms of discrimination) are built into the very core of our society and are reflected in the everyday operation of our institutions - families, schools and colleges, media, work organizations, governmental agencies, police, etc. This system works, and has worked historically, to the benefit of white men, especially those of upper-middle and upper class status. Moreover, most white people are not consciously aware of the ways they have benefited from these structures; most have accepted the cultural myth that it is their hard work and talent alone that has privileged them, not that their superior status is a skewed result of discriminatory access to social resources and opportunities. Naturally, then, multicultural challenges to these cultures and structures is seen as an attack on the things that people have worked hard and meritoriously to obtain - and that they feel they deserve. Challengers themselves often are seen as wanting to get things without working hard for them - and that they don't deserve. Because this form of discrimination is institutionalized, one need not be personally prejudiced, or even conscious of one's actions, to resist challenges to institutionalized privilege, and individuals and organizations do not need to engage in overtly discriminatory behaviors or procedures to pass along resistance to change (see Feagin & Feagin's distinction between "direct" and "indirect" discrimination, 1986).

These four frames are not independent of one another - theoretically or practically. Our individual hearts and minds are shaped in part by the larger culture and structure;

organizational dynamics are impacted by social movement activities; both organizations and movements are composed in part of individuals; and all of this does take place within a larger society, its prevailing cultures and structures and its dominant institutional procedures and practices.

Resistance to change may be quite overt or rather subtle. It may involve active efforts to frustrate social justice concerns and to maintain discrimination and oppression, or it may take the form of passive acquiescence with traditional (and traditionally oppressive) behaviors and situations. The result of open conflict about multiculturalism often is a high level of confrontation and struggle. Given the generally low level of skill most organizational members have in dealing with serious conflicts of any sort, it is very difficult to institute positive processes of conflict engagement and resolution of these multicultural struggles...especially given the aforementioned complexity of individual, organizational and societal roots of resistance.

Sources of resistance to multicultural change in higher education.

My colleagues and I have been involved in a series of efforts designed to help individual faculty members develop ways of teaching that are more responsive to the increasingly diverse environment of higher education, and to help create long-term change in higher educational organizations (FAIRteach, 1994; Frankel, 1993). As one part of these organizational change efforts and faculty development workshops we focus attention on understanding, anticipating and dealing with institutional and personal resistance to the anti-racist, anti-sexist and multiculturalist agenda. There is, of course, a great deal of variety in the types and sources of resistance active on any single campus, and differences across campuses as well. A wide range of rhetorical posturing labels and attacks multiculturalism with suggestions that "ethnicity is destiny", that multiculturalism "sacrifices standards", "discards core values of Western culture", "destroys the possibility of community", etc. (Schulz, 1992).

The arguments made to counter multiculturalism are not necessarily the same as the sources of resistance; public rhetoric often masks real feelings, real organizational interests and real public as well as private priorities. Moreover, while these different arguments are complex, often occurring together, several different root sources of organizational and personal resistance commonly are discernible. Only through the identification and disaggregation of the broad phenomenon of resistance can we understand what's going on. Moreover, most of us who champion greater multiculturalism carry some of the following sources of resistance within ourselves as well. We have grown up and live in this society, have been subject to racist, sexist, classist, homophobic and other prejudicial and intolerant messages throughout our own lives, and carry our own "knapsack of white and male privilege" (Chesler, 1995; McIntosh, 1979). Full and careful exploration of resistance may help us better understand the roots (and potential ambiguities or ambivalences) of our own multicultural commitments as well as ways of countering resistance and pursuing social justice goals more effectively.

In the discussion that follows I adopt a shorthand (acknowledgedly dangerous) of discussing primarily racial issues, but also race and gender, as key elements in the multicultural challenge. Multiculturalism is of course broader than a challenge to race and gender discrimination and privilege; it includes concern for class, ethnicity, religion, sexual

orientation, ability and other social identity groups or categorizations that are used as discriminatory means of allocating social opportunities, resources, privileges and power. Moreover, almost none of these categories are binary, and each includes multiple sub-categories, many of which are socially disadvantaged and oppressed (e.g., race/ethnicity is not just Black and white, but Latino/a, Native-American, etc. - each with many different tribes and national origins; religion is not just Christian and Jewish, but Islamic, Buddhist, Atheist, Nativist, etc. - each with many different sects and traditions). At the same time I advocate such a broad definition, I also know that it is important to maintain a primary focus on the most sustained and egregious forms of oppression and discrimination, and not to try to advocate every form of liberation or advance at the same time. As Baker argues (1996, p. 144), "when the 'isms' are lumped together, oppression may appear to be a uniform problem", and that strategy often buys allies (or softens particularized resistance) at the cost of de-emphasizing race and racism.

Substantive ideological/philosophical disagreement exists with regard to the goals and content of multiculturalism or diversity in higher education. There are legitimate and important alternatives, and considerable intellectual and ideological difference and disagreement, about the preferred meaning or focus of multiculturalism, what a more multicultural educational organization might look like, and whether and how we can create teaching/learning communities of common value and interest across identity groupings. But such legitimate questions and differences often are transformed into resistance tactics, as colleagues, administrators or students argue that this is an unnecessary or unwise set of changes, and that much that is valued within the modern university will be jettisoned or threatened by the recruitment and admission/hiring of larger numbers of women and people of color and by making related curricular and pedagogical changes. Concerns about maintaining institutional excellence, upholding standards, combatting uncritical relativism, preserving the canon, and continuing appropriate methods of teaching, etc., may be presented to support this source of resistance. Discussion and debate often fail to focus on just what is merit and fair play, and the degree to which SAT scores or intellectual performance alone are appropriate criteria for college admission, graduation and faculty performance. These concerns have always been unclear in practice, and often are/were employed as covers for maintaining white male privilege, primarily through the establishment and sanctioning of "apparently neutral" but biased standards and implementation rules. In similar fashion, varied sources of resistance may "hide" under the banner of reasonable ideological difference.

In its more extreme form we have seen such ideological resistance championed by William Bennett's concern about the diminution or destruction of "our" western values and way of life, Arthur Schlesinger's call to halt the "Balkanization of America", Jesse Helm's labelling of "unnatural acts", and D'Souza's and Steele's arguments that affirmative action (especially on campus) is unnecessary, unfair and counterproductive. It is important to acknowledge the existence of real value differences, and to afford our ideological opponents and their ideas the dignity and respect we desire for ourselves and our own. Otherwise we may end up replacing the orthodoxy of racism and sexism with new orthodoxies - which, however preferable, may still create a stifling form of "political correctness" (it is a myth that this form of political correctness exists with any great and

sustained power right now, especially as compared to the "traditional correctness" of the academic culture, but it is a noisy presence and a potential danger nevertheless).

Progressives, allies in the struggle against racism and sexism, also may disagree with some aspects of the multicultural agenda. As noted above, the concern with multiple forms of discrimination and oppression is sometimes seen and used as a dilution of the concern about racial privilege and oppression, and as a way of distracting people from a forthright focus on anti-racism work. Moreover, to the extent that multicultural efforts start and stop with the "celebration of differences", and/or attempts at "mutual understanding", they are especially vulnerable to charges that they seek personal change at the cost of ignoring (or denying) the role of organizational power and structure, and themselves constitute avoidance and resistance to organizational changes.

Concern about loss of power and privilege. Changes in cherished ideas and ideals, in the racial or gender makeup of the faculty, or in the pedagogy and curriculum, may alter the dominance of traditional elites and their voice and power in the academy. Then some of these voices can be expected to object to changes that they say threaten Western society and challenge or threaten their self-interested position of power and privilege. Clearly multiculturalism does not discard Western traditions, but seeks to enrich and critique them via consideration of other points of view and experience. This source of resistance may be conscious or unconscious in origin; indeed, it has been argued that white males may not be aware of our degree of race and gender privilege in this racist and patriarchal society (McIntosh, 1979). How then could we be conscious of how the feared loss of these privileges may drive some of us to resist multiculturalism and the extension of these powers and privileges to others? But when faculty react hostilely to students' or colleagues' challenges to their classroom designs or procedures as overly monocultural and oppressive, they often are expressing clearly and consciously their defense of the privileges associated with classroom autonomy, instructional authority and "academic freedom". The concerns about loss of privilege are similarly obvious when claims are made that white male graduate students no longer can anticipate academic jobs and that only women and people of color now can be hired. Related dynamics of resistance may surface when efforts are made to "play off" the concerns of one set of traditionally disadvantaged or oppressed groups over another (e.g., in debates or contests over the priority of women's concerns or African-American concerns, of Asian concerns or Latino/a concerns).

Ignorance of the need for change or of the cost of the status quo (to students, to the development of viable knowledge, to the staff's mental health, to faculty time and energy - or anxiety, to our own ability to learn from one another) is another source of resistance. Sometimes this is ignorance about the negative impact of current course content and procedures on students (especially students of color); sometimes it is ignorance of the fact that there are other cultures present, and that different needs and styles of teaching and learning may be culturally associated; and sometimes it is ignorance about what is required in order to change and to support change efforts. In some of our faculty workshops, for instance, faculty (almost universally of good will and interested in supporting the multicultural agenda) often said that they did not know what they did or might have done in the classroom that was problematic for students of color (and women). One may take such statements as a clear example of privilege (only people with substantial

power can afford not to know how their behavior impacts on others), or of a refusal to become informed, but we decided to treat it as a simple statement of a desire for more information. We created 15 focus groups of students of color, asked them for examples of their experiences (positive and negative) with university faculty in and out of class, and presented the findings back to our colleagues (Chesler, Wilson & Malani, 1993). These reports, in the actual voices of students, provided clear and powerful answers to the question, and clear guidelines for altered behavior. Similar reports are available from self-studies conducted at various colleges and universities (see Chesler, 1996).

Lack of a clear vision or model of the future, and of how to get there, may stand in the way of some people's ability and willingness to engage in this effort and commit to what is for them an unknown (and potentially risky) future. As a result, images of "ethnicity as destiny", "the destruction of community" and "the creation of organizational chaos" take center stage. But to argue that our ethnicities (and race and gender and class) are influential in shaping our histories and perceptions is not to argue that they are essentialist or determinative in and of themselves. Moreover, the emphasis on ethnic or cultural differentiation does not mitigate against a trans-group organizational identity or sense of community. It does mean that we must teach/learn/work in more pluralistic and just organizations and communities - and that we must learn how to do that and create them. Fortunately, some scholars and activists have begun to generate clear images of multicultural organizations (Cox, 1993; Jackson & Holvino, 1988; Katz, 1988), but we need more and more detailed images and more examples of multicultural higher educational organizations (or of successful units or subunit innovations in this regard), and how to get there. Such unclarity (both about content and process) may be a prime factor in explaining the difficulty many executive officers and Deans or Chairs experience in providing multicultural leadership. Moving a college or university in a more multicultural direction requires complex skills in planning change, and such skills are not generally part of the portfolios of institutional leaders. In our experience, it also requires both the generation of a strategic plan for multicultural organizational change (Chesler & Reed, 1996; Jackson & Hardiman, 1994), and the ability to generate and/or respond proactively and productively to the more or less spontaneous crises and opportunities presented by student-led and organized movements for campus change.

Procedural ideological/philosophical disagreement may take the form of arguing that the change effort embodying multiculturalism is being planned or implemented in inappropriate ways...with inappropriate strategies. The most common stimuli to large-scale organizational change on local campuses, administrative mandates and/or student protests, often are characterized as examples of authoritarianism or anarchy, respectively (and indeed, sometimes they are). Generally students are the prime movers on this agenda, and students of color are the primary challengers of the "ancien regime", while faculty and administrators often come along later; the faculty plans and sometimes acts, the students challenge. Thus, resistance to multicultural initiatives pressed by students, in particular, may claim the rhetoric of upholding institutional authority and forestalling "turning the zoo over to the animals" or "ceding the institution to its inmates" - students.

When the multicultural agenda is advanced in ways that "trash" opponents, or disparage the styles and intentions of white males and members of other nominally privileged groups, we also can expect to encounter procedural objections. As Terry points

out, in the history of anti-racist programs “blaming and bashing easily replaced inquiry (1996, p.182),” and often action for change as well. This approach sacrifices authentic engagement for short term gains in righteousness and expression of anger/pain. The result is increased defensiveness and flight, the organization’s adoption of a “bunker mentality”, and the conversion of potential allies or uncommitted forces into resisters. In addition, those resisting the multicultural agenda often then can claim the “moral high ground” of victimization, reverse discrimination, and curtailment of academic freedom.

Even when the advocates of multiculturalism do not engage in trashing, however, individual faculty initiatives to create anti-racist and anti-sexist learning environments may be procedurally resisted by labelling them as pandering to student activism, abuses of academic freedom and misguided efforts to curtail free speech or impose “political correctness”. Certainly some abuses of this sort occur and are covered extensively by the media; when new voices clamor to be heard they may appear to be (and be) quite loud, both because the previously excluded are still finding/testing their new voice and because the previously protected have not yet learned to listen - and hear. But such events still are quite rare. Far more common is the maintenance of traditional faculty and administrative airtime and authority and the negative sanctioning or silencing (formally or informally) of advocates of the multicultural agenda and efforts to build more socially just educational organizations.

Another procedural issue focuses on where leadership of a multicultural change effort should be located: in a special Office of Multicultural Affairs or within every unit, as a staff or line position, in the hands of a white person or a person of color (or a multicultural team), etc. Other elaborate and extended procedural debates may center on whether the curriculum should change before the pedagogy, or without pedagogical changes, or the reverse. All these procedural disagreements and debates may have value and validity on their face; on the other hand, they may be strategically generated to mask other concerns or be the visible peaks of a broad resistance effort. While debate and discussion about proper procedures for a multicultural change effort is proper and useful, they often are delaying tactics, offering endless and time-consuming alternatives to the real hard work of change-making.

Lack of specific skills in teaching, learning, facilitating learning, researching or administering in a multicultural environment may prevent some people from changing and from advocating or supporting change efforts. For those of us who were socialized, trained and habituated in a more or less monocultural environment, in a system requiring people who were different to assimilate, or in a system dominated by white and eurocentric cultures, life in a multicultural organization will require us to operate differently. Some of the specific skills involved in teaching and working in more multicultural ways include knowing how to teach students with different learning styles (Anderson & Adams, 1992), creating inclusive classrooms (Collett & Serrano, 1992), encouraging relatively equal classroom participation patterns (Sadker & Sadker, 1992), dealing with students at different stages of their racial/ethnic identity development (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992; Tatum, 1992), dealing with one’s own personal or cultural anxieties (Weinstein & Obear, 1992), dealing with cultural conflicts among students and between students and the faculty, and of course knowing how to broaden the curriculum itself.

Emotional barriers to change include fear: fear of the unknown, fear of making a "mistake", fear of alienating students, anxiety about coming close to students who are "different", fear of being seen as "catering" to students of color, fear of reprisals from colleagues or chairs for spending too much time and energy on teaching to the detriment of other priorities, fear of being labelled as "politically correct", etc. They may also include pain or anger about being "encouraged" or perhaps "forced" to change. Some explorations of multiculturalism stimulate guilt about past activities: about prior insensitivities, unconscious or non-deliberate exclusions of students of color, behavior that women or people with different sexual orientations might have experienced as sexual humiliation or harassment, etc. Uncertainty or inconsistency about one's own emotional reactions to difference and change often causes these reactions to "leak" in covert ways, sometimes masquerading as ideological or otherwise principled forms of resistance. The liberal faculty, in particular, may feel emotionally assaulted or betrayed by multiculturalism's challenges. Colleagues who feel they have been and are allies in pro-civil-rights or anti-racism work may be quite distressed when not trusted by angry or offended students or faculty of color. This is approximately the situation described by Blauner over 20 years ago (1972). Some of these disheartened or disillusioned colleagues may resist further multicultural advance in response.

Fear of conflict may be closely related to other sources of resistance, such as lack of specific skills and emotional barriers. Several scholars suggest that efforts to diversify organizations often lead to temporarily exacerbated tension and conflict, as previously separated and often mutually distrustful groups are brought into more direct contact with one another (Cox, 1993). Certainly there also is evidence of mismanaged multicultural efforts that have led to highly conflictual situations. If faculty members and administrators (let alone students) lack the skill to deal with such conflicts, they may appear (and indeed, become) quite threatening. And if one's reputation as a good teacher or administrator is linked to low tension and conflict in classroom or workunit, regardless of new environmental realities, this threat is likely to be double-barreled. Then conflict that does arise will be ignored or suppressed, to lie stagnant or rot until it explodes like "a raisin in the sun".

Current disciplinary or departmental structures that require a narrow curricular focus or a limited range of pedagogical options (e.g., to lecture, to have high enrollments, to retain certain grading forms, to rely on standardized assignments) may forestall and frustrate innovation and change. Moreover, to the extent that a multicultural curricular endeavor requires interdisciplinary content (and probably multi-instructor collaboration and even team teaching), departmental structures, resources and norms that resist such collaboration effectively frustrate progress on this agenda.

Inadequate resources, such as monies, materials and teaching assistance may seriously curtail the innovation and implementation of new policies and programs - in student affairs, in staff relations, in administrative style, in the curriculum and in the classroom. Similarly, time and energy constraints may cause faculty and administrators to resist learning and trying new ways of working with students and with one another. Many of us are, after all, so overloaded and fraught with non-scholarly bureaucratic tasks as to reject new duties, new learning opportunities, and innovative tasks out of hand.

Efforts to transform curriculum and pedagogy, to devise new grading and assignment systems, to do more comprehensive advising, to deal openly with controversial or conflictual issues, and to innovate in classrooms, require substantial personal investments and generally additional material resources. Most often, advocates of the multicultural agenda must carry the burden of this change on their own shoulders and personal time - a prescription for eventual burnout and alienation.

Concern about public support from peers, university administrators, alumni, and even legislative bodies or government agencies also may prevent faculty and administrators from trying new ideas, particularly if it is not clear that such effort is valued and rewarded. The public attack on affirmative action and multiculturalism in the halls of Congress and the Federal Courts feeds the ideological stance of resisters and raises ultimate questions of effectiveness for advocates. This is, of course, part of the more general struggle over issues of social justice and equality in our nation.

Personal prejudice and bigotry continue to exist as a central part of our national culture, and we cannot overlook this potent force on our campuses as well. Despite arguments that personal racial prejudice is diminishing, that it only is an ailment of the old, the uneducated, the lower-classes, or that it is now taking a more "rational" form, it continues to negatively affect the lives of people of color and women (and in less obvious ways whites and men as well), and to take overt form in resistance to multicultural advance. Certainly, well-established forms of organizational and institutional racism operate to pass on and sustain and implement resistance, whether they have a strong and overtly prejudicial component or not.

Embedded white racism (monoculturalism) rooted in the society at large, and evident in all our political and economic institutions, helps provide and support resistance to the multicultural agenda. The educational and instructional (let alone financial) inequalities and racial separatism of our nation's elementary and secondary school system are passed on to colleges and universities. Societal classism combines with racism and sexism to dramatically affect the life opportunities available to people with different group identities, and so sets the stage for white males' privileges and women and peoples of color's disadvantages to be attributed to local cultures and individual talent and industry, rather than to the embracing national culture and political economy. In the midst of these trends, and societal passivity about or resistance to changing them, not overtly challenging those structures and cultures is tantamount to supporting them.

A number of these sources of resistance are summarized in Figure 1, categorized according to their primary occurrence at the individual, organizational or institutional level of operations.

What does this resistance look like in practice?

These roots or sources of resistance may be illustrated by drawing on the work cited previously to create a typology of resistant actions, including attempts to: (1) nullify the multicultural agenda through obfuscation, denial or outright rejection of its claims and requests/demands; (2) incorporate or absorb the multicultural agenda through efforts to delay action for change, assert apparent institutional acceptance where little exists in reality, engage leaders in other tasks, and even reward challengers by moving them into

organizational positions of higher authority that at the same time diminish their ability to maintain their roles as challengers; (3) sabotage the multicultural agenda by failing to implement good faith agreements for change or by carrying out agreements in bad faith; and (4) counter-attack the multicultural agenda by intimidating or harassing its leaders and members, or by mobilizing and supporting other resistant constituencies. For instance:

- Refusal to listen to and act on student, staff or faculty complaints about racist or sexist or homophobic activities (nullification)
- Being unwilling to seek out evidence of insensitivity, harassment and discrimination (denial by passivity)
- Denial of the existence of institutional discrimination, or denial that the institution is partly responsible for passing on prior societal discrimination in elementary and secondary schooling (nullification)
- Failure to hire or admit or promote faculty or staff of color or women because they are not "as qualified" as available white men, without examining the current criteria for "qualified" or determining their relevance for the tasks at hand (nullification)
- Failure to initiate or support (via participation or provision of resources) faculty or graduate instructors' efforts at diversity training, multicultural organizational development or constituency mobilization and challenge (nullification)
- Invitation to innovators or challengers to turn their change efforts or protests into helping the organization plan for incremental change (absorption)
- Provision of partial (but insufficient and short-term) funding for multicultural innovations in classrooms, dormitories or social organizations, in the expectation that they will fail to be fully implemented or sustained over time and therefore will not be successful (absorption)
- Delivery of a non-inspiring speech, a document and report, or only mild support in favor of non-discrimination (absorption)
- Efforts to delay action on obvious problems via creation of a "commission of inquiry" into campus discrimination and subsequent "cultural audits" (absorption via delay)
- Carry out multicultural policies, programs and curricular or pedagogical reforms "to the letter", brooking no flexible adaptation or response (sabotage via over-conformity)
- Failure to carry out the full spirit of anti-racist and anti-sexist policies and programs that were generated by senior administrators or negotiated in apparent good faith with challengers (sabotage)
- Admission, employment or promotion of obviously "less qualified" people of color or women just to meet diversity goals...and making it clear that this is what is being done (sabotage)
- Harassment and pressure on challengers to cease their activity (counter-attack via intimidation)
- Labelling challengers "hotheads", "racists", "uninformed anti-intellectuals", "do-gooders", "frustrated women", "destroyers of western civilization", "acting out post-adolescents", "low-achievers", "sexual deviants", etc. (counter-attack via defamation)

- Collaboration with resisters to the multicultural agenda via overt or covert assistance to them with resources and publicity for their actions (counter-attack via counter-movement activity)
- Direct legal or physical attack or economic sanctioning of multicultural and social justice advocates (counter-attack)

Nullification involves university colleagues and administrators (as well as students) arguing that there is no real problem to be dealt with here, that current forms of instruction are adequate - or even superior - and that the admissions, faculty development, program innovation, staff deployment or other change effort itself is wrong-headed. Or, having acknowledged that some set of problems arise with regard to a narrow curriculum, or a low level of successful instruction and retention of students of color, the argument may be made this is nothing that the university system is responsible for. It may be rationalized as "natural", as the fault of inadequate secondary educational preparation or as a consequence of the extent of racism existing and unchangeable in the broader U.S. culture. Or, it may be argued that as pressing as issues of racial and ethnic equity may be, they are best handled through offices of student affairs and student life, and not in classrooms. Nullification also may take the form of distinct lack of support, as in official refusal to sponsor, publicize or otherwise facilitate multicultural change efforts.

Absorption or incorporation can be quite subtle. For instance, in the face of efforts to create innovative forms of teaching in a diverse classroom and community, university colleagues and administrators may try to co-opt or pre-empt the change effort by promising to build it into other programs or other change efforts (e.g., CQI, TQM, OD), or by suggesting that initiative and support for this effort is best placed in administrative offices. Such absorption efforts may appear at first glance like substantial institutional support, and may appear to take the burden off overloaded and underresourced faculty advocates, but if key resources and prompt action to reproduce, expand and disseminate faculty multicultural development efforts are not forthcoming, the usurpation of faculty initiative and momentum may lead to major delay and distraction. Another form that incorporation may take is the provision of symbolic rewards to a few leaders of the change effort, without significant alteration in the reward structure available to and impinging on large numbers of faculty members. Individual prizes, as welcome as they may be, are barely substitutes for changes in organizational norms and infrastructures that might encourage, support (or even "require") new ways of teaching and learning, new ways of permanently rewarding innovative classroom efforts, and new ways of working with faculty members.

In addition to these incorporative efforts, we may see resistance in the form of delaying tactics, in the effort to create and sustain special commissions, planning teams and never-ending dialogue or inquiry about the nature and extent of campus racism or sexism or homophobia, or the content and procedures of new multicultural curriculum and pedagogy. This is an especially common tactic in the face of student protests and challenges. I am not suggesting that dialogue and careful consideration are not important; surely they are. But at some point in time endless dialogue, study groups and committee work, and constant soul searching and fine-tuning of proposals and programs, represent unnecessary delay.

Sabotage of the multicultural change effort often is hard to detect, and may only become obvious as we encounter and ponder new levels of apparent institutional incompetence or bureaucratization that surface only when discrimination or harassment is the issue and anti-racism or multiculturalism is the agenda. Promises to provide support that are never realized, difficulty in locating responsible officers when key (especially funding) decisions must be made, and spreading rumors about the expected or presumed failure of multicultural activities, are examples.

Finally, resistance also may take the overt form of counterattack or efforts to cease or destroy the student experience/activity, faculty development, staff training, or organizational change initiative involved in multicultural change. Faculty leaders of multicultural or anti-racist and anti-sexist efforts may be labelled "liberal" or worse, and seen as "acting out" in this arena as a substitute for their "inability" to do high quality academic work. Their motives may be impugned as well, and efforts at intimidation are well-documented in the literature on change in higher educational systems around race equity issues. Faculty or staff may be transferred or given alternative assignments, explicitly to draw their energy away from the change effort. Students may be suspended or expelled, or subject to civil action as a result of their threat to good order or academic freedom. And certainly we have witnessed, historically and recently, police brutality, assassinations and physical attacks visited upon advocates of multicultural changes.

Dealing with resistance

While analyzing the general nature of resistance to multiculturalism is a daunting task, it is even more difficult to suggest clear and coherent ways of dealing with such resistance. In part this is because so much of what can and should be done is contextualized by and dependent upon the local situation - the local source and shape of resistance, the specific campus or unit environment, the ideologies and personal resources of local advocates of multicultural change, and the forces we can mobilize to help us deal with resistance. But the first steps, to be sure, are to see resistance as natural and inevitable, and to acknowledge its complex and multifaceted nature. Conflict over the shape and substance of higher education is normal in this society, and it often takes shape in struggles between faculty and students, between faculty, students and administrators, and of course within any of these groups as well. It should be no surprise that serious campus conflict now surfaces over issues of racial and social justice. The trick is neither to avoid nor deny such conflict, but to plan how to deal with it...how to use it as leverage and stimulus for change rather than as an insurmountable or fearsome barrier.

Like other situations in which dealing with conflict is both necessary and problematic, it is important to keep in mind that the objective of making multicultural change is not the same as coming to agreement or even doing away with conflict. In some circumstances, surfacing and escalating underlying conflict may be vital to draw people's attention to problems of discrimination and injustice, and to mobilize others to come to the aid of the change effort. Disagreement and conflict may continue to exist, even as the change process unfolds, especially when the price of agreement or peace may simply not advance the multicultural agenda. Nevertheless, there are multiple tactics available for dealing with conflict and resistance.

Dialog is an attempt to develop mutual understanding; it is not the same as a monologue, debate or effort at persuasion. It involves careful (and usually empathic) listening to and hearing of another's views or experiences, and fullsome sharing of one's own (see the report of recent experience with student intergroup dialoging in Zuniga & Nagda, 1993). Obviously, dialog requires the establishment of a trusting relationship and context, and if this mutual trust is not forthcoming the vulnerability required for open sharing of ideas will be impossible. Dialog, then, is most likely to be an effective response strategy when the sources of resistance include substantive disagreement, as long as that disagreement is not held so strongly that it forstalls openness, and lack of vision or conceptual frameworks.

Education can deal with resistance when there is some acknowledgement of gaps in information or skills (to the extent we consider skill development as an educational activity). This is unlikely when portions of the faculty or administration continue to assert their superior knowledge base, of course. Educational efforts may be as diverse as direct and indirect instruction, instructor-oriented or peer-oriented delivery of materials and information, banking or liberationist (experiential) pedagogies, practice or real-time efforts in the field, etc. It is most likely to be an effective strategy when the sources of resistance include ignorance, lack of vision, difficulties in conceptualizing and planning change, lack of specific multicultural teaching and administering skills, and prejudice (although there is serious question regarding the effectiveness of traditional educational tactics in prejudice reduction).

Cooperative problem-solving involves people working together on specific projects or objectives, despite their potential disagreement on broad goals or interests and values. Thus, it requires a search for a "problem" that various parties identify as important to them to solve, and for ways of finding "common ground" (e.g., the failure of the current curriculum to excite students of any background, perception by a wide range of the faculty that tenure and mentoring processes are unfair, the college's inability to recruit and retain good students or good faculty generally, high turnover among people of color in student affairs or other administrative offices, etc.). It also requires attention to the quality of interaction and teamwork between advocates and resisters of the multicultural agenda, because cooperative problem-solving necessarily involves cooperation - at least temporarily and on a specific project or program. Cooperative problem-solving does not necessarily (although it may) reduce differences, but does engage people in working together (at least temporarily) on the things they do agree about. This strategy is most likely to be effective where there is a strong possibility of common ground, and where resistance has a strong interpersonal or organizational component, as in dealing with resistance based on lack of vision, difficulty conceptualizing and planning change, procedural disagreement (when procedural concern is not simply a cover for strong ideological resistance), emotional barriers, fear of conflict, and time/energy constraints. It also may be effective in challenging organizational or institutional racism/sexism, at least in those situations where large numbers of people agree that such discrimination exists and where it is not so firmly entrenched in the unit's hierarchy as to overwhelm cooperative efforts at reform.

Influence and persuasion efforts involve applying intellectual appeals (reasoning or argument, and perhaps debates) and/or political/economic incentives (rewards and

sanctions) as ways of altering individual and organizational behavior and modifying resistant acts. Such efforts assume some openness on the part of resisters to hear (and really listen to) such appeals, or at least to be influenced by changed incentives, and the power on the part of advocates to produce such incentives. They are most likely to be effective in those situations where the sources of resistance include substantive disagreement and concern about loss of power and privilege (where such positioning is not overly strong or closed-minded), procedural disagreement, and monoculturalism or discrimination that is organizationally based.

Bargaining assumes the existence of strong and continuing disagreement, usually based in different material interests and social positions. It requires conflicting parties' acknowledgement that they have some interests in common, not the least of which may be sheer preservation of the college's operating capacity, the maintenance of relative peace in dormitories, the prevention of student/staff boycotts or strikes, or defense against "common external enemies." Bargaining assumes less "common ground" and trust than does cooperative problem-solving, although some argue that bargaining is just another form of cooperative problem-solving - albeit one with considerably greater displays and applications of power and coercion on all sides. A modicum of faith in the willingness of others to bargain, and to implement the outcomes of bargaining in "good faith", are essential. Bargaining is most likely to be an effective strategy when various parties have relatively equal power, and when the sources of resistance include substantive and procedural disagreement, concern about loss of power and privilege, inadequate resources, and embedded monoculturalism.

Contesting or fighting involves developing and exerting sufficient power to require (force) the resistant party to alter its behavior. Since it makes no claim to alter mindsets or attitudes, but to control certain behaviors, it is generally not seen as appropriate for the liberal intellectual ethics of most college campuses (despite its constant presence and use by faculty and administrators with superior power). The kinds of power involved range from typical organizational sanctions on faculty and staff (such as merit reviews, wage and salary adjustments, promotions/demotions) to political mobilization efforts by students... and occasionally staff or faculty (protests, demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, etc.). This strategy is only likely to be effective when advocates have access to such power and its use, and is most likely to be necessary when facing entrenched and immovable resistance from sources such as strong substantive disagreement, concern with loss of power and privilege, enduring procedural disagreement, and institutionalized monoculturalism and discrimination.

This list of ways to deal with resistance is not complete, and other strategies, or modifications and mixes of these strategies, may be most effective in particular situations. One might start with a consensus-based strategy such as dialogue, and proceed to bargaining only when it is clear that mutual listening and regard is absent. Similarly, one might start with requests for cooperative problem-solving, and to stay with this approach as long as good faith efforts are evident. In contrast, one might start with threats and displays of power, moving to cooperative problem-solving or education when it appears that willing collaborators are present and committed to work on change (Chesler, 1994). Moreover, there is no guarantee that any or all of these strategies will be effective,

because the resistance to multiculturalism - from these many sources - is at least as wide and deep as the multicultural agenda itself.

Conclusion

The focus on organizational resistance reminds us of the controversial nature of the issues involved in campuses and classrooms, and provides warning to any member of the higher education community who wishes to undertake multicultural change efforts. In order to advance the multicultural agenda this resistance must be overcome. If we take seriously a power analysis of higher educational organizations, faculty and administrators would do well to complement the instructional and strategic work we do on multiculturalism with efforts to forge coalitions with activist students - in and out of classrooms - and with community members. Allies who share important components of a multicultural vision, whatever their status, represent important resources in the change process. But such faculty-administrative-student-community coalitions will not be easy. These different groupings have very different educational experiences, rooted in their different locations in the social hierarchies of organizational status and privilege. Just as interracial, interclass and intergender coalitions for change face great difficulties, so do interstatus coalitions in the college community. But they also hold great promise - for learning how to work together and for accomplishing the work itself, and for bringing the external realities of life in the U.S. to bear on campus issues.

Just as it is important not to overlook or deny the existence of resistance, it is important not to overstate it and not to categorize all non-support as resistance. Some resistance can be overcome by efforts at communication and dialogue, by collaborative inquiry and problem solving, or by the mobilization of faculty, administrative and student constituencies. An entire institution does not have to be transformed, nor convinced of the need for change, for substantial groups of university members to begin to re-educate themselves and their peers, to begin to dramatically improve the quality of instruction and interaction with students and colleagues - especially with people who are members of traditionally oppressed groups - and to begin to provide a more equitable and supportive climate of learning and living for members of all racial, ethnic, class and gender groups.

*In preparing this piece I have benefitted from the collegueship, collaboration and reactions of James Crowfoot, Beth Reed, Shari Saunders, Margaret White and my colleagues in the UM's Program in Conflict Management Alternatives.

Figure 1

RESISTANCE TO THE MULTICULTURAL AGENDA

At the individual level

- Conscious or unconscious beliefs in white/male supremacy
- Lack of skill in intergroup interaction
- Ignorance of cultural differences and distress
- Defense of advantage/privilege (conscious or unconscious)
- Defense of unmeritorious base of advantage/privilege
- Concern about lifespaces/career disruption
- Fear of conflict
- Time and energy concerns
- Fear of exposing ignorance and incompetence
- Fear of being trashed

At the organizational level

- Defense of status power and privilege
- Commitment to cherished traditions and symbols
- Perceptions of low reward for innovation/change
- Normative compliance
- Perception that new policy is only rhetoric
- Concern about colleagues' reactions (loss of friends)
- Concern about inefficiency/noise/conflict
- Uncertainty about market demand or advantage for change

At the societal level

- Culture of white male merit and superiority
- Culture of individualism and victim blame
- Systemic economic advantage for white upper-middle class men
- Concentration of political power among white upper-middle class men
- Recorded history and traditions
- Institutionalized racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, etc.

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