Praxialism: a philosophical foundation of multicultural education in a democratic society

Philemon O. Anosike

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A Dissertation

entitled

Praxialism: A Philosophical Foundation of Multicultural Education in a
Democratic Society

By

Philemon O. Anosike, Sr.

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as a partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Foundations of Education:
Theory and Social Foundations

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May, 2013
An Abstract of

Praxialism: A Philosophical Foundation of Multicultural Education in a Democratic Society

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The praxial philosophy of music education is proposed as a potential inclusive philosophical foundation of a multicultural education that broadly encompasses race, gender, religion, and people with disabilities. The praxial philosophy is grounded in the practice of multiple cultures by different peoples in a democratic society. Culture is viewed as a significant human engagement, which is necessary for the continuity of life. It upholds the equality of all cultures in their ability to sustain its people over a period of time. The central finding of this study is that the values of cultural recognition and inclusion underlie and drive the various historical movements that gave rise to and shaped the idea of multicultural education; those values are at the core of liberal democracy; and praxial philosophy is also grounded in those same values and therefore is a potential philosophical framework for multicultural education. The study contributes to the understanding of the philosophy and intellectual history of multicultural education.
In Memoriam

*Dedicated To A Great Mother and Friend*

This work is dedicated to the memory of my dear friend, Mrs. Dorothy Anne Goodloe. . . . It is your love of humankind, your beauty and purity of spirit, your generosity, and kindness of heart that marked the beginning of this journey. Though you are not around to physically witness the end, the thought of you will forever remain in my mind and will celebrate the success of this journey, as your soul Rests in Peace with our God the Creator.
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Above all unto thee, Almighty God, be all Glory and Honor for the strength, perseverance, wisdom, and the desire to seek knowledge.
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Chapter One
Introduction

Cultural diversity is a basic social fact of American society. American society is characterized by a rich diversity. It can be argued that this fundamental diversity calls for a multicultural education responsive to the core values of a liberal democracy. As suggested by the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) (1999), such an education should be “committed to a philosophy of inclusion that embraces the basic tenets of democracy and cultural pluralism” (http://nameorg.org/board-of-directors/governance-2/philosophy-code-of-ethics/). The purpose of this dissertation is to make a contribution to a philosophy of inclusion as foundational to a conception of multicultural education. It is proposed that a “praxial philosophy” can serve as a potential theoretical framework, one among a reasonable plurality of possible philosophical frameworks, for a conception of multicultural education in the context of a liberal democracy.

Praxial philosophy, popular in music education, was developed by the Canadian scholar and music educator, David Elliot (1995), who believes that music makers throughout the world are practitioners of “a diverse human practice” which is called “music.” Praxial philosophy focuses on different cultural forms of musical activity as significant human engagement. Informed by a variety of cultural perspectives and different disciplines, this philosophy underscores the role that different forms of music play in everyday life, as well as its emphasis on diversity, social justice, and its capability to unify the curriculum. The praxial philosophy has been influential in providing a broad-based framework for the inclusion of music in the school curriculum. It conceives
culture as a conscious act of human engagement that is sustained through action and practice from generation to generation. The term ‘praxial,’ hence the noun ‘praxeology,’ originates from the word ‘praxis,’ which is defined by the Merriam Webster Dictionary as the “exercise of [human] action, or a customary practice or conduct.” Praxis involves “action” and “practice.” “Action” is the exercise of “an act of will” in the process of doing something, while “practice” – an application or use, as in knowledge or skills -- as distinguished from theory, is the process of doing or performing something in a customary or habitual manner. Thus the term praxeology implies the study of human action and conduct that engages the practical side of human action, habit, or established/accepted practice or custom of a people as opposed to a focus on theory.

Based on its capability to unite the various historical movements of the oppressed people premised upon a common interest in freedom, diversity, and national unity, it is proposed that praxial philosophy is potentially a viable philosophical framework for multicultural education. Education, as praxis, is a practice that exists in every culture around the world through which the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge is sustained through generations. From this perspective, a multicultural education gives equal recognition to the cultural diversity that constitutes a pluralistic, democratic society.

This study is intended to contribute to the understanding of the philosophy and intellectual history of multicultural education. The stated purpose of the study is to propose the praxial philosophy as a possible philosophical framework for multicultural education. The praxial philosophy directs attention to the practice of different cultures, by different people, as significant human endeavors necessary for the continuity of life.
It promotes the idea that education is a practice of teaching and learning that exists in every culture around the world, which also sustains different people in different cultures. The idea of “associated living,” espoused by Dewey (1916), is brought to light through the praxial philosophy because praxial philosophy is premised upon the practices of diverse cultures, which form a symbiotic relationship through supporting and informing one another. It further upholds the equality of all cultures in its ability to sustain its people over a period of time. It then logically holds that the praxial philosophy is suited as a philosophical framework for multicultural education because it upholds the critical principle that all cultures are equal, and no one culture is greater than the other because all cultures play important roles in the life and learning of its people. It instantiates the core liberal democratic values of cultural recognition and inclusion.

**Research Question**

Therefore, the central research question of this study is: can Praxial Philosophy serve as a philosophical framework for a conception of multicultural education consistent with the imperatives of a democratic society?

In response to this question, the central finding of this study is that the values of cultural recognition and inclusion underlie and drive the various historical movements that gave rise to and shaped the idea of multicultural education; those values are at the core of liberal democracy; and praxial philosophy is also grounded in those same values and therefore is a potential philosophical framework for multicultural education.

It should be noted that multicultural education can be, as is the case with education in general, grounded in a number of different philosophical frameworks. The purpose of this study is to explore an additional perspective in the form of Praxialism.
The purpose here is not to refute *per se* these other perspectives; rather, it is to explore an additional philosophical possibility.

It has been argued throughout the history of American educational thought, that public schools should serve the major needs of society (Tozer, 2006). From the perspective of democratic ideals, schools should offer an equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of ethnic origin, social class, gender, sexual orientation, or mental health and physical disabilities. That is, education should be inclusive. This imperative is common across the educational philosophical spectrum. It can also be argued that inclusion is in turn contingent upon equal cultural recognition. Through education, a citizen is able to understand the current changes in the society as well as its implications to the advancement of the society. Society evolves toward higher ideals when it is able to commit to a moral obligation, to respect the rights of all individuals and groups of people, granting them inalienable rights to all the freedoms granted by the Bill of Rights, including the right to equal access to schooling and educational resources. American society has indeed evolved into a multicultural democracy and as such, the old educational paradigm which tends to favor a particular group of people, including those termed “the natural aristocrats,” based on their race and talent, at the expense of the general public (Tozer, 2006, pp. 36-38), is no longer effective in educating America’s future citizens. The type of education that may work for America in the twenty-first century is an educational system that is transformed to address the needs of a multicultural society.

The conception of multicultural education proposed in this study is an example of an inclusive approach rooted in a philosophical framework that is grounded in diversity,
social justice, and cultural recognition. The praxial philosophy provides a potential framework because it is a philosophy that is grounded on the practices of cultures around the world, and it also argues that all cultures are relevant in the lives of its adherents regardless of the circumstance upon which it is practiced. Furthermore, the logic of the praxial philosophy is rooted in the classical tripatriate constellation of knowledge, which emphasizes the harmonious development of the theoretical knowledge (the intellect), the practical knowledge (practice), and the productive knowledge (production) (see chapter four, p. 116). Since the praxial philosophy promotes equal value of all cultures in human development, it therefore logically becomes a strong candidate that advocates mutual cultural respect, the recognition and coexistence of all the cultures in the transmission and proliferation of knowledge in the education of all American children. Thus, the praxial philosophy can provide a rationale for diversity and inclusiveness, while being premised upon the logic of democracy—equality and freedom for all.

From this perspective, the primary goal of a multicultural education is to encourage the educational achievement of all students in America, including those that have been traditionally disenfranchised. Nieto (1996), for example, views multicultural education as “antiracist basic education for all students that permeates all areas of schooling, characterized by a commitment to social justice and critical approaches to learning” (pp. 307-308). By this assessment, she asserts that multicultural education challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society. This view accepts and affirms the existence of racial difference, ethnicity, religion, language, economics, sexual orientation, gender, and other differences that students, communities, and teachers encompass (Nieto, 1996). In this broad conception, Nieto
(1999) argues that a multicultural education approach “should permeate the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as interactions among teachers, students, and families in school and outside of it” (p. 48).

The praxial philosophical framework includes all students, and does not exclude anyone in the process of teaching and learning. Praxialism promises hope in the adequate preparation of teachers and administrators to face the challenges of multiculturalism, equity, diversity, and social justice. The major needs of our society in the 21st century are centered on the question of a just response to diversity in a liberal democratic society, a response that achieves equity and social justice, for all. It will be argued that the development of an effective multicultural education for a democratic society should embrace an inclusive philosophical framework. It will be argued that such a philosophical framework can potentially be provided by the praxial philosophy.

It will be argued that the praxial philosophy provides the rationale for cultural recognition and the development of self-identity. The misrepresentation, stereotypes, and the distortion of the images of the minority cultures in basal series as observed by Rehyer, 1986; Reimer, 1992; and Pirofski, 2003, is an example of what Charles Taylor (1994) observed as [a cultural] “nonrecognition or misrecognition” which he argues, “is capable of inflicting harm, and can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (p. 25). A person who has been denied recognition over a period of time may suffer a loss of self-identity or mental imprisonment. Nonrecognition and misrecognition have been used as a social oppressive tool against members of minority cultures, especially in the public schools.
The praxial philosophical framework is rooted in the rationale of equal recognition of all the students, teachers, and administrators of the public school. The equal recognition offered by the praxial philosophical framework extends to all aspects of education from equal school supplies to a balanced approach of the images and cultural content in the basal series and other text books, and the equal recognition of all people who will be treated with equal human dignity in all cases related to the educational process. In all, the praxial philosophy recognizes the authenticity of cultural practices throughout the world. It provides the rationale for the expansion of the curriculum to include the fundamentals of diverse cultural practices into the school curriculum. The praxial philosophical framework promises a positive cultural engagement and contributions of all peoples in the society. Thus, the equality of learning opportunities will transcend knowledge, and cultural inequality will give way to equal accessibility.

This study will be approached from the perspective of content analysis, logical analysis, and interpretation. Among other things, it will explore the connections between the ideas of democracy and multiculturalism. Such connection will serve as the groundwork for the plausibility of the praxial philosophy as a framework for multicultural education in a democratic society.

Two perspectives on multicultural education will be explored in this study: (1) the intellectual history of multicultural education in the context of a liberal democracy, and (2) the proposal of the praxial philosophy as a potential philosophical foundation for multicultural education. Section one (chapters two and three) explores the historical development of multicultural education as well as its consistency with democratic values. This section provides an in-depth analysis of multicultural education, and the historical
precedents that are deemed forerunners of the multicultural education movement. Chapter Two, the historical development of multicultural education, explores the historical roots of multicultural education highlighting the various historical movements that ultimately gave rise to the multicultural education movement. It attempts to make relevant connections between the ideology and practices of the earliest forms of multicultural education and how it evolved to its current conception and practice, which is expected to serve a multicultural democratic society in the twenty-first century. The supporting literatures that informed this section of the study are the works of James Banks, 1992, 1993, & 1994; Geneva Gay, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1997; Christine Sleeter, 1989; and Carl Grant (2008). These notable scholars and educators made a strong case linking the historical origins of multicultural education to the ethnic studies movement. The ethnic studies movement, in turn, was an important outcome of the Civil Rights movement whereby many universities, colleges, and public schools encouraged the teaching of ethnic minority courses as a response to the decay in race relations and the mass oppression of minorities (especially African Americans) which received national and international attention in the 1960s. The movement that gave rise to the existing multicultural education began in the twentieth century as ethnic studies, when African American scholars such as George Washington Williams, Carter G. Woodson, W. E. B. DuBois, Horace Mann Bond, and Charles H. Wesley pioneered African American literatures (under ethnic studies). The goal was to challenge the negative images and stereotypes of African Americans prevalent in mainstream scholarship by creating accurate descriptions of the life, history, and contributions of African Americans” (Banks, 1992, pp. 274-275). According to James Banks, the works of these early
scholars in African American studies “formed the academic roots of the current
multicultural education movement when it emerged in the 1960s and 1970s”
(http://www2.yk.psu.edu/~jlg18/506/multicultural-yes.pdf). Thus, the scope and
emphasis of the current multicultural education is on preserving the legacy of the ethnic
studies movement, aimed at re-writing the history and contributions of the minority
groups (African Americans, and Latino/Latina).

Although the foundation of the ethnic studies movement was laid by early African
American scholarship particularly, the writings of George Washington Williams (1882,
Horace Mann Bond (1939), and Charles H. Wesley (1935), Carl Grant (2008) argues that
the current multicultural education movement was the product of “a chain of linked
actions that includes ethnic movements, court decisions, legislation, publications,
constitutional mandates, and a code of conduct that embraced the principles of social
justice, the elimination of poverty, racism, classism, religious bigotry, and sexism in the
United States” (p. 2). He further broadened the foundational origins of multicultural
education to include past historical movements such as the Intercultural Movement,
Intergroup Movement, Civil Rights Movement, and the Ethnic Studies Movement. Grant
recognized the movements as the historical precedence of the evolution of multicultural
education movement in the United States. Although Grant (2008) rendered a swift
historical account of the origins of multicultural education from multiple sources, what
appears to have received inadequate attention is the contributions of the early African
American scholarship whose writing marks the real beginning of formal conversation in
the history, religion, folklore, and experiences of African Americans in the Americas.
The response to ethnic studies movements in the twentieth century was so swift that “every major institution [in America] established either courses or academic departments that focused primarily on African American studies at the height of the Civil Rights movement” (Morgan, 2000, p. 97). The objective of the ethnic studies movement remained to encourage African American scholars to teach African American children about their own history and culture in an effort to instill in them a sense of cultural pride and self-esteem (which has been badly distorted by the ideology of racial superiority), and as a response to the violence of racism, racial stereotypes, and demeaning cultural inferiority theories directed against African Americans (Banks, 1993; Kaltsounis, 1995).

Ethnic studies gradually evolved, going through different stages before emerging as multicultural education. James Banks (1993) identified four stages of the historical evolution of multicultural education as: 1) “ethnic studies, an effort geared toward teaching African American children about their own history; 2) multiethnic education a movement to bring about structural and systemic changes in schools that will benefit children from minority groups that viewed themselves as victims of society; 3) [early] multicultural education, which included women and people with disabilities who also felt victimized by the society; and 4) [the existing] multicultural education, which according to Banks, ‘consists of the development of theory, research, and practice that interrelate variables connected to race, class, and gender’” (Banks, 1993, p. 20; Banks, 1994, p. 18).

Unlike the previous studies on the origins of multicultural education, this study goes beyond the events that formed the historical data of ethnic studies and the Civil Rights Movement. It expanded the research to include the various historical movements of oppressed peoples of America which includes the women’s movement, African
American Civil Rights Movement, and the multiethnic studies movement. Additionally, it investigates the forerunners of multicultural education, which is believed to include the earliest form of education practiced by different ethnic groups and cultures in North America at a time when the Western European education had taken strong hold in the new nation. One of the forerunners of multicultural education was the teaching and learning carried out by the Blacks, for themselves, in the fields, in the barns, in the homes, and on the street corners before the emancipation proclamation. Although such educational practices were neither formal nor approved, the learning events fulfilled the conditions of learning, and ultimately taught some of their children how to read and write, as well as a basic understanding of who they were in relation to the historical circumstance that contributed to their social condition. This historical overview uncovers two fundamental values that are foundational to and drive the movements that gave rise to multicultural education: cultural recognition and inclusion.

Chapter Three, multiculturalism and liberal democracy, explores the nature of a just response to diversity in a liberal democracy. It will be argued in this chapter that the values of cultural recognition and inclusion, uncovered in Chapter Two, are at the core of liberal democracy as a moral and political ideal. The chapter attempts to explore the question of whether there is a right to cultural recognition in a liberal democracy as a necessary condition for inclusiveness. This chapter is organized in terms of political responses to cultural diversity in American Society: Assimilationism, Liberal Pluralism, and Cultural Recognition. The discussion of these responses will focus on prominent representative conceptualizations (and thereby authors) within the field of the political philosophy of liberal democracy in relation to the question of a just response to cultural
diversity. It expands the discussion of the intellectual history of multicultural education to include the views of liberal pluralists led by Arthur Schlesinger (1998), and that of the contemporary philosophers of multiculturalism led by Charles Taylor (1994). Both camps provided contrasting views on how multiculturalism may affect national unity, as well as the right of minority cultures to be recognized in a liberal democracy.

Schlesinger argued that multiculturalism does not “bode well” with national unity. He feared that it would alter what was once known as “the American way of life,” and may subvert the national unity, causing different ethnic groups to engage in self-determination and ultimately break away from the nation. He compared multiculturalism to “tribalism” (a strong loyalty to one’s own tribe) and “separatist tendencies,” which according to him must not “go unchecked.” He therefore called for a return to the Anglo-centric assimilationism into the “American melting pot” as the only way to maintain national unity (p. 17). At the same time, he observed that the Anglo-centric assimilation did not provide equal access to everyone who wished to become assimilated into the great “melting pot.” Thus, the Anglo-centric assimilation created a class disparity based on race and wealth, whereby some citizens became “third-class members” due to what Schlesinger called the “curse of racism . . . the great failure of the American experiment, the glaring contradiction of American ideals and the crippling disease of American life . . .” (Schlesinger, pp. 18-19). It should be noted at this juncture that “tribalism,” in concept and practice, does not parallel multiculturalism. Tribalism reflects a conflict of interest or the feeling of “otherness” among two rival tribes who often antagonize each other. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, seems to convey the opposite meaning.
Multiculturalism calls for unity and peaceful coexistence of many cultures from diverse background.

Charles Taylor, on the other hand, saw multiculturalism as a positive strength of a nation rather than its weakness. He asserts that the problem with national unity lies not on multiculturalism but, on the nonrecognition or misrecognition of some members of the society, which often leads to the adoption of a depreciatory image by the victims of nonrecognition or misrecognition (p. 25). He argues that there is a link between recognition and self-identity on the one hand, whereby people feel better about themselves when they have a positive understanding of who they are. Self-identity on the other hand is strongly linked to cultural identity. He argues that nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm on a person, and can be a form of oppression imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being, which often leads the victims to feel condemned, and as a result suffer the pain of low self-esteem (p. 25). Taylor insists that “the forms of equal recognition have been essential to democratic cultures”; hence “democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form demands for the equal status of cultures and of genders” (p. 27). Taylor implies that the Eurocentric assimilationism favored by Schlesinger is associated with “social hierarchies of the ancien regime, whereby honor was intrinsically linked to inequalities and was a privileged right due only to the elites of the society,” and does not accommodate equal cultural recognition. It may be understood that the Eurocentric assimilation is linked with the “traditional code of honor, which reserved recognition only to the kings and elites of the European societies whereas all others were compelled under obligation to recognize, obey, and to respect the
elites.” Eurocentric assimilationism retains the characteristics of elitism, the assimilated cultures become subordinate, marginalized, and nonrecognized or misrecognized. The fact that minority cultures are largely disenfranchised under Eurocentric assimilationism seems to form the crust of discontent between minority cultures and the mainstream culture in a liberal democracy. This study has sought a solution that may equalize the social condition created by the Eurocentric assimilationism and its revered master-servant relationship, which contributes to the condition that Taylor described as the social hierarchies of the ancien régime. Praxial philosophy accords the equal recognition to both European and non-European cultures. It ushers the era of cultural equality in recognition, cooperation, and mutual respect for all.

Section two (chapters four, five, and six) presents the analysis of the historical and the philosophical development of the praxial philosophy, which spans from Aristotle to the publication of David Elliott’s *Music Matters* (1995). Chapter Four, the development of the praxial philosophy, presents a discussion of the history and ideological circumstance that created the praxial approach. This chapter shows the connections between praxialism and multiculturalism. It attempts to establish an argument as to why the praxial philosophy is suited to be a philosophical framework for mainstream multicultural education. The chapter examines Bennett Reimer’s (1970), and David Elliott’s (1995) aesthetics and praxial philosophies of music respectively. It highlights the philosophical contributions of Philip Alperson (1991), and Francis Sparshott (1987) in praxial philosophy of music, and also attempts to investigate the etymological root of the praxial philosophy, as well as its epistemological implication contextually linked to the practice of music and cultures. Chapter five proposes the
praxial philosophy as a philosophical foundation for multicultural education consistent with inclusion and cultural recognition. It attempts to offer an argument as to why and how praxial philosophy is suited as a philosophical foundation of multicultural education. It explores the meaning and nature of praxial philosophy of multicultural education. Its underpinning assumption is cultural recognition: that any culture that has provided meaning to a group of people over a period of time is an important expression of the peoples’ lives, attitudes, and beliefs and therefore should be recognized as being important, relevant, and meaningful to its adherents. The chapter emphasizes the idea that the practice of cultures as a means of understanding and appreciating its value should be at the center of a multicultural education curriculum. Chapter Six presents a summary of the main arguments discussed in chapters one through five. It provides an in-depth analysis of the praxial philosophy and why it is suited as a philosophical foundation of a mainstream multicultural education.
Chapter Two

The Historical Development of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is the culminating point of the various historical movements of the oppressed peoples of America in their struggle for freedom, liberty, and equality of opportunity (Tozer, 2006; Gollnick & Chinn, 2002; Gorski, 1999; Kaltsounis, 1995; Gary, 1994; Banks, J. 1993). The various movements that gave rise to multicultural education include the women’s movement (which gained prominence with the Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention of 1848, and later culminated in the founding of women’s studies program in major universities) (Tozer, 2006, p. 146); the African American movement (culminating in the Civil Rights movement, and the founding of Black and Ethnic Studies programs in major universities) (Banks, 1994); and later, the multiethnic studies movement – which includes women, gays, lesbians, and people with disabilities (all culminating in the multicultural studies movements) (Gay, 1994). The size and shape of these historical movements of oppressed peoples vary considerably. Some of them commanded more national attention than others, while others did not go far enough to influence changes in institutional discrimination. The struggles for liberation and human equality heightened in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s with African American voices for freedom and equality, becoming the loudest and the most dominant voice among historically oppressed groups. Different ideas arose in the course of social and political struggles for liberation and equal educational opportunity. Although the various historical movements were independent from one another, they all shared one common purpose of achieving freedom, liberty, and equal opportunity for all. The present multicultural education movement integrates the various
movements of the historically oppressed groups into one national movement struggling for equal educational opportunity. The current multicultural education is a national movement. It is not intended to serve one particular ethnicity or to boost their ethnic pride. It should be seen as an agent of political, social, and economic equality. It is a noble experiment that is intended to bring about equality of opportunity, fairness, and national unity.

This chapter will explore the historical roots of multicultural education. It will examine the role played by major historical social movements, such as the women’s liberation movement; the African American movement – including the civil rights movement; the intercultural and intergroup educational movements; the education of individuals with disability movement; as well as the gay and lesbian movements. The chapter intends to show that multicultural education is a product of different political, social, and educational movements of the oppressed peoples of America, and as such, it cannot be attributed to any one particular group, although some may have played more prominent historical roles. Multicultural education is a movement that involves people from diverse race, ethnicities, class, and gender – people who share a common political, social, and economic interest. The political and social influence exerted by each of those groups gave rise to a demand for a multicultural education, which sought equal educational opportunity for all Americans.

The historical overview in this chapter uncovers two fundamental values that are foundational to and drive the movements that give rise to multicultural education: cultural recognition and inclusion. Cultural recognition refers to the right, the justified demand, for each person’s and cultural group’s cultural identity to be respected by others
(Taylor, p. 64; see also the discussion in Chapter 3). Inclusion refers to the right to equal standing in the social and political community and to an equal opportunity to benefits of equal citizenship and membership in the society. As Chapter 3 will demonstrate, these two values are at the core of democracy as a moral and political ideal. In turn, a philosophy of multicultural education should cohere with these two values—it should be both inclusive and respectful of the justified demand for cultural recognition. It will be argued in Chapters 4 and 5 that praxial philosophy coheres with these values, and therefore, is a potential philosophical foundation for multicultural education.

Therefore, it will be argued that a mainstream multicultural education movement grounded in the values of cultural recognition and inclusion is the culminating point of the liberation movements of all the people that have struggled and fought for equal opportunity in education, social, political, and economic life of Americans. The mainstream multicultural education movement is broad-based, inclusive, and champions the educational interests of all American citizens regardless of their ethnicity, gender, class, or religious persuasion.

**The Socio-political Conditions that led Different Ethnic Groups to forge their Own Educational Entity in America**

Throughout American history minority peoples have faced discriminatory social conditions that have resulted in their social exclusion (Grant, 2008) (Banks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994). These social conditions include: the denial of the opportunity to be included—the practice of exclusion, a denial grounded in racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination and negative stereotyping, and other forms of cultural misrecognition (Gibson, & Grant, 2010; Iffil, 2003; Gollnick & Chinn, 2002; Banks, 1992).
America has been described as a great “melting pot” where people from all walks of life come and are expected to forgo their native cultures and to become a part of one American culture (Schlesinger, p. 21). Cultural minority groups such as African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans have historically been “deprived of educational and occupational opportunities and primary relationships with members of the dominant [cultural] group” and therefore were unable to assimilate into America’s “melting-pot” (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002, p. 14). Vontress (1971) articulated it in this way:

[African-Americans] have constantly sought integration into the mainstream of the society but with little avail. Having been schooled in the melting pot tradition, they sought that goal only to discover that black does not melt. . . Not only are Negroes outside the melting pot, but what is worse, they are victims of a system of pernicious racism that exists throughout the country. Its mechanisms are economic and social: a labor market that keeps them at the lowest levels of income and skill, a housing market that confines them to racial ghettos, and an educational process that produces more dropouts than high school graduates (Vontress, p. 3).

Public association through educational institution is a necessary condition for an assimilation to take place. President Woodrow Wilson once said:

Our public school is the great melting-pot of America. The place where we are all made Americans of, is the public school, where men of every race and every origins and of every station in life send their children, or ought to send their children, and where, being mixed together, the youngsters are all infused with the American spirit and developed into American men and American women (Schlesinger, pp. 21-22).
Having been denied the opportunity to engage in common association with members of the dominant cultural group in education, occupation, and religion, minority groups were unable to assimilate into American culture and therefore had to forge their own vital institutions (churches, schools, and business centers) in order to survive. The lack of opportunity to interact with members of the dominant cultural group resulted in minority groups not being able to assimilate.

Minority cultural groups have historically been denied the opportunity to assimilate through education and other areas of human engagement into the mainstream culture. Until Brown v. Board of Education, African Americans in particular were legally barred in Southern states from attending all-white K-12 schools, academies, and higher educational institutions. There was widespread segregation, evidenced in the implementation of “Jim Crow” laws and the “separate but equal” clause of the 1896 US Supreme Court ruling in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson “in which the Court held that the requirements of equal protection were met by ‘separate-but-equal’ treatment of the races by government in support of ‘public peace and good order’” (Tozer, 2006, pp. 164 & 231).

Negative images of people of color (popular images of the 18th and 19th century, racialized era, which were used as propaganda tools against Native Americans and African Americans) filled the pages of history and sociology books in American schools (Pieterse, 1992, p. 15). A theory of “genetic inferiority,” whereby people from the minority cultural group were thought to be inferior to members of the dominant culture was used as a standard justification for social exclusion. A “cultural deficit” theory was also used to suggest that the inferiority label assigned to members of the minority group
originated from the home environment (Tozer, 2006, p. 403). Adherents of both genetic inferiority and cultural deficit theory asserted that the inferiority assigned to members of the minority groups was inherited, either genetically and/or culturally. This type of bias, which was used to describe cultural differences, soon became commonplace in school socialization and teaching practices, and often led to a widespread discrimination against members of the minority group. Consequently, early African American scholars took the initiative to develop learning tools that would eventually change the way in which black children would learn about themselves and their culture as they grow up to become adults (Grant, 2008; Banks, 1992).

Ironically, while African Americans who have been willing to assimilate into the mainstream culture were denied access on the basis of their skin color, other ethnic minorities who were granted full access, blatantly refused to assimilate into the mainstream culture. They opted to stay separate and refused to identify with the mainstream cultural practices. This type of development often led minority groups to seek educational opportunities in self-determination to support and sustain their communities. They sought an educational medium that would portray them as human subjects whose history, achievements, successes and failures would be presented from an objective non-biased point of view. This is because the history of African Americans and many other minority cultural groups were portrayed negatively as inferior to Whites (from Western Europe), the minority groups sought for equity in the policies and practices of schooling in an effort to be heard (Grant, 2008; Tozer, 2006; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; J. A. Banks, 1993).
The efforts of African Americans and other minority cultural groups to present a positive image of their group were countered by Whites from the mainstream culture. They acted to keep minorities in their present social level – which Schlesinger (1998) eloquently noted as “third-class” membership (p. 19). This was further compounded by a mass movement of African Americans from rural areas to the city after WWII in search of employment opportunities, as well as the demands of African American veterans of WWII to be treated like their white compatriots after fighting a foreign war to defend democracy. Whites’ reactions resulted in widespread racial violence, both direct and indirect, mainly directed against African Americans.

**Racial Violence and Government Responses as a Prelude to the Civil Rights Movement**

A widespread racial violence against blacks which claimed the lives of nearly 5,000 African Americans between 1890 and 1960 prompted an African American response (Iffil, 2003; Gibson, 2010). Although a part of the response was violent in nature there was nevertheless a non-violent movement of peaceful demonstration, which employed an educational approach to promote human dignity and mutual respect among the American people (Gibson, 2010). The educational aspect of the non-violent movement, according to Banks (1992), comprised of scholarly writings aimed at promoting peace and mutual respect among the different ethnic groups in the United States (p.279). The goal of such an effort, Montalto (1978) noted, “was to make the dominant majority populations more tolerant and accepting of [people that are different from them] in order to maintain national unity and social control” (Dissertation Abstract International, p. 1061). The racial violence of the 1890s to 1960s spawned not only an educational response but more violence, and a series of social protests that became the
prelude to the Civil Rights movement, and ultimately, the birth of the multicultural education movement. In response to racial and ethnic discrimination these movements sought equality and social justice.

**Different Historical Movements that Led to the Multicultural Education Movement**

Grant (2008) identified four historical movements that are connected with the evolution of multicultural education in the United States. The movements are: Intercultural Movement, Intergroup Movement, Civil Rights Movement, and Ethnic Studies Movement (p. 3). To this list I may add the Women’s Movement as the fifth important movement in the evolution of multicultural education. In order of historical occurrence, the 19th century women’s movement had been established as a liberation movement before every other organized liberation movement – including the African American Liberation Movement. The goal of each of these movements, however independent or separate they were from one another, “was to take action for social justice and human rights” (Grant, 2008, p. 3). The long-term products of these movements will be considered in the light of how they contributed in the efforts to seek social justice, equity in education, economic empowerment, and human rights. The historical movements will be discussed starting with Women’s Liberation Movement.

**The Women’s Liberation Movement**

“I desire you would remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands.”

-- Abigail Adams.

Abigail Adams, wife to the second president of the United States made this famous statement to her husband, President John Adams, as the new nation prepared
itself for the Declaration of Independence. The strength of this statement lies in the understanding of the historical oppression against women. Despite the then first lady’s plea, the social status of women was not elevated in The Declaration of Independence which states, “all men were created equal.” Such androcentric views implanted in The Declaration of Independence thus enacted a political justification for further exclusion of women from the educational, political, social, and economic life in the new republic.

The Issues of Women’s Liberation Movement

Early feminist activists during the abolition movement compared women’s plight to the situation of African Americans during slavery. They identified and demonstrated gender oppression. This position, indeed, fueled the rhetoric of the women’s movement as a movement for liberating women from men’s oppression, and a movement to seek equality of opportunity with men (Eisenberg & Rithsdotter, 1998). The condition of women in the United States was carefully enumerated in the following excerpt from Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s Declaration of Sentiments:

Women were not allowed to vote; they had no rights to property; many husbands neglected and abused their wives without impunity; divorce and child custody laws favored men, giving no rights to women; women were paid just a fraction of the wages earned by men performing the same duty; women were not allowed to enter professions such as law and medicine; colleges and universities did not accept female students; women were not allowed to participate in the affairs of the church; and they were robbed of their self-confidence and self-respect, and were totally dependent on men (Eisenberg & Rithsdotter, 1998).

Women in the new republic were expected to perform a specific role in the homes. It was held that “a woman’s proper role was to be a wife, a nurturing mother and a teacher of the young, and a moral exemplar to all.” This is called the “Cult of True
Womanhood” or the “Cult of Domesticity.” Even more liberal thinkers like Benjamin Rush and Horace Mann proposed that women needed to be educated in schools in order to carry out their roles as homemakers, thereby excluding them from public life. In his “Thought on Female Education,” Benjamin Rush asserted that “a woman should be the stewards of their husband’s wealth, homemakers, and child care givers” (Tozer, p. 136). To adequately prepare women for their homemaker’s role, Rush proposed that the English language, handwriting, arithmetic, bookkeeping, beginning astronomy, chemistry, natural philosophy, dancing, Christian religion, geography, and history as the curriculum for women’s education (Tozer, p. 136). In an 1838 article in the Common School Journal, Horace Mann advocated that women have a special role to play in the “peaceful ministry” of teaching the young. He argued that women should not be “lured by false ambition to shine in courts or to mingle in the clashing tumult of men.” He proposed that teaching of the young is a “peaceful ministry . . . and a serene and blessed sphere of duty” (Tozer, pp. 136-137).

The Targeted Front for Women’s Liberation

Education for women was among the first front to be challenged by the women’s liberation movement. Ironically, many women accepted the idea of homemaking as a destined role of women in the new republic (Tozer, p. 135). Female leaders of the time such as Mrs. Phillips, the noted educator; Emma Willard, the noted advocate for normal schools for women; and Catherine Beecher, a proponent for women’s education, seemed to accept the traditional role of women as homemakers but contended, like their male counterparts, that a proper education would enhance the ability of women to perform their duties as homemakers (Tozer, p.137).
Besides the struggle to gain access to education, other issues at stake included the right to divorce, property rights, the right to speak in the public, abuse by husbands, and unequal pay for work performed by women (Gollnick & Chinn, p. 126). Inspired by the thoughts of a better future for themselves and their children, the pioneers of the women’s liberation movement demanded equality of rights and opportunities.

**Women’s Liberation Movement and the Declaration of Sentiment**

The first noted women’s right convention to seek equality with men was the Seneca Falls convention of 1848. Women leaders like Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton began to demand gender equality in such institutions as the ballot box, the professions, and higher education (Tozer, p. 146). As preparation for the convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote the “Declation of Sentiments,” which she modeled after the words and ideas of the Declaration of Independence, connecting the campaign for women’s rights directly “to that powerful American liberty stating: “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (Eisenberg & Rithsdotter, 1998). This convention energized the movement whose effort was later rewarded in many ways, including the report that “in the year 1890 female graduates of public high schools outnumbered males by nearly three to two …” (Tozer, p. 147).

Women’s liberation movement received strong support from both the U.S. Congress and the Presidents. Adopted in 1919, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteed women’s suffrage. In 1963, the commission created by President Kennedy on the status of women revealed widespread sex discrimination in
American life. That same year, President Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay Act and executive orders ending sex discrimination in civil service (Eisenberg & Rithsdotter, 1998). The women’s Liberation Movement got on the national stage with the formation of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966. That year, mass protests led many states to pass laws that forced “men’s only” restaurants, clubs, and organizations to open their doors to women (Eisenberg & Rithsdotter, 1998). President Nixon supported the Equal Rights Amendment, and signed into law the Equal Employment Opportunity Act in 1972. Protective legislation for women and children was also enacted in the last half of the 19th century (Gollnick & Chinn, p. 126).

Title IX (1975) of ESEA barred discrimination on the basis of sex in all aspects of employment in schools, including recruitment; leaves of absence; rates of pay and other compensation; fringe benefits; and tuition, training, and sabbatical assistance. Schools were prohibited from barring pregnant women or placing them in separate classes unless they specifically requested it. Schools were required to treat childbirth, termination of pregnancy, and recovery as any other disability. Pregnant women who left school had to be reinstated to the status they held before they left. Schools were prohibited from discriminating against both women and men in their admission policies and in their classes. Physical education classes had to be integrated by sex but could be segregated for contact sports, but expenditures for women’s and men’s sport did not have to be equal (Reed & Bergemann, 1995, p. 189).

According to Gollnick and Chinn (2002), the 1960s saw the most advances in the status of women when feminists gained support of more women and men than at any previous time in history (p. 127). Those who fought for women’s liberation in the 19th century were mostly middle class white women and their efforts (although focused on the status of women and did not include other oppressed groups) laid the foundation for the significant gains made in the 1960s on the status of women (Gollnick & Chinn, p. 127).
In the 1990s the National Organization for Women (NOW), the nation’s largest feminist’s organization, expanded its agenda to include the fight against racism, and giving support to welfare reform, immigrant rights, and affirmative action (Zia, 1996). Leaders of the women’s liberation movement “believe that women should not continue to be subordinated to men at home, in the work place, or in the society.” They also fight to “eliminate the physical and mental violence that has resulted from such subordination.” In addition, they advocated a shared male and female responsibility in the home and availability of child care to all families (Gollnick & Chinn, pp. 127-128).

**Gains Made through the Women’s Liberation Movement**

The public image of women is moving from an ordinary homemaker to that of equal citizen and leader. President Reagan set a record in appointing women to high political offices (Reed & Bergemann, 1995, p. 189). Some women have gained political, social, and economic status in the 20th and 21st centuries. Women are highly visible in education, politics, law, science, medicine, finance, and administration. Janet Reno served as the Attorney General for the U.S.A. during President Clinton’s administration. Although no woman has been a major party nominee for President, several have ran as a Vice Presidential candidate – the latest being Alaska’s former governor, Sarah Palin, who ran as a Vice Presidential candidate for the Republican Party in 2008. We have also seen the former first lady, Hillary Rodham-Clinton, running shoulder-to-shoulder against Barack Obama for her party’s nomination and later becoming a highly respected Secretary of State. Although the women’s movement has made some gains in politics, social, and economic status of women in recent decades, it should be noted that a significant percentage of women remains in poverty and are still subjected to violence
and oppression by men (Gollnick & Chinn, p. 127). Perhaps the overarching achievement in the women’s liberation movement is the institution of Women’s Studies programs in many universities. Women’s studies have been a source of empowerment and inspiration for upward mobility for many women.

The women’s liberation movement is a movement for equality and social justice; it aims to guarantee equal opportunity and standing in society. It is a natural ally of the multicultural movement, often joining forces with others against various forms of oppression and exploitation.

**Intercultural Education Movement**

The Intercultural Education Movement was founded for the purpose of facilitating the settlement of new immigrants from Europe. This movement was “started in the 1930s and continued into the 1950s” (C. Banks, 2004). It was supported by the National Origins Quota Act of 1924, which favored the settlement of immigrants from Northern Europe up to a yearly quota of over 127,000 while at the same time the Act restricted the immigration of people from eastern and southern Europe to an annual quota of less than 24,000 (Grant, 2008, p. 4). Grant (2008) observed that the goals of the Intercultural Movement were to facilitate a swift settlement of the new immigrants; to help them enjoy freedom, justice, and equality; and to “reduce the fears and misconceptions that they harbored about members of other white ethnic groups who had begun to arrive from Southern European countries from the 1920s to 1940s” (pp. 3-4). In their efforts to support the ease of settlement, the Intercultural Education Movement facilitated the establishment of schools and settlement houses for the new immigrants as well as a newspaper publication in the immigrants’ native language. Those were tools used to
teach the new immigrants the importance of giving complete allegiance to the United States -- their new homeland (Grants, 2008, p. 4). Furthermore, the Intercultural Education Movement implemented “curriculum and activities in the school[s] and communities to celebrate the immigrants’ culture and contribution to society in general and the United States in particular” (Grant, 2008, p. 4). Thus, the Intercultural Education Movement contributed “knowledge about issues of ethnicity, immigration, assimilation, social mobility, and prejudice,” and therefore became one of “the early contributors to the development of multicultural education” (Grant, 2008, p. 3). Some of the key ideas, such as tolerance and respect for diversity, are also included as central ideas in the current multicultural education movement (Grant and Sleeter 2007).

**Contributions of the Intercultural Education Movement to Multicultural Education**

This movement, supported by the National Origins Quota Act of 1924, demonstrates the willingness of the federal government to support educational projects aimed at benefiting new immigrants. It therefore sets a precedent for government support of future multicultural projects. By implementing curriculum and activities in the schools and the community to celebrate the immigrants’ culture and contribution to society, the Intercultural Education Movement became the pioneer of current approaches used for implementing multicultural education programs in the public schools.

**Intergroup Education Movement**

The Intergroup Education Movement was another movement whose activities later contributed to the development of multicultural education. The movement was formed in the 1940s in the wake of a growing racial tension in American cities at the end of World War II (Grant, 2008, p. 4). Racism escalated in American cities as a result of a
mass movement of people, most of them blacks, from rural areas to the cities in search of employment opportunities. Among the causes of the race riot was the demand made by African American veterans of WWII, upon their return from Europe, concerning the way they were treated compared to that of their white counterparts. As a result, they demanded for their civil and human rights. Grant (2008) explains that the treatment received by the African American veterans tended to fuel anger about the unresolved issues in the 1930s connected with “the mis-education of African American students, and the racist ideology used by European Americans in societal institutions – e.g., schools and the media – to shape the values and the beliefs of the society” (p. 5). Apparently, the mistreatment of the African American veterans of WWII upon return to their homeland, and the proliferation of Europeans’ racist ideology in American institutions contributed to the racial tension and the racial violence that escalated in American cities.

Perhaps one of the most serious race riots carried out in the history of the United States, the Detroit riot was an outcome of the anger that accumulated through the years as a result of racial oppression (Gibson, 2010; Grants, 2008; Iffil, 2003; Banks, 1992). Klarin (1989) described the riot as “the drop that made the cup run over.” In response to the social tumult that ensued from the riots, more than 400 public organizations, including the Intergroup Education Movement, were formed to address the conflict and to seek ways to resolve similar conflicts in the future (Grants, 2008, p. 4). The Intergroup Education Movement helped to direct the attention of the American people to the effect of racism and other problems that were facing the people of color at the time (Grant, 2008, p. 4). In partnership with major universities such as Harvard, the University of Chicago, and New York University, Intergroup Studies Movement promoted research
studies geared at gaining a better understanding of the causes of intergroup tension (Grants, 2008, p. 4). It also promoted the study of anthropology, sociology, and psychology in an effort to gain a deeper insight on how to prevent racial tension and to reduce prejudice (Grants, 2008; La Belle & Ward, 1996). This agrees with their major aim which according to Taba & Wilson (1946) “was to reduce prejudice, to develop interracial understanding, and to foster a shared national American culture” (p. 19).

The Intergroup Education Movement however, has been criticized for being “led by White professionals who were not linked to minority communities,” and did not encourage the collaboration or input of scholars from the minority communities (J. A. Banks, 1992, p. 280). However, J. A. Banks (1992) acknowledged that the movement was born in response to a national crisis, and that it faded away “when the heat from the racial crisis faded and special funding for intergroup research and projects dried up” (p. 279). The Intergroup Education projects, programs, and publications were sponsored by a number of professional and civil rights organizations that includes the American Council on Education, the National Council for the Social Studies; the Progressive Education Association, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith (J. A. Banks, 1992, p. 279).

**Contributions of the Intergroup Education Movement to the Multicultural Education Movement**

Through the efforts of the Intergroup Education Movement, teacher-training institutions were encouraged to create subjects, projects, and instructional units in response to the nation’s racial crisis (J. A. Banks, 1992; Taba, Brady, & Robinson, 1952; Cook, 1951). Among the scholarly contributions of the Intergroup Education Movement was the publication of Gordon W. Allport’s *Nature of Prejudice* (1954), which, focusing
on the affective and cognitive components of prejudice, defines prejudice as “an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization” (p. 9). The book offered a broad eclectic view of the psychological effects of prejudice on the victims, and was praised for revealing Allport’s democratic values and his concern for evidence . . .” (Smith, 1978, p. 31). Aaronson (1978) also praised the book for showing “a remarkable mixture of careful scholarship and humane values . . .” (p. 92). The Intergroup Education Movement led to the creation of school curriculum that promotes intergroup tolerance among students, and to ultimately reduce intergroup prejudice, ignorance, and conflict (Pettigrew, 2004, p. 770). To support the curriculum and to develop the attitudes espoused by intergroup studies, programs which are now a part of the approaches to multicultural education were “developed to teach students how to handle conflicts without resorting to violence” (Grant, 2008, p. 5).

The African American Civil Rights Movement

Nonviolent protests and acts of civil disobedience which gained national attention in the 1930s and 1940s soon developed into a “crisis between activists and government authorities whereby federal, state, and local governments, businesses, and communities responded to immediate crisis situation in a way that highlighted the inequalities faced by African Americans” (Tozer, 2006; Reed and Bergemann, 1995). Coupled with that was the prominence of racial segregation in education and other aspects of human interaction, which gained support in the 1896 U.S. Supreme court ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson, in which the Court held that the requirements of equal protection were met in “separate-but-equal” treatment of the races by government in support of “public peace and good order;” – thereby ignoring the lone dissent by Justice Harlan that “the Constitution is color blind .
This ruling was later overturned in 1954 in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*, whereby the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling declared segregation of schools to be inherently unequal. However, the 1954 Supreme Court ruling did neither “explicitly overturn segregation in other places of human/educational engagement which includes public accommodations, ‘private’ schools and college admissions nor, did it require immediate desegregation of the public schools” (http://www.crmvet.org/tim/timhis51.htm).

However, studies about schools carried out from the late 19th century through the mid-20th century showed that “separate” was not “equal.” For example, “South Carolina spent three times as much on education for white students as it spent on black students, even though blacks outnumbered whites” (Reed and Bergemann, pp. 180-181). Also, “the percentage of white students completing four years of high school has always been higher than the percentage of black students, and the differences was particularly great prior to the integration of schools in the 1960s and 1970s” (Reed and Bergemann, p. 181). Indeed, “separate” was not “equal.” New attention was drawn to the theme of racial prejudice by increasing number of novelists, playwrights, and film makers who brought it to the center stage as a most central problem in America (Tozer, 231). These events and actions culminated in the Civil Rights Movement (narrowly defined as occurring between 1955-1968, (Reed and Bergemann, p. 180)), a reform movement aimed at outlawing racial discrimination against African Americans and an attempt to restore their civil rights as equal citizens (Grant, 2008; Tozer, 2006; J. A. Banks, 1992). The Civil Rights Movement challenged systematic racism against African Americans and the deprivation of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in the post WWII era.
(Tozer, p. 231). Grant (2008) observes that the Civil Rights struggle was about the fundamental issues of freedom, respect, dignity, and economic and social equity of all Americans (p. 7).

Significance of the Civil Rights Movement to Multicultural Education

Grant (2008) asserts that “the significance of the Civil Rights Movement was huge, in that every U.S. citizen, north, south, east, and west was to be legally judged without reference to skin color” (Grant, 2008, p. 7). It emphasized the fundamental issues of freedom, respect, tolerance, and human dignity for all Americans – a commitment that has remained a fundamental lesson taught and learned through multicultural education. In the last year of his administration President Harry Truman (1945-1953), desegregated the Armed Forces. This was an important development because it helped to address the circumstance that led to the 1940s race riot when the WWII African American veterans carried out a peaceful demonstration to demand civil and human rights. The desegregation of the Armed Forces signaled a sweeping change that would soon extend to all government institutions, including the public schools. The 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka declared segregated schools inherently unequal. By overturning the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson ruling of “separate but equal,” the Supreme Court thereby declared that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” thus, making “de jure racial segregation” a violation of the equal protection clause of the fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This ruling may also be seen as an endorsement of multicultural education movement because it encourages different people (regardless of their ethnicity) to
continue to live together in their particular neighborhood and to send their children to the neighborhood schools within their locality.

As a result of the Civil Rights Movement, important legislation aimed at restoring peace and order in the society was passed by the U.S. congress. Among the legislation was the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination on the basis of “race, color, or national origin” in employment practices and public accommodations; the Voting Rights Act of 1965, that restored and protected voting rights; the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965, which opened entry to the U.S. to immigrants other than traditional European groups; and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which banned discrimination in the sale or rental of housing (Grant, 2008; Tozer, 2006; Reed and Bergemann, 1995). An important outcome of the Civil Rights movement is the fact that many universities, colleges, and public schools encouraged the teaching of ethnic minority courses. This move later gave rise to the teaching of ethnic studies course in many universities across the nation. Multicultural education then grew out of ethnic studies, which in itself was an outcome of the Civil Rights movement (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002; Gorski, 1999; Davidman & Davidman, 1997; Banks, 1989).

The Foundation of Ethnic Studies Movement

Early African American scholarship has been credited for laying the foundation of ethnic studies programs in major American universities (Banks, 1992, p. 274). The writings of George Washington Williams (1882, 1883/1989), W. E. B. DuBois (1889, 1896/1973), Carter G. Woodson (1919, 1921), Horace Mann Bond (1939), and Charles H. Wesley (1935) are the foundations of the Ethnic studies movement (Banks, 1992, p. 274). The foundation of the Ethnic studies movement was sequel to African American
struggles to educate themselves about their own history and accomplishments without bias. Carter G. Woodson was the most influential figure in the development of ethnic studies such that he was the pioneer historian who tailored his works in a manner consistent with the teaching of African American history without the biases associated with 19th century racism. Along with the works of W.E.B. DuBois, Woodson’s work laid the foundation for the teaching of African American history and later, Blacks Studies in many American high schools and universities (Banks, 1992, p. 275). According to Banks (1992), the teaching of Black studies further led to the formation of the Ethnic studies movement, and also laid the intellectual framework upon which the current multicultural education was built (p. 278). Thus, early African American scholarship laid the foundation for the Ethnic studies movement, which, although was founded out of self-determination, soon became a symbol of ethnic pride, and survival (Banks, 1992, p. 280).

**The Development of Ethnic Studies Movement**

When the Ethnic studies movement emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, it relied mainly on the works of Franklin and Woodson for intellectual guidance and direction. It received a boost from the Civil Rights Movement, which provided the impetus for the spread of ethnic studies programs in major American universities. This development came as a response to “the demand by African Americans and other people of color for equity and equality in the policies and practices of schools” (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 172). Gorski (1999) observes that educational institutions were specifically targeted during the civil rights era because it was among the most oppressive and hostile institutions that proved to be a target for racial equality. As a result, activists, community leaders, and parents called for curricular reform and the hiring practices of schools which,
they believed, should be more consistent with the racial diversity in the country (Gorski, p. 1). The demands led to the establishment of programs and courses that focused on the various ethnic histories and cultures in major American universities. The objective was to provide students with insight that instills cultural pride from their own ethnic backgrounds (Gollnick & Chinn, p. 28). These courses and academic departments brought about “a renewal of interest in ethnic studies, discrimination, and intergroup relations” (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002, p. 28). The renewed interest was aimed at promoting intergroup and interracial understanding, as well as the reduction or elimination of stereotypes (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002, pp. 28 & 29). All the efforts led to the creation of ethnic studies programs, which assumed academic course titles such as Blacks Studies, African American studies, Native American Studies, and Latina/o studies in major universities (Hu-DeHart, 2004; Morgan, 2000; Gollnick & Chinn, 2002). Ethnic studies courses also became a part of the curriculum in many high schools and colleges across the nation (Yang, 2000, p. 10). Sooner than later, ethnic studies developed fully and multiplied in many higher institutions across America. Evelyn Hu-DeHart (2004) wrote:

Beginning in 1968 at San Francisco State University and University of California campuses such as Berkley and Santa Barbara to many campuses across the nation. During the course of the next quarter century to the present, students of color have been demanding greater access to higher education, recruitment of more faculty of color, and the creation of programs that have come to be collectively known as ethnic studies and separately by a variety of names: Black Studies (Also Afro American Studies, African American Studies, African Studies); Chicana/o, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican Studies (also Latina/o Studies); American Indian (or Native American) Studies; and Asian American Studies. These programs formed the beginning of multicultural curricular reform in
higher education. . . Ethnic studies programs have produced a prodigious amount of new scholarship . . . [and] the new perspectives are intended not only to increase our knowledge base but in time to transform all scholarship. Their deep and widespread influence is definitely felt and debated (pp. 869-870).

The development of Ethnic Studies in most American universities has generated a new perspective to education and has added a new kind of scholarship, which might not have existed about half a century ago. Grant (2008) observes that the Ethnic studies movement “challenged white-dominated social and education theory and programs by having an assigned physical space as well as scholars to articulate [its purposes and goals, as well as] students interested in perusing ethnic studies knowledge” (Grant, p. 8). Its advocates demand for an educational policy and practices that are more inclusive. “They sought the replacement of the primacy of whiteness in textbook content and illustrations and an increased accuracy in reporting the history and culture of African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Latinos” (Grant, p. 8). Indeed, Ethnic Studies became a “vehicle for school districts, colleges, and universities to respond collectively to the diverse and often conflicting demands of the [minority cultural] groups” (Banks, 1992, p. 282). The movement seeks an inclusive curriculum that equally highlights the history and achievements of people from all ethnicities rather than focusing mainly on the superiority of European culture over other cultures. More so, ethnic studies movement led to the founding of multicultural education movement – a movement which seeks an equal educational opportunity for all people from all cultures and not limited by ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, physical disability, or other forms of limitation.
The Ethnic Studies Program as a High Point Accomplishment of African American Struggles

The establishment of ethnic studies program as a discipline in major American universities highlights a historic achievement in African American struggles – the Civil Rights movement and the entire liberation movement -- because it created the avenue through which an unabridged history of African American experiences, struggles, and contributions are taught to younger African Americans as well as non-African American youths (including Anglo-American students). The original intention of the ethnic studies movement was to teach African American students about their own history and culture in an effort to instill in them a sense of cultural pride and self-esteem (which has been badly distorted by the proponents of racial superiority ideology), and as a response to the violence of racism, racial stereotypes, and demeaning cultural inferiority theories directed against African Americans (Banks, 1993; Kaltsounis, 1995). However, the movement developed to give support, not only to the demands of African Americans, but also women and other people of color, who were equally struggling to achieve equity and equality in the policies and practice of housing and schooling, and for the end of de facto racist educational practices that kept segregation in place (Grant, 2008, p. 7). The acceptance of ethnic studies programs as well as its institution in major American universities in the 1960s and 1970s marked a historic moment that rewarded the efforts and perseverance of African Americans in their struggles to seek equity and equality of opportunity in education, politics, housing, and empowerment. Today, ethnic studies programs have been fully established in major universities across America and beyond. Undergraduate and graduate programs -- up to the doctorate level -- are now available in many universities and higher institutions. Thanks to the early African American
scholarship, the activists, as well as the perseverance of the educators that contributed one way or the other to the creation of the ethnic studies movement.

**The Expansion of Ethnic Studies to Multiethnic Studies**

The progress made in African American ethnic studies programs soon inspired scholars from other ethnicities and marginalized groups such as Mexican Americans, Native Americans, women, and people with disability to begin to write, demanding that the curriculum be expanded to address their own perspectives. For example, Cortes (1973) wrote about teaching Mexican American studies, and Forbes (1973) wrote about teaching Native American studies (Banks, 1992, p. 281). Women’s rights groups also voiced their demands to be heard in American classrooms. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, women’s rights groups challenged the inequalities in employment and educational opportunities as well as income. They identified unequal education as a primary contributing factor in institutionalized and systemic sexism (Gollnick & Chinn, pp. 136-137). Feminist scholars and other women activists, like groups of ethnic minorities before them, insisted on curricula more inclusive of their histories and experiences. They challenged the low number of female administrators relative to the percentage of female teachers (Banks, 1989; Gorski, 1999). All the demands contributed to the expansion of ethnic studies into multiethnic studies in which courses and programs about other marginalized groups were offered in many universities – in addition to existing ethnic studies programs. This expansion enabled ethnic studies scholars to include content materials that extend to the study of the history, culture, and the contribution of the oppressed groups along with those of the dominant groups (Gollnick & Chinn, p. 29). The new expansion also created a form of alliance whereby any fight against sexism, for
example, would ultimately result in a simultaneous fight against racism, classism, homophobia, and discrimination against children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities (Gollnick & Chinn, p. 290). At last, Multiethnic Studies emerged as a movement intended to “reform the total school environment which includes the curriculum, teaching methods and materials, school policy, counseling, teacher attitudes and expectations, and learning styles and languages accepted in the school” (Banks, 1992, p. 282).

The efforts of early African American scholars to teach their own history to their children from the 1920s to 1950s laid the foundation of ethnic studies movement. The movement developed from the 1960s to 1970s and later modulated to multiethnic studies which includes different branches, including women’s studies, and gays and lesbian studies. The goal of these branches is to address the needs of different marginalized groups that live in America. Banks (1993) observes that the overall goal of multiethnic studies is to enable structural and systemic changes in schools that will benefit children from minority cultural groups that viewed themselves as victims of the society (p. 20).

**Foundation of the Multicultural Education Movement**

In his article entitled “African American Scholarship and the Evolution of Multicultural Education,” James Banks (1992) argues that “the early African American scholarship and the ethnic studies movement are an important historical foundation of the multicultural education movement” (p. 281). The early African American scholars were inspired by the need to learn more about their own history and to impart the knowledge to younger African Americans who were being fed with a biased version of their cultural history and experiences in the public schools. Their efforts produced historical facts and
intellectual experiences that later became the foundation of the ethnic studies movement and ultimately the multicultural education movement. The current multicultural education movement is an offspring of the ethnic studies movement as well as the multiethnic studies movement (Grant, 2008; Banks, 1992).

The views of the early African American scholarship also influenced the leaders of the current multicultural education movement. Banks (1992) argues that the “major architects of the multicultural education movement were cogently influenced by early African American scholarship and the ethnic studies movement” (p. 281). According to him, every one of the scholars that have played a major role in multicultural education movement including Gwendolyn C. Baker, (1983), James A. Banks (1991), Geneva Gay (1994), and Carl Grant (1977) “was heavily influenced by the early work of African American ethnic studies.” For example, he observes that both Banks (1969) and Grant (1972) “did their doctoral thesis on Black studies topics” (p. 281). He credits scholars of color for playing “a major role in formulating the theory, research, and practice [that laid the foundation] of the current multicultural education movement” (p. 281). Thus, Banks’ (1992) claims seem to establish the early African American scholarships as the founder as well as the pioneers who played major roles in the origins of the current multicultural education movement.

The Origins of the Current Multicultural Education Movement

Carl Grant (2008) believes that the current multicultural education movement began in the 1970s as a product of “a chain of linked actions (e.g., movements, court decisions, legislation, publications, constitutional mandates, codes of conduct) that embrace principles of social justice to support the elimination of poverty, racism,
classism, religious bigotry, and sexism in the United States” (p. 2). According to him, the movement was conceived by different individual and scattered group action of different peoples since the 19th century, who sought for equality of opportunity in freedom, education, wealth, social life, and freedom from all kinds of discrimination (p. 2).

**Evolution of the Multicultural Education Movement**

Grant (2008) observed that the multicultural education movement evolved from the early attempts made by Native American tribes, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Mexican Americans, to educate themselves in the early years of the American republic (p. 2). Those early actions of self-education are so significant that it continued in different forms until it became a source of empowerment, for example, when Blacks were able to teach themselves how to read and write, and to complete the voting forms to cast their vote for a political candidate of their choice (Banks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994). It further laid the foundation for the education of early African American scholars who wrote their own history from a non-biased perspective, and became the founding fathers of the ethnic studies movement, which is credited for establishing the intellectual framework upon which the current multicultural education movement was built (Banks, 1992, p. 278).

Carl Grant’s view of the current multicultural education as “a chain of linked actions” highlights the role played by different agencies that helped to establish the multicultural education movement in recent years – in addition to the early African American scholarship. Those include the Women’s Movement, Intercultural Movement, Intergroup Educational Movement, The Civil Rights Movement, Ethnic Studies Movement, Multiethnic Education Movement, Gays and Lesbians movement, people
with disabilities, English language learners, and the elderly (Grant, 2008; Gollnick & Chinn, 2002; Morgan, 2000; Gorski, 1999; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; Kaltsounis, 1995; Gay, 1994; Banks, 1992; Montalto, 1978). Each of the agencies represents a historically marginalized group of people, who have one common purpose in mind: the search for freedom; the search for equality of opportunity in all wings of life; the struggle for liberation from oppression; and the right to be heard (Grant, 2008; Gay, 2004; Grant and Landson-Billings, 1997; Banks, 1992).

**Historical Movements that Gave Rise to the Current Multicultural Education Movement**

Many scholars of multicultural education believe that the current multicultural education movement grew out of different historical movements such as the Civil Rights movement of various historically oppressed groups” in America, ethnic studies movement, and multiethnic studies movement (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002; Gorski, 1999; Davidman & Davidman, 1997; Banks, 1989). In all, multicultural education scholars believe that multicultural education is a product of “the social action of African Americans and other people of color who challenged discriminatory practices in public institutions during the civil rights struggles of the 1960s” (Banks, 1989; Davidman & Davidman, 1997). Grant (2008) believes that the fundamental issue that led to the Civil Rights Movement of 1955-1965 was freedom, respect, dignity, and economic and social equity (p. 7). Looking at the present multicultural education movement as a product of the ethnic studies movement, Banks (1992) asserts that “the work of the early African American scholars provided an important intellectual foundation for the architects of today’s multicultural education movement” (p. 280). Ethnic Studies Movement later
evolved into “multiethnic education.” The aim according to Banks, was “to reform the total school environment which includes the curriculum, teaching methods and materials, school policy, counseling, teacher attitudes and expectations, and learning styles and languages accepted in the school” (p. 282). Gollnick & Chinn (2002) believes that the expansion of ethnic studies to form multiethnic education helped to establish multicultural education as a broader concept focused “on the different microcultures to which individuals belong, with an emphasis on the interaction of membership in the microcultures, especially race, ethnicity, class, gender, and also calls for the elimination of discrimination against individuals because of their group membership” (p. 29).

The Emerging Scholarship in the Multicultural Education Movement

Banks (1992) believes that “the 1980s saw the emergence of a body of scholarship on multicultural education by progressive education activists and researchers who refused to allow schools to address their concerns by simply adding token programs and special units on famous women or famous people of color. James Banks was among the first multicultural education scholars to examine schools as a social system from a multicultural context (Banks, 1981). He grounded his conceptualization of multicultural education in the idea of “educational equality.” He believes that “all aspects of the school had to be examined and transformed, including policies, teachers’ attitudes, instructional materials, assessment methods, counseling, and teaching styles,” in order to maintain a “multicultural school environment” (Banks, 1981, 1989). More scholarship was provided by the middle and late 1980s by Carl Grant, Christine Sleeter, Geneva Gay, and Sonia Nieto who helped to develop a deeper framework that was grounded in the ideal of equal educational opportunity and a connection between school transformation
and social change” (Gorski, p. 3). The above scholars built on Bank’s work, and examined the entire operation of schools and how it contributes to educational inequities in regards to tracking, cultural oppressive teaching approaches, standardized tests, school funding discrepancies, classroom climate, discriminatory hiring practices, and other symptoms of an ailing and oppressive education system were exposed, discussed, and criticized” (Gorski, p. 3). The leaders of the current multicultural education movement are quite ethnically diverse and include African American scholars such as James Banks, Baker, Gay, and Grant; European American scholars, Christine I. Benneth, Donna Gollnick, and Christine E. Sleeter; Latino scholars, Carlos E. Cortes, Ricardo L. Garcia, Hilda Hernandez, and Sonia Nieto; and Asian American scholars, Philip C. Chinn, Valerie O. Pang, and Derald W. Sue (Banks, 1992, pp. 281-282).

**Opposition to Multicultural Education Movement**

Banks (1992) observes that the multicultural education movement has been challenged by critics from both the right and left who have become so suspicious of the reform movement. Critics, which include D’Souza (1991) and Schlesinger (1991), claim that “multicultural education promotes divisiveness and ethnic polarization rather than national unity” (p. 282). Schlesinger in particular believes that multicultural education would split the nation into separate ethnic groups instead of bringing them together, and would eventually lead to a balkanization of the United States whereby the nation state would disintegrate into different ethnic tribes according to their “ethnic origins, languages, and religions” (pp. 13 & 42). The radical critics, who include Mattai, 1992, and McCarthy, 1988, argue that “multicultural education reinforces the status quo
because it fails to challenge the current social structure that oppresses the poor, people of
color, women, and people with different sexual orientation (Banks, p. 282).

The critics tend to express fear and mistrust to express their dissenting opinion
about the reform movement rather than viewing it as a need of the present American
society. Sleeter (1989) believes that “both groups support their arguments against
multicultural education by largely dismissing the writings and research of its major
theorists, by using examples of teaching and activities that violate the theoretical
principles of multicultural education, and by ignoring many of the realities of today’s
classrooms” (p. 17). Noting that the American society was already sharply divided along
class, race, and gender lines Banks (1992) asserts that the “major aim of multicultural
education is to cement and unify a deeply divided nation rather than to divide a united
one” (p. 283). This is perhaps an utmost response to the critics, and it calls attention to
the reality that classroom teachers, especially in most K-12 schools, are facing while
trying to educate students that are diverse in culture, language, religion, gender, sexual
orientation, physical and mental ability.

Conclusion

Current multicultural education movements developed from a search for fairness
and equality of opportunity. The Civil Rights movement created a political and social
condition, which hastened its development through the ethnic studies movement.
Multicultural education in the United States today provides the knowledge and the tools
that helps oppressed Americans to “take action against social [in]justice and human rights
violations such as class discrimination; gender categorization and subordination; racism
in the areas of criminal justice, the administration of social service, education, and public
housing; restrictions on freedom of movement and the right to live in a particular area of one’s own country; and world-wide discriminatory treatment of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants” (Grant, 2008, p. 2). All individual and groups in the multicultural education movement are bound by the same goal, which is to seek a more equitable and effective educational system for ethnically and culturally diverse students, and a more democratic society in which there is much greater equality, freedom, and justice in all spheres of life (Gay, 2004, p. 39).

As discussed above, the idea of multicultural education emerges out of various social and educational movements struggling for equality and justice. A common underlying value of these movements, in particular the ethnic studies movement, is cultural pluralism. Inherent within cultural pluralism is the idea of “maintaining the distinctiveness of different tastes and values in every conceivable realm of human experience. Different immigrant groups choose to maintain their own unique communities and enclaves because they either refused to assimilate or were not permitted to assimilate into the dominant American culture” (Gollnick & Chinn, p. 15). Cultural pluralism holds that “a society is best served by maintaining the distinctiveness of different tastes and values in just about every conceivable realm of human experience – political, religious, social, linguistic, and so on” (Tesconi, 2001, p. 88). Cultural pluralism is a positive attribute of a democratic society due to its ability to unleash multiple perspectives and opinions in matters concerning the common goods that are necessary for human flourishing. Cultural pluralism contributes a certain uniqueness and sustainability to multicultural education, and should therefore be seen as a strength rather than a weakness to the multicultural education movement. However, an authentic
cultural pluralism finds its foundation in a fully guaranteed equal right to cultural recognition, for without respectful recognition pluralism is merely a façade, which hides potent forms of imposition and oppression.

While acknowledging the importance of cultural pluralism and thereby cultural recognition as foundational values of multicultural education, inclusion is equally fundamental. The principle of inclusion is present throughout the history reviewed above. The historical overview in this chapter uncovered two fundamental values that are foundational to and drive the movements that give rise to multicultural education: cultural recognition and inclusion. As Chapter Three will demonstrate, these two values are at the core of democracy as a moral and political ideal. In turn, a philosophy of multicultural education should cohere with these two values—it should be both inclusive and respectful of the justified demand for cultural recognition. It will be argued in Chapters four and five that praxial philosophy coheres with these values, and therefore, is a potential philosophical foundation for multicultural education.
Chapter Three

Multiculturalism and Liberal Democracy

It will be argued in this chapter that the values of cultural recognition and inclusion are at the core of liberal democracy as a moral and political ideal. In keeping with standard conceptions, liberal democracy is defined here, in terms of both a governmental arrangement [and] ethical ideal, as a constitutional political regime [and] society whose basic structure is framed by a constitutionally guaranteed scheme of basic rights and liberties, including political equality and liberty (Berlin, 1969; Dahl, 2000; Gutman, 1999; Held, 1987; Macpherson, 1977; Rawls, 1993). Liberal democracy, so defined, should be both inclusive and respectful of cultural recognition as urgent matters of justice.

Democracy is a cosmopolitan, moral, and political ideal that transcends national, ethnic, and cultural boundaries (Snauwaert, 2002). As a cosmopolitan ideal Snauwaert (2002) argues that “democracy can no longer be conceived as exclusively a national phenomenon” (p. 5). In other words, there is a shift in ownership formerly ascribed to democracy – such as from “Athenian democracy” or “American democracy” to “global democracy.” Democracy is thus conceived in terms of the cosmopolitanism or in relation to the diversity of peoples in a multicultural state. “At the core of democracy is a fundamental belief in moral equality, a belief that all humans [are created equal and as such] possesses an equal inherent dignity or worth” (Snauwaert, 2002, p. 5).

Dahl logically points out that “people that are morally equal also possess equal rights, inviolable claims to the actual enjoyment of particular social goods guaranteed by the society” (Snauwaert, 2002; Dahl, 2000; Shue, 1980). This argument holds that any
group of people that claims the ideals of democracy are morally equal and possesses equal human dignity by virtue of their membership in a democratic society. As such, members of a democratic society are automatically guaranteed equal rights to the enjoyment of social goods that are necessary for human flourishing. Such includes the right for equal participation in many forums; the right to be heard; the right to be free from all forms of violence, harassment, and intimidation – racial, sexual, ethnic, or physical condition; the right to equal education, jobs, and leadership opportunities; the right to engage in moral choices that affect people’s lives; and not the least, the right for equal protection under the law. These rights apply to every member of a democratic society regardless of their ethnicity, religion, gender, age, or condition of disabilities.

Eventually, the equality of opportunity promised by democracy is only enjoyed by a few members of the American society while great many suffer inequality, which now characterizes the current practices of schooling in the U.S. public schools (Nwonga, 2005, p. 2). Inequality or social limits put in place by the privileged against the underprivileged in America has historically inhibited political participation through the use of poll tax, and by social intimidation of minorities by the Ku Klux Klan, to mention a few. These actions were premised upon the logic of inequality perpetrated against the minority cultural groups; therefore, they are undemocratic.

All humans have the right to live in a democracy and to experience democratic living. Dahl (2000) asserts that democracy is “a system of rights premised upon the logic of equality.” Living in a democracy is conceived in terms of the physical spatial relationship between humans, the political environment, and the governance – how government policies affect the citizen within and beyond the immediate political
environment. The experience of democracy, on the other hand, entails citizens’ active participation. It is a participation process whereby citizens make their voices heard through actual engagement in the formulation, support, and, or rejection of public policies. While elected officials, acting upon the will of the people (the sovereign law of the land), create a democratic environment in which the people live, citizens in a democracy express their rights to engage in political activities through participation in public forums conceived in terms of voting, engagement in physical assembly, blogospheres, chat rooms, twits, and telecommunication airwaves. Therefore, individuals in a democracy together express their political rights because they conceive themselves as equals in the eyes of the law.

This chapter will present a discussion of multiculturalism as a philosophical and political trend in the 21st century. It will attempt to explore the relationship between multiculturalism and liberal democracy. The chapter is organized in terms of political responses to cultural diversity in American Society: Assimilation, Liberal Pluralism, and Cultural Recognition. The discussion of these responses will focus on prominent representative conceptualizations (and thereby authors) within the field of the political philosophy of liberal democracy in relation to the question of a just response to cultural diversity.

**Assimilationism**

The dominant response to diversity in American education and society in general has been a program of assimilation— the classic image of the “melting pot.” Assimilationists have historically opposed multiculturalism on the grounds that it would cause the break-up of the nation into factions of ethnic enclaves whose competing ethnic
interests may undermine the solidarity of America as “one people” thereby resulting to a “balkanization” of America.

The overarching belief in the “melting pot” metaphor is that people from different ethnic groups come to America and “melt away” their ethnic differences and submerge themselves into “a national identity that absorbs and transcends the diverse ethnicities that come to [the American] shore” (Schlesinger, 1998, p. 17). Arthur Schlesinger (1998), for example, asserts that multiculturalists are “very often ethnocentric separatists who tend to classify all Americans “according to ethnic and racial criteria,” and tends to replace “assimilation [with] fragmentation, integration [with] separatism . . . and “belittles unum and glorifies pluribus” (p. 21). He argues that while ethnic awareness has had many positive results in uniting the nation, it has produced “a cult of ethnicity among non-Anglo whites and among nonwhite minorities [whose goal is] to denounce the goal of assimilation, to challenge the concept of ‘one people,’ and to protect, promote, and perpetuate separate ethnic and racial communities” (p. 20). He warns against the influence of what he calls the “cult of ethnicity” stating that if “pressed too far,” the “cult of ethnicity” threatens to fragment American society and imperils the unity of our great nation (p. 20). He insists that Americans should continue to uphold the principles of assimilation into a civic, political culture while preserving their ethnic diversity.

Schlesinger’s position raises questions about liberal commitments to cultural pluralism and recognition, in which “cultural and linguistic differences in a society are valued and maintained, in contrast to a commitment to assimilation, in which the customs, habits, and languages of subcultures are absorbed into a dominant culture” (Tolzer, p. 196). The effort of European-Americans to assimilate Native Americans is a
case in point. As Steve Tozer (2006) correctly pointed out on the one hand, “a regard for pluralism represents [the] recognition that the strength of a society depends in part on the extent to which cultural differences are honored for their contribution to healthy diversity. Pluralism thus conceived means valuing and maintaining cultural and linguistic differences within a society” (p. 199). The concept of assimilation on the other hand, is “the process by which diverse cultures – immigrants, racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities – alter their customs, habits, and languages [in order to be] absorbed into a dominant culture” (Tozer, p. 199). It may be argued that assimilation of Native Americans, for example, exemplifies a “forced” conformity to the mainstream culture. The Native Americans did not assimilate on their own volition. They were forced to abandon their cultural ways, and adopt European-American ways and styles. For the Native Americans, schooling was used as an agent of assimilation into the dominant ideology. The Americanization of Native Americans was employed through “curricular standardization, character education, and Protestant humanism [all of which] affected Indian boarding and mission school efforts, and . . . the increased effort to make compulsory public school a reality” (p. 200). One of the reasons for the apparent failure of the assimilation policy to achieve the desired goal of acculturating Native Americans through education was “a fundamental clash between [European-Americans’] impulse toward ‘manifest destiny’ tempered by corporate liberal democratic ideology and Native American approaches to life that did not emphasize liberal concepts of property, progress, scientific rationality, and nationalism” (Tozer, p. 196). More so, the assimilation curriculum did not inculcate any part of Native American cultural ideology, which, of course, would have diverted the Euro-centric ambience of the curriculum. The lack of
success of the assimilation efforts with the Native Americans as well as other minority cultures in America was contingent upon the fact that it was a forced conformity whereby the minority cultural groups were forced to adopt European cultural ways and lifestyles while they forgo each of their indigenous cultures which had been relevant to their existence. Assimilation does not respect cultural recognition and is inherently exclusionary, in that it employs cultural imposition, a forced and therefore illegitimate form of inclusion.

An articulation of the philosophy of assimilationism is offered in Arthur Schlesinger’s book, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*. Schlesinger (1998) argues that multiculturalism, understood as an emphasis on ethnic distinctiveness and separation, is likely to lead to ethnic conflict. Considering that tribalism (a strong loyalty to one’s own tribe -- a sentiment that creates ethnic divisions) has been a major cause of “balkanization” (a break-up of national unity) in countries such as the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Nigeria, and Czechoslovakia, he argues that multiculturalism may have the same effect in the United States, whereby different ethnic groups that make-up the nation may break into separate factions each engaged in pursuit of self-determination (pp. 13 & 42). He argues that ethnic divisions (if and when it occurs) may cause ethnic conflicts that may ultimately lead to a break-up of the nation into ethnic enclaves.

His problem with multiculturalism rests in the development of what he calls the “cult of ethnicity,” a movement that, according to him, promotes ethnic awareness, Afro-centric curricula, a continuing attack on the history and literacy canons of the United States, increased racial hostility, and national disintegration (p. 20). He writes:
The new ethnic gospel rejects the unifying vision of individuals from all nations melted into a new race. Its underlying philosophy is that America is not a nation of individuals at all but a nation of groups, that ethnicity is the defining experience for Americans; that ethnic ties are permanent and indelible, and that division into ethnic communities establishes the basic structure of American society and the basic meaning of American history (pp. 20-21).

He asserts that the advocates of the “cult of ethnicity” want a “nation of groups, differentiated in their ancestries, inviolable in their identities; and that the self-appointed leaders of the “cult of ethnicity” have lost confidence in the American future and hope to radically change it; and that, the cult threatens to become a counter revolution against the original theory of America as one people a common culture, [and] a single nation” (p. 20). He argues that the “cult of ethnicity” tends to classify Americans according to ethnic and racial criteria” (p. 21). He warns that the trend toward multiculturalism may lead to a “balkanization” of the United States of America, whereby ethnic interests may override the interest of national unity thereby causing the nation to split into combating ethnic factions rather than upholding the integrity of one nation. He quotes President Theodore Roosevelt saying:

The one absolute certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of it continuing to be a nation at all would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities, an intricate knot of German-Americans, Irish-Americans, English-Americans, French Americans, Scandinavian-Americans, or Italian-Americans, each preserving its separate nationality (p. 124).

Schlesinger expresses a serious concern over the impact of multiculturalism on public schools’ curriculum in the United States. He warns that “the cult of ethnicity in general and Afrocentric campaign in particular do not bode well either for American
education or for the future of the minorities” (p. 80). He asserts that “the bonds of national cohesion are sufficiently fragile already,” and that “public education should aim to strengthen those bonds, and not to weaken them.” He warns that “if separatist tendencies go unchecked the result can only be the fragmentation, resegregation, and tribalization of American life” (p. 23). He cites the negative impact of tribalism on countries (such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia) as an imminent danger brought about by ethnic conflicts. He suggests that there is an ongoing battle (between the assimilationist and the multiculturalist) to control the schools which, “if the multiculturalist wins, will irreparably damage the fabrics of American society, as different ethnicities huddle together in isolation instead of all coming together for the common good” (p. 108). To this, he argues that Afro-centric curricula threatens America’s common bond (p. 74). He maintains that American public schools have historically been the place for building a strong nation and an agent of assimilation of people into America’s “melting pot.”

Our schools and colleges train the citizens of the future. Our public schools in particular have been the primary instrument of assimilation and the primary means of forming an American identity (p. 21).

The fact that American schools and colleges is a preparatory ground for civic assimilation is undisputed. However, the assertion that “Afro-centric curricula threatens America’s common bond” seems to suggest that the goal of multicultural education is to establish an Afro-centric curriculum which may eventually overthrow the Anglo-centric curriculum currently used in the schools. This assertion seems to be unsupported. So also, the idea of an Afro-centric curriculum becoming a threat to the mainstream curriculum is equally unsupported. Recent statistics shows that African-Americans
constitute a mere 12% of the population (National Center for Education Statistics), and does not constitute a growing minority group as does the Latino/a ethnic group. There does not seem to be any known bilingual education program that supports the growth and development of ebonics or any aspect of Africana linguistics. So far, the only aspect of Afro-centric program sporadically mentioned in some K-12 schools is a highlight of African-American history – and this is done only in the month of February of every year as an additive to social studies (Banks, 1993, p. 20). Therefore, the idea of an Afro-centric curriculum rising to overthrow the Anglo-centric curriculum is clearly unreal. Schlesinger expresses discomfort at seeing black students communing together in university campuses. He suggests that the university campuses in recent years have been “fragmented into a multitude of ethnic organizations,” and questions why there are “black dormitories, black student unions, black fraternities and sororities, black business and law societies, black homosexual groups, and black tables in dining halls” (pp. 107-108). He cites Black gatherings, communions, and organizations in the university campuses as an evidence of fragmentations into ethnic groups that he has talked about (p. 108).

He believes that the “unprecedented ethnic upsurge began as a gesture of protest against the Anglocentric culture,” and that today, it has “become a cult and threatens to become a counter-revolution against the original theory of America as one people, a common culture, and a single nation” (p. 49). However, the point that Schlesinger is trying to make here is that what he perceives as the “unprecedented ethnic upsurge [which according to him] began as a gesture of protest against the Anglo-centric culture,” has indeed “become a cult [that] threatens to become a counter-revolution against the original theory of America as one people, a common culture, and a single nation” (p. 49).
That “original theory of America” is the principles of assimilation whereby people forgo their ethnic and racial criteria and melt into America’s political culture. Schlesinger fears that the “cult of ethnicity,” in his view, is an imminent danger to the “original theory of America as one people.” Earlier on page 20 he stated:

the cult of ethnicity has had bad consequences . . . The new ethnic gospel rejects the unifying vision of individuals from all nations melted into a new race. Its underlying philosophy is that America is not a nation of individuals at all but a nation of groups, that ethnicity is the defining experience for Americans, that ethnic ties are permanent and indelible, and that division into ethnic communities establishes the basic structure of American society and the basic meaning of American history (pp. 20-21).

**Liberal Pluralism**

A second response to diversity is Liberal Pluralism. Liberal pluralism conjoins the concepts of liberalism and pluralism. The historical merging of the two concepts could be traced back to “reformation liberalism” dating back to Lockean response to the European wars of religion, which took as its central value the toleration of religious and cultural diversity in Europe (Crowder, 2007, p. 123). For the purpose of this writing, focus will remain on the understanding of the concepts as they mutually support one another in rendering a single meaning to the grand concept of liberal pluralism.

The first concept, liberalism, is the “presumption of individuals or groups leading their lives as they see fit, within a broad range of legitimate variation, in accordance with their own understanding of what gives life meaning and value” (Galston, 2002, p. 4). Galston calls this concept “expressive liberty” (p. 4). He argues that “expressive liberty protects the ability of individuals and groups to live in ways that others would regard as unfree” (p. 29). Examples include minority cultures that practice ritual infant
circumcision, which some liberal states see as “genital amputation” or “genital mutilation,” religious polygamy by the Mormon, and ritual animal sacrifice, which is still being practiced in some cultures. Expressive liberty also protects the right of the Old Order Amish to forbid access by Amish children to public high school education on the ground of religious belief (Galston, p. 19). As a political theory, liberalism values tolerance and social diversity. Galston (2002) argues that “liberalism is about the protection of legitimate diversity” (p. 23). Diversity “allow people to fit their lives to their own characters, needs and aspirations” (Green, 2002, p. 1). Therefore, liberalism offers protection to people who choose to fit their lives to their own characters, needs, and aspirations.

The second concept, pluralism, is used to denote a peaceful coexistence of different peoples, interests, and lifestyles. In modern democracy, pluralism is believed to be in the interest of the citizens. Pluralism encourages members of the society to accommodate their differences through dialogue and peaceful negotiation. Notably present in democratic pluralism is the concept of conflict and resolution, which is achieved through dialogue and negotiation. Therefore, political pluralism is committed to conflict resolution through dialogue as a process of achieving the common good that will serve the needs of all members of the society. In a pluralistic democracy the common good is not given a priori but can only be achieved after negotiation – a posteriori. Due to the fact that dialogue is imperative to negotiation in a political democracy, it then holds that equal representation of all the parties that constitutes the diversity is required in order to achieve a balanced negotiation which will serve the interest of the whole constituent.
Galston (2002) argues that the relationship between the ideals of liberalism and pluralism is “one of mutual support [whereby] a liberal order is the one most likely to encourage the flourishing of different, valuable ways of life, [while] value pluralism supports tolerance-based liberalism (and undermines liberty-based liberalism)” (p. 4). The term, value pluralism, was used to convey the meaning that “not all values are commensurable: they may neither be reduced to a single over-arching value nor completely rank-ordered” (p. 23). Galston borrowed the term from Isaiah Berlin (2002) who argues that “human values, including some universals, are irreducibly multiple, frequently in conflict with one another, and sometimes incommensurable” (p. 213).

Crowder’s precisely explained the term giving it a broad meaning:

Value pluralism is the idea that there are many objective and intrinsic goods – goods that are valuable for their own sake as components of human well-being. Each of these goods makes its own unique claims on us, requiring our respect. Since none of these goods are inherently superior to any other, we should in that sense respect them equally (Crowder, 2007, p. 132).

The diversity of peoples in a pluralistic society entails a diverse need to satisfy their demands. The needs, or social goods regardless of how crucial, have intrinsic values attached to them -- values that are unique or peculiar to the lifestyle of the people in a particular constituent. Although the needs, when realized, may satisfy the demands of all the people in a pluralistic society, they are not equally valued and cannot be equitably measured. However, the values that are attached to each good satisfy the demands of the members of each constituent. With the understanding that the diverse human needs in a pluralistic society are not commensurable, Isaiah Berlin reminds us that they are “equally ultimate,” and deserves our “equal respect.”
While liberals enjoy the freedom to live their lives in accordance to their own taste, “no pluralist can also be liberal without insisting on limits to permissible diversity” (Galston, p. 54). “The pluralist state,” Galston argues, “may properly act to reduce coordination problems and conflict among legitimate diverse activities, to prevent and punish violations of individual rights, to resist illegitimate ways of life, and to support the cultural and political conditions necessary to sustain a liberal pluralist regime” (p. 23). For example, liberal pluralists need not tolerate a religion that practices [human] sacrifice, such as the ritual practice of the Aztecs” (p. 23). Galston maintains that “a liberal pluralist state insists on the importance of allowing human beings to live their lives in ways congruent with their varying conceptions of what gives life meaning and purpose” (p. 121). Galston shows concerns over the incidence whereby some people attempts to live other people’s lives for them, and thus tend to dictate or impose the mode of living that the other people ought to live.

However, the question may be asked: “Is the liberal state entitled to intervene in the internal affairs of its non-liberal minorities to promote individual autonomy as a public ideal, or should it tolerate the non-liberal practices of such groups in the name of legitimate diversity?” (Crowder, p. 121). Some of the practices condoned by non-liberal religious and ethnic cultural groups include rituals of human and animal sacrifice, polygamy, polyandry, genital amputation/mutilation, amputation of criminals’ limbs, women beating, arranged marriage, primogeniture rights, as well as the unequal distribution of inheritance due to the right of the first born male. The question is: do liberals have the right to impose limits and restrictions on those cultural practices of the non-liberal minority groups, which liberals consider to limit individual autonomy of the
members of the group? Liberals are divided in their deliberation of how to treat such “illiberal” practices of minority groups in a liberal democracy.

One group of liberals “see liberalism as standing primarily for the autonomy of the individual person” (Crowder, p. 121). This group criticizes the non-liberal groups that place serious restrictions on the autonomy of their members. The other group “identif[ies] liberalism with maximal toleration of the beliefs and practices of different social groups” (p. 121). They “tend to regard the ideal of individual autonomy as too demanding a principle for liberal politics, since many non-liberal groups do not value that kind of personal freedom” (p. 122).

The conjoint relationship between liberal and plural agendas creates a tension that must be resolved in a liberal-pluralist state. On the one hand, liberalism provides unabridged freedom to individuals or groups, enabling them to lead their lives as they see fit according to their own understanding of what gives life meaning and value (Galston, p. 4). Thus, the lifestyle and cultural agenda of certain liberal elements may pose moral concerns to the pluralists who although are willing to share the socio-political space with liberals may object to some of the liberal practices. Pluralism, on the other hand, entails a diverse society that accommodates multiple ways of life, allowing individual members to pursue and develop a variety of goods, virtues, and personal projects (Crowder, p. 135). This tension is resolved in liberal theory by an appeal to common political ethic, a commonly shared set of political values and principles designed to generate political unity in the context of pluralism.

Schlesinger is advocating for a political assimilation, a general acceptance of the political principles of a democracy with the preservation of ethnic diversity. In other
words, he is advocating not for a cultural, ethnic assimilation but a political assimilation into a civic, political culture while preserving ethnic diversity. This idea is summed-up under the slogan “E pluribus unum: one out of many” (pp. 17; 129). “The creation of a brand-new national identity by individuals who, in forsaking old loyalties and joining to make new lives, melted away their ethnic differences – a national identity that absorbs and transcends the diverse ethnicities that come to our shore, ethnicities that enrich and reshape the common culture in the very act of entering into it” (p. 17). A political assimilation principle whereby individuals come to America from different nations “leaving behind all their ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, [and] the new rank he holds” (p. 29). The politically assimilated “American, [he maintains], is a new man, who acts upon new principles; individuals of different nations who are “melted into a new race of men” (pp. 29-33).

The Kind of Assimilation Schlesinger Advocated

Evidence in his writing suggests that Schlesinger is not advocating for ethnic assimilation. Ethnic assimilation, according to him, is one characterized by “separatist tendencies” (p. 23); “ethnocentric separatism” (p. 21); and one that “belittles unum and glorifies pluribus” (p. 21). Schlesinger believes that ethnic assimilation has the tendency of splitting America into combating ethnic groups. Indeed, Schlesinger is advocating for the continuance of a civic assimilation into a political democracy; one that celebrates unum while acknowledging pluribus (p. 17). He maintains that this assimilation is “what holds the American people together in the absence of a common ethnic origin . . . a common adherence to the ideals of democracy and human rights” (p. 123). He believes
that political assimilation is “the mechanism for translating diversity into unity . . . the
American Creed, [and] the civic culture . . .” (p. 137). To sum it up, Schlesinger (1998)
articulates the nature of American assimilation into a civil society in this manner:

The genius of America lies in its capacity to forge a single
nation from peoples of remarkably diverse racial, religious,
and ethnic origins. It has done so because democratic
principles provide both the philosophical bond of union and
practical experience in civic participation (p. 142). Plainly
there is no incompatibility between fidelity to the unifying
civic principles that hold us together as Americans and
fidelity, if one wishes it, to any particular religious or
ethnic or racial or gender group. It is a vital part of
America for people to cherish their own traditions,
observances, organizations, customs, rituals, holidays,
parades, cuisines. It is these strands of particularity that
lend richness and texture to our society (p.123). Our task is
to combine due appreciation of the splendid diversity of the
nation with due emphasis on the great unifying Western
ideas of individual freedom, political democracy, and
human rights. These are the ideas that define the American
nationality (p.147).

As a liberal pluralist, Schlesinger is advocating assimilation into a civic, political culture
while preserving ethnic diversity in America. He is not advocating assimilation into an
American ethnic culture. Assimilation into a civic, political culture is one that celebrates
diversity grounded in the ideals of democracy, freedom, and human rights.

The “doctrine” of the new race, according to Schlesinger, holds that people from
different countries, nations, and ethnicities come to America, as individuals, to
completely assimilate into a civic political culture – a process whereby individuals give-
up the “language, habits and principles (good or bad) which they [brought] with them”;
assimilation is the readiness of “individuals,” not a “clannish groups” to “intermix” with
[the American people]; the preparedness of individuals to assimilate to American
“customs, measures and laws . . . and to soon become one people” (p. 30). This
assimilation, according to George Washington, “is open . . . to the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations and Religions,” people who “. . . must cast off the European skin, never to resume it . . . [as] they look forward to their posterity rather than backward to their ancestors” (pp. 30-31). The assimilation into the “new race,” according to George Washington, was an invitation to “the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations and Religions” of European, “people who [were willing to] cast off the European skin, never to resume it.” The individuals that meet the above qualification then will adopt a common identity to assimilate into American ideal of democracy, freedom, and human rights.

Schlesinger (1998) believes that national unity in the 21st century can only be achieved through civic assimilation into a single political entity. He contends that political assimilation, summed-up under the slogan “E pluribus unum: one out of many,” has historically held the American people together as one nation since the beginning of the republic (pp. 17; 129). He believes that multiculturalism cannot lead to national unity because it encourages separatist tendencies, and may result to the “balkanization” of the United States into combating ethnic groups (Schlesinger, 1998, p. 42). Besides, he argues that multiculturalism does not meet Crevecoeur’s standard defining “the American” in the sense that it nurtures “separatists’ tendencies” and gives preference to ethnicity over assimilation (p. 23). According to Crevecoeur, “the American” is one who forsakes his past cultural affiliation, upon entry into the American soil, and embraces the American way of life “. . . embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds.”
Schlesinger’s use of Crevecoeur’s letter as a standard that determines the characteristics of “the American,” in the 21st century, seems to support an argument that is personal and time-limited. Crevecoeur’s letters to a friend reflects a personal opinion of a farmer who considered himself fortunate for his new-found opportunities in the New World than in his home country. He wrote:

The great number of European emigrants yearly coming here informs us that the severity of taxes, the injustice of laws, the tyranny of the rich, and the oppressive avarice of the church are as intolerable as ever . . . How happy are we here in having fortunately escaped the miseries which attended our fathers . . . You have, no doubt, read several histories of this continent, yet there are a thousand facts, a thousand explanations, overlooked. Authors will certainly convey to you a geographical knowledge of this country; they will acquaint you with the eras of the several settlements, the foundations of our towns, the spirit of our different charters, & yet they do not sufficiently disclose the genius of the people, their various customs, their modes of agriculture, the innumerable resources which the industrious have of raising themselves to a comfortable and easy situation (Letters from an American Farmer, by J. Hector St. John Crevecoeur).

Crevecoeur’s opinion was personal and was not based on any established criteria by the British Colony of North America, and was not intended to set a criterion that defines “the American”:

Letters from an American Farmer describes certain provincial situations, manners, and customs, not generally known. It conveys some idea of the late and present interior circumstances of the British Colonies of North America in 1782. This [letter] was written by Crevecoeur to inform a friend in England (http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap2/creve.html).

Letters from an American Farmer has its importance:
It provides useful information and understanding of the New World; creation of personas, or disguises – James, the American Farmer; tries to create an American identity – an attempt to describe an entire country, not merely regional colonies; celebrates American innocence and simplicity; describes American tolerance for religious diversity; asks the important question [at the time] – what is an American? And, it shows the first writer to explore the concept of the American Dream. (Nation of Letters: A Concise Anthology of American Literature).

Crevecoeur’s letters also show some limitations:

It misses specific details in matters of geography, religion, history, and politics. He glosses over the issue of slavery. He presented a general treatment of American agriculture, and did not present any details (Nation of Letters: A Concise Anthology of American Literature).

One will wonder why Crevecoeur’s letters was not mentioned by the founding fathers in the official documents that defined the American citizenship, if it were such an important document of historical and political importance. Indeed, no official document of the United States government has sanctioned its authority as representing the central belief of the American government in the 18th century, or since the beginning of the republic. Crevecoeur did not seem to consider the experiences of all the people that lived in the New World at the time of his writing. His arbitrary set standards was based only on the European immigrants, and he made no mention of the other inhabitants such as the Native Americans, African Americans, and other racial groups that inhabited North America in the 18th century. Although Crevecoeur’s letters may be of folkloric and literary value in American literature, it mainly represents an individual’s opinion and seems to provide a weak argument for defining “The American” in the 21st century -- multicultural America.
Michael Walzer (1999) offers another conception of liberal pluralism. He argues that toleration is a necessary condition for the coexistence of different individuals and cultural groups in a pluralist democracy. He sees intolerance, rather than multiculturalism, as a threat to national unity. He asserts that toleration is both an attitude and a practice; therefore, he ponders “What is it that sustains toleration and how it works?” (p. xii). He insists that tolerance is “an attitude of accommodation enacted within a political and legislative practice” (French, 1999, p. 692). He wonders how tolerance can be fostered within the public and legislative spheres in such a way that different groups might be able to dialogue and act on important issues (French, p. 692).

Asserting that toleration is a basic good in a multicultural democracy, Walzer maintains that it is a necessary condition for the “peaceful coexistence of different people, with different histories, cultures, and identities, and for the valuing of life and basic human rights, liberty, and maintenance of tradition” (p. 2). This statement strongly echoes Schlesinger’s call for civic assimilation into political democracy – one which celebrates unum while acknowledging pluribus, whereby different nationalities are absorbed into the “melting pot” (p. 17). Toleration in this view allies with assimilationism and becomes the agent that holds the American people together in the absence of a common ethnic origin.

Commenting on Walzer’s work, French (1999) writes that Walzer observed a strong embrace of group identity in adherence to religion, ethnicity, or cultural group membership, which tends to reject or deemphasize the social and political life that all citizens have in common (p. 691). Such group identity, he explains, is characterized by a hyphenated identity such as African-American, Asian-American, European-American,
Irish-American, etc. He suggests that such hyphenated identities tend to reject or deemphasize the social and political life that all citizens have in common. As such, he asserts that mutual toleration is a way of keeping all the cultures peaceful and together in a multicultural democracy. French maintains that on the other hand, Walzer sees a prevalence of individualists thrust on modernity which tends to separate people from group membership. According to him, this individualist ideal attempts to include every person in an equal share of the legal and political common life by reducing many different forms of individuality into a common mode of life – that of citizen (French, 1999, p. 691). As such, he argues, “there is no longer a single mode of individuality that everyone is striving to achieve. Difference is everywhere. Many of these individuals are under enormous economic and racial hardship, and also lack the resources needed to carve from the fragments of the past to pursue their own existences” (French, 1999, p. 692). Walzer observes that the associations that these self-made and self-making individuals form are likely to be little more than temporary alliances that can be easily broken off when something more promising presents itself. Won’t tolerance and intolerance in such a setting, Walzer asks, “be replaced by mere personal liking and disliking?” (Walzer, p. 88). He insists that all of the clamoring for public voices will result in a “jangling discord” (p. 96) and inefficient social action without a strong group identity to shape and empower the different groups. He concludes that toleration is a necessity for any society that embraces differences in race, ethnicity, gender, and “religious, cultural, and way-of-life differences” (p. 9). French, like Walzer, also believes that toleration is sustained through human emotion; and that toleration is “built on deeper human capacities – representing thinking (in the tradition of Immanuel Kant
and Hannah Arendt) and compassion (in the neo-Aristotelianism of Martha Nussbaum) – that make possible the broadening of one’s hermeneutical horizon or at least allow one to legitimate another’s public expression on diverse beliefs” (p. 692).

With strong support for tolerance-based liberalism, Walzer connects with liberal pluralists. Toleration is the basis of peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society. It does not necessarily demand cultural recognition as a basis of coexistence rather it embraces group identity from religion, ethnicity, and cultural group membership, under the principle that mutual toleration forms the adhesive that will hold every one of the cultural groups together.

**Cultural Recognition**

The demands of the minority groups have evolved to include not only political, social, and economic equality, but also cultural equality. This demand is premised upon the rationale that an individual’s self-identity is innately linked to cultural recognition, whereby “lack of recognition, or misrecognition” of an individual or a group, contributes to “a form of oppression, inflicting harm, and imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (Taylor, p. 25). Therefore, the demand for cultural recognition becomes crucial as an individual or a people’s “identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence” (Taylor, p. 25). It therefore becomes necessary that equal recognition accorded to an individual or a cultural group becomes the pedestal of multiculturalism in a liberal democracy. Furthermore, equal recognition of all people enacts the core liberal democratic principle of equality.

Charles Taylor (1994) explores the idea of a right to cultural recognition within the parameters of a liberal democracy; he argues that a right to cultural recognition is
necessary for the inclusion of all persons as equal citizens in a liberal democracy characterized by various forms of diversity. He states the problem with a high level of precision:

The demand for recognition is given urgency by the supposed link between recognition and identity, where this later term designates something like a person’s understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as a human being. The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Taylor, 1994, p. 25).

He argues that “nonrecognition or misrecognition often leads the victims to adopt a depreciatory image of themselves forcing them to internalize a picture of their own inferiority so that even when some of the objective obstacles of their advancement fall away, they may be incapable of taking advantage of the new opportunities” (p. 25). “Beyond this,” he continues, [the victims] are condemned to suffer the pain of low self-esteem” (p. 26). As a point in reference, he illustrated how “white society has for generations projected a demeaning image of blacks which some black people have been unable to resist adopting,” consequently, “their own self-depreciation becomes one of the most potent instruments of their own oppression” (p. 26). Oppression is defined here as dehumanization caused by disrespect, by not being respected as a moral, social and political equal. The cultural non-recognition constitutes injustice.

He points out that the close connection between identity and recognition became prominent at the collapse of social hierarchies of the ancien regime, whereby honor was
intrinsically linked to inequalities and was a privileged right due only to the elites of the society (p. 27). The traditional code of honor reserved recognition only to the kings and elites of the European societies whereas all others – the ordinary non-elites – were compelled under obligation to recognize, obey, and to respect the elites. Taylor notes that the code of honor, once reserved for the elites, has been replaced by human dignity in our modern society, and is used in a universalist and egalitarian sense as in the “inherent dignity of human beings,” or “of citizen dignity” (p. 27). The implication of the shift from honor to dignity is the emergence of the politics of universalism, which according to Taylor emphasizes the equal dignity of all citizens ensuring the equalization of rights and entitlements (p. 27). In this sense, ‘dignity’ is conceived as everyone’s natural entitlement shared by everyone as opposed to the old concept of ‘honor’ -- shared only by European elites. Taylor argues, “this concept of dignity is the only one compatible with a democratic society, and that it was inevitable that the old concept of honor was superseded” (p. 27). That being the case, Taylor insists, “the forms of equal recognition have been essential to democratic cultures.” He maintains “democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form demands for the equal status of cultures and of genders” (p. 27).

Taylor argues that the demand for recognition is a vital human need (p. 26). He maintains “the importance of recognition has been modified and intensified by the new understanding of individual identity whereby we can [now] speak of individualized identity, ‘one that is particular to me, and that I discover in myself.’” He explains that the ideal of individualized identity “arises with an ideal, that of being true to myself and my own particular way of being” – a concept which he identifies as “an ideal of authenticity”
(p. 28). “The ideal of authenticity,” according to him, “cannot be socially derived, but must be inwardly generated” (p. 32). In other words, the ideal of individual authenticity offers an explanation of who a person truly is based on the true assessment of the person’s self-conviction of who he or she truly is – such as from down deep within myself.

Taylor maintains that the connection between identity and recognition may be better understood when we consider that a key factor that distinguishes human beings from other creatures is “fundamentally [our] dialogical character” -- the human ability to dialogue with one another. He argues that “we become fully human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression” (p. 32). Therefore, he asserts

. . my discovering my own identity doesn’t mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others . . . (Taylor, 1994, p. 34).

Taylor maintains that “the development of modern notion of identity has given rise to a politics of difference” – the idea that “everyone should be recognized for his or her unique identity” (p. 38). Taylor emphasizes that the politics of difference requires that “we recognize the unique identity of a particular individual or group, their distinctness from everyone else – which had been precisely ignored, glossed over, or assimilated to a dominant or majority identity (p. 38). Taylor insists that the type of assimilation into a dominant or majority identity, which tends to ignore or gloss over
individual identity and recognition, is “the cardinal sin against the ideal of authenticity” (p. 38).

Taylor’s central idea rests on the process of the dialogical formation of identity. He states that dialogical identity becomes crucial in the process whereby an individual defines himself as an authentic being whose life-goal is to experience self-fulfillment (p. 31). Taylor argues that one’s discovery of his or her true identity is contingent upon the cultural membership to which the person belongs. One’s cultural membership enables the person to define himself as an authentic being, whose goal is to experience self-fulfillment (p. 31). He maintains that individual authenticity and self-fulfillment are never achieved alone but are made possible when an individual engages in a “dialogical relationship . . . a rich human languages of expression” -- with others (p. 32). The process of acquiring cultural expression among cultural groups seems to fit in the description of the process of growth, in African-American community, rendered by Vontress (1971). It tends to show how self-authenticity is developed through a cultural based dialogical interaction:

A black child [for example] grows up not just in American culture, but more importantly, he matures in a Negro subculture. This subculture, like the American umbrella culture, consist of all the folkways, habit patterns, and various modus operandi which members of a human society develop in order to cope with the environment and to interact with their fellows. The demands and expectations of the subculture are generally more determinant of an individual’s behavior than are those of the umbrella culture. It is the culture in which the infant is first socialized. The child’s initial development of a superego is a direct result of his immediate subculture, not the culture at large. He first internalizes the restraints imposed upon him by his parents, who represent, in the case of the Negro, the black subculture; when he ventures from home, he inculcates the values and attitudes of his
neighborhood peers, who are also usually black. Attitudes, values, and motivational patterns acquired during impressionable years become powerful forces which continue to direct much of his behavior throughout his lifetime (pp. 53-54).

Thus, the concept of cultural recognition is not an entitlement applicable to the term “culture” as a political entity, but to the individuals of that particular cultural group. Therefore, Taylor maintains that the connection between democracy and diversity is centered on a right to cultural recognition – whereby the term culture refers not to the inanimate political entity but to the individuals that form the membership of that political entity. He argues that human identity is also constituted by cultural group membership, and that an individual's sense of self-worth is deeply tied to the value that others attach to his or her cultural group. As a result of this "new understanding of the human social condition," cultural recognition can be construed as a necessary component of individual recognition, whereas misrecognition can reasonably be considered a form of oppression (Taylor, 1994, pp. 25-26). In Taylor’s conception, dialogical identity suggests that one’s cultural inheritance is inseparable from one’s individual identity, and thus cultural recognition is entailed in a basic right to individual identity/freedom. The individual thus has a right to cultural recognition. This right grounds Taylor’s understanding of multiculturalism. It then holds that if the individual has a right to cultural recognition, then the government has a duty to promote multiculturalism. From this perspective, the ideal of governmental neutrality central to liberal pluralism is refuted in favor of cultural recognition.

In his critique of Taylor’s thesis, K. Anthony Appiah commented on the tension between personal and collective identities, such as those shaped by religion, gender,
ethnicity, race, and sexuality, and on the dangerous tendency of multicultural politics to gloss over such tensions. Although he agrees with Taylor that there are “legitimate collective goals whose pursuit will require giving up pure proceduralism,” he argues that cultural survival is not a goal guaranteed in a constitutional liberal democracy. Appiah supports the ideals of individual autonomy, which is construed to be different from collective identity. He maintains that collective identity is “the identification of people as members of a particular race, ethnicity, nationality, or sexuality” (p. 150). He rejects collective identities on the ground that it “comes with the notion of how a proper person of that kind behaves” (Taylor, 1994, p. 159). Stretched further, collective identity implies, for example, that “there are gay and black modes of behavior,” that may serve as a “script,” “narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their life stories” (p. 160). He worries that “the life-scripts associated with women, homosexuals, blacks, Catholics, Jews, and various other collective identities have often been negative, creating obstacles to, rather than opportunities for, living a socially dignified life and being treated as equals by other members of the society” (p. xi).

Appiah seems to place more value on the stigma (scripting) that the mainstream culture attaches to minorities with collective identities, than supporting the political and moral struggle to protect the rights of individuals with a cultural identity. Such stigma has historically been attached to different racial and ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, Gays and Lesbians, religious groups, among others in America. All the subjects of stigma have been scripted, and their stories have been maligned and written from stigmatized perspectives. However, it is incumbent on the oppressed and the scripted to work together, collectively, to make themselves relevant. Freire (1993) in
*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* believes that the responsibility for change rests in the hands of the oppressed. “This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well” (p. 44). It was through collective efforts, namely the Civil Rights movement, and not through individual struggles, that civil and political victories granted equal rights to Blacks and other minority groups in America. Today, same sex union is gaining nation-wide recognition in the USA based on the collective effort of the Gay and Lesbian community. The open identity and autonomy so far exerted by some members of the Gay and Lesbian community may be linked to their apparent recognition as a group – a political group I may add. Although liberal democracy perhaps does not guarantee protection per se to groups under collective identities, an individual cannot be separated from a culture, which is ultimately the basis of the individual’s identity. As observed by Taylor (1994), collective identity and group recognition is a special human characteristic which fundamentally produces human’s dialogical character – the human ability to dialogue and form relationship with one another (p. 32). Human dialogical character is the embodiment of the freedom of speech guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. Multiculturalism does not “gloss over individual autonomy” as Appiah suggested rather, it enables it. Because of the “supposed link between recognition and [individual] identity – a person’s understanding of who they are, and their fundamental defining characteristics as human being” (Taylor, 1994, p. 25), it may be argued that individual autonomy is developed based on a person’s understanding of who they are. A person’s understanding of who they are is based on the cultural affiliation, which is the source of the dialogical identity that ultimately produced the sense of self-autonomy. Therefore, it may be argued that the group (culture) is the
source of the individual who makes himself relevant, based on his group affiliation, and
that individual later becomes the basic unit of political consideration.

However, Appiah rejects the idea of group recognition based on the assumption that “it ties individuals too tightly to scripts over which they have too little authorial control” (p. xi). He also objects to the idea that groups, rather than individuals, are the basic unit of political consideration, and that political rights attach to groups as they do to individuals. Questioning Taylor’s assumption that political rights attach to groups as they do to individuals, Appiah asserts that “cultural survival [group political right] is not a goal guaranteed in constitutional democracy” (p. 151). Underscoring the need for cultural recognition based on the relationship between culture and self-identity, Taylor demands that cultural recognition be given an urgent response due to the link between recognition and identity whereby, “nonrecognition or misrecognition often leads the victims to adopt a depreciatory image of themselves forcing them to internalize a picture of their own inferiority . . .” (p. 25). In rejection, Appiah responded that “the politics of recognition requires that one’s skin color, one’s sexual body, should be acknowledged politically in ways that make it hard for those who want to treat their skin and their sexual body as personal dimensions of the self” (p. 163). By rejecting group recognition, Appiah affirms the preeminence of individual’s autonomy over collective identities. While he distanced himself from Taylor’s multicultural (collective) proposal, Appiah seems to channel his position toward the cultural assimilationist argument that ethnicities should melt away giving rise to individuals who are submerged into one melting pot with “a common adherence to the ideals of democracy and human rights.” Schlesinger acknowledges cultural diversity but maintains that civic assimilation into political
democracy is “a vital part of America [whereby] people cherish their own traditions, observances, organizations, customs, rituals, holidays, parades, and cuisines” (p. 123). Appiah seems to lean toward liberal pluralism. However, by insisting on a strict adherence to individual’s autonomy with the presumption that “individuals lead their lives as they see fit in accordance with their own understanding of what gives life meaning and value” (Galston, 2002, p. 4), Appiah positions himself more as a liberal than a liberal pluralist.

In his book *Common Schools/Uncommon Identities: National Unity and Cultural Differences*, Walter Feinberg (1999) offers an elaboration of the right to cultural recognition. He discusses the implication of education of citizens in a multicultural society. He observes that the current public education system in the United States was designed to serve a “more particular interests,” as opposed to the general interest of the public . . . and that the dominant group uses the school “as a weapon with which it can reproduce an arbitrary social class structure” (pp. 7-8). Therefore, he proposes what he calls a “principled reasons for a public education” (p. 1).

By the term “principled reasons,” he refers to the general ideals that historically have been used to advance public education for both individual and the common good. He argues: “principled reasons are justifications that appeal to people as human beings rather than as members of a particular social class, race, gender, or religious group” (p. 7). Thomas F. Green (2004) explains that Feinberg’s central concern is that schools should not “merely accommodate cultural and ethnic diversity or merely allow it as plain fact, but that schooling be aimed at developing a mutuality among persons of diverse
origins and differing dimensions of self-identity at the same time rejecting the dominance of any one cultural group” (p. 7).

Feinberg maintains that “the issue of stability arises because of the concern that if multicultural education legitimizes multiple centers of allegiance but neglects a common national identity, the multicultural nation will not have the ability to support the multicultural state” (p. 206). That is, he continues, “if the multicultural nation is not constituted through a single people but is only the name of a formation that holds with it many different cultural groups, then the emotional and intellectual commitment of the citizens will be insufficient to sustain order, stability, and cooperative endeavors across cultural and interest group boundaries” (p. 206). Feinberg fears that “a society that seeks to recognize groups rather than individuals will redirect loyalty away from a common national good to more particularistic goods.” This implies that “people in a multicultural or pluralistic society are more likely to favor their own kind and encourage parochial group interests, rather than expressing a concern for the unity of the nation” (p. 206).

Thus, Feinberg echoes Schlesinger’s sentiment that the “cult of ethnicity,” which according to him is represented by “Afro-centric curricula,” “threatens America’s common bond” and seeks to divide the United States into a “nation of groups, differentiated in their ancestries, inviolable in their identities . . . (p. 20).

Agreeing with liberal pluralism Feinberg proposes that “citizenship education in a multicultural society must have a specific moral content, predicated on complex conceptual skills and concrete moral commitments – skills and commitments that parents and local cultural groups alone may not have sufficient reason to develop, and their importance provides a powerful case for a public school system that attends to their
development” (pp. 206-207). He observes that the concrete moral commitment is mutual respect, which should mediate between people from different cultures. Feinberg asserts that citizens of a multicultural democratic society must “respect the rights of those who are different from [themselves]” (p. 212). He explains that “respecting the rights of those that are different from us” does not oblige a personal likeness of a person or people from other cultures, or the way they live. Rather, it establishes a condition whereby members of a multicultural democratic society would exercise self-restraint in the expression of their individual freedom. It conveys the idea of recognition accorded to one another as equals, whose rights to freedom, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness cannot infringe or be infringed upon by the other, either because of personal or collective strength in wealth, social class, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion.

Thomas Green (2004) adds that mutual “respect is reached under circumstances where the difference simply does not matter. It is merely a rule for forbearance. It is not a term of trust, but of truce” (p. 8). Respect in this sense should not be seen as an invitation for one to become friends or share things in common with someone else from a different culture. Obviously, people from different cultures may choose to become friends or enter into some contractual agreement at any given time. Although, mutual respect for one another, in this case, may lead to mutual friendship between two people of uncommon cultural identity, mutual friendship is not a precondition for mutual respect to develop among people from different cultures. The idea of respect here is more analogous to cooperative attitudes to appreciate what people from the other cultures have to offer especially in their efforts to contribute to national unity.
But, how can mutual respect be developed in a liberal democracy? The way to develop mutual respect for one another is to encourage “public discourse” among people of uncommon cultural identities. Feinberg suggests that “the [best] way to engage in public discourse is to ensure that unique cultural voices are heard, and not muted...” (Feinberg, 1999, p. 225). He recommends that cultural respect is a basic right in a multicultural democratic society. He suggests that multicultural nations should encourage a “citizen education in which students learns to respect members of different groups...” (p. 212). He adds: “such a respect is a basic element of political democracy” (p. 212).

In line with Taylor, Feinberg affirms that “dialogue is an important element of educational democracy in a multicultural society [because] it serves to introduce students to the “diversity in their own society” (p. 212). While the school is expected to teach mutual respect to students in a liberal democracy, dialogue is seen as a means of engagement in which students are able to ask questions and express their views and appreciation (or disapproval) of other people’s cultures. The beauty of it is that students are able to engage in this multicultural dialogue without fear of intimidation – even if they disagree with the content of the cultural expression or even the context on which it was performed. Above all, the mutual respect, which they learned through liberal education, will sustain the diversity of views that arise in the process of cultural engagement. Feinberg affirms that the purpose of public schools in a multicultural liberal democracy is to provide a common ground for the development of mutual respect among students, staff, and parents. Mutual respect in turn sustains cultural engagement among people of uncommon identities. Cultural engagement, on the other hand, is performed
and sustained through dialogues, and was made possible through an education that was carefully designed to stimulate the intellectual and moral development of people of uncommon identities.

In his book, *The rights of minority cultures*, Will Kymlicka (1995) defends cultural recognition not only as an individual right but a *group right*. Kymlicka attempts to demonstrate that contemporary liberalism provides the basis for group rights for cultural communities. He argues: “the arguments made against various forms of individual inequality can be extended to justify special rights for minority groups facing inequality of cultural circumstances in liberal nation states” (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 162). In defending special group rights for aboriginal people, for example, Kymlicka points out that Indian reservations are “special political jurisdictions over which Indian communities have certain guaranteed powers and within which non-Indian Americans have restricted mobility, property and voting rights” (p.136). He argues: “a cultural community is required for the primary good of self-respect and that without special group rights the cultural communities of aboriginal people would be vulnerable to destruction” (p. 154). Culture, to Kymlicka, means a “cultural structure,” which may be understood as a “context of choice,” which can provide a full range of meaning to free individuals pursuing their various life-plans. Therefore he maintains that culture should be protected (p. 165).

Kymlicka (1995) argues that a cultural structure should be understood as one that provides the “essential context for autonomous individual choice” (p. 166). He argues that cultural membership should be protected “because it is a means of showing equal
respect for individuals by providing equal access to this good” (p. 167). However, he stresses that

This understanding of cultural membership does not involve any necessary connection with the shared ends which characterize the culture at any given moment. The primary good being recognized is the cultural community as a context of choice, not the character of the community or its traditional ways of life, which people are free to endorse or reject (p. 172).

Kymlicka insists that the rights granted to minorities should not override individual autonomy, an ideal which he sees as being the foundation of liberalism. He argues that “liberals can only support minority cultural rights, whether self-government, polyethnic, or ‘special representation’” (pp. 31-33). By polyethnic rights, Kymlicka refers to such rights as the exemption given to Muslim and Jewish groups from Sunday closing laws, as well as animal slaughtering legislation; Orthodox Jewish and Sikh exclusion from headgear requirements in the police and military; and dress code exemptions in the case of Muslim school girls in France who wish to wear traditional head scarves. He asserts that the above cases show that Muslim, Jews, and Sikhs “are simply asking that their religious needs be taken into consideration in the same way that the needs of Christians have always been taken into account” (pp. 31, 114-115). He defines a liberal theory of minority rights as “freedom within the minority group, and equality between the minority and majority groups” (p. 152, 80-82). He argues for “supplementing” traditional human rights with minority rights, and aims to show how the latter “are limited by principles of individual liberty, democracy, and social justice” (p. 6). The above formulations, Taylor, Feinberg, and Kymlicka, of a right to cultural recognition as a core value of a liberal
democracy provide a conception of what can be referred to as “Liberal Multiculturism,” which is distinct from both Cultural Assimilationism and Liberal Pluralism.

Liberal multiculturalists demand equal cultural recognition for all individuals and cultural groups in a liberal democracy. The rationale is based on cultural equality, and equal worth of the individuals that constitute a multicultural society. They insist that cultural recognition is crucial for the development of individual autonomy due to the supposed link between recognition and identity, which enables a person to understand who they are and their fundamental defining characteristics as human beings (Taylor, 1994, p. 25). Recognizing that human identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, liberal multiculturalists insist that uncensored freedom provides the latitudes to engage in dialogical relationship with others. Such relationship plays important role in the development of the “ideal of individualized identity,” which gives rise to the “ideal of authenticity” -- the feeling of “being true to myself and my own particular way of being” (Taylor, 1994, p. 28). The ideal of authenticity, according to Taylor, “cannot be socially derived, but must be inwardly generated” (p. 32). However, the development of the ideal of authenticity is contingent upon the development of individual identity, which is in turn a product of dialogical interaction. Ultimately, individual autonomy is developed based on dialogical identity, a product of cultural recognition, under which cultural freedom and open dialogue pros pers.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

In summary, the stated purpose of this chapter was to explore the relationship between multiculturalism and liberal democracy. Multiculturalism has been defined as the coexistence of multiple cultures practiced by different people in a democratic society.
It may be most described, metaphorically, as a kaleidoscope of culture, language, and color. National unity is the solidarity of a nation, brought about by the patriotic feeling of oneness, with undivided cohesive spirit toward maintaining a single national integrity.

Schlesinger (1998) believes that civic assimilation into political democracy -- one that celebrates unum while acknowledging pluribus (p. 17), is the only way to achieve national unity. He argues that civic assimilation into political democracy is “what holds the American people together in the absence of a common ethnic origin.” He advocates for “a common adherence to the ideals of democracy and human rights” (p. 123). He sees diversity as problematic to national unity; therefore, he argues that political assimilation is “the mechanism for translating diversity into unity . . . the American Creed, [and] the civic culture . . .” (p. 137). He refers to civic assimilation into political democracy as “the genius of America which lies in its capacity to forge a single nation from peoples of remarkably diverse racial, religious, and ethnic origins” (p.147).

Recognizing diversity, Schlesinger contends that civic assimilation into political democracy acknowledges diversity as “a vital part of America [whereby] people cherish their own traditions, observances, organizations, customs, rituals, holidays, parades, and cuisines” (p. 123). He believes that fidelity to religious, ethnic, racial, or gender, groups is compatible with fidelity to the unifying civic principles that holds America together as one people (p. 123). He believes that diversity lends richness and texture to the American society (p.123). Therefore, he remarks, “our task is to combine due appreciation of the splendid diversity of the nation with due emphasis on the great unifying Western ideas of individual freedom, political democracy, and human rights . . . the ideas that define the American nationality” (p.147).
Taylor (1994) tends to argue that Schlesinger’s idea of civic assimilation into political culture may not be adequate in maintaining peace and national unity in a multicultural society in the 21st century. While civic assimilation into political democracy seem to have worked well at the early part of the American republic, “the emergence of the politics of universalism” which ensures “the equalization of rights and entitlements,” according to Taylor (p. 27), has made the demand for cultural recognition more urgent in the 21st century. Taylor argues that this demand has been necessitated “by the supposed link between recognition and identity,” whereby a person’s understanding of who they are becomes crucial to the development of individual autonomy. Thus, cultural recognition plays indispensable role in the development of self-identity especially as dialogical identity, which grows from cultural membership, is crucial in the formation of a person. It is through dialogical interaction with capable others that an individual is able to know more about himself and further develops the ideal of individual identity – the real development of a person which, according to Taylor, is inwardly generated. It then holds that the institution of liberal democracy should accord cultural recognition to the various cultures that constitute a multicultural society because of the relationship between cultural recognition and the development of individual autonomy. Since culture shapes the dialogical identity, which in turn shapes the individual, cultures should then be recognized because it is the source of individual autonomy.

This chapter explored the question whether the idea of multiculturalism is consistent with the ideals of liberal democracy or whether it is in conflict with it. A Summary of the viewpoint of contemporary philosophers on multiculturalism is presented on table 3.1.
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<th>Taylor</th>
<th>Kymlicka</th>
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<td>1. Multiculturalism is not a threat to national unity rather it will enable national unity if all individuals and peoples are equally recognized. 2. What threatens national unity is the nonrecognition or misrecognition of a person or a people, which may lead the individual or people to suffer real damage, and real distortion because the people or society around them mirrors back to them a demeaning and contemptible image of themselves, thereby reducing the person or people to mental imprisonment, false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. 3. There is a link between recognition and the development of self-identity -- a person’s understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as human beings. 4. The politics of universalism has emerged, and it emphasizes the equal dignity of all citizens ensuring the equalization of rights and entitlements whereby, dignity is conceived as everyone’s natural entitlement. 5. The concept of human dignity is the only one compatible with a democratic society and, equal recognition is essential to democratic cultures. 6. Therefore, equal recognition is premised upon democratic principles which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form demands for the equal status of cultures and genders.</td>
<td>1. There is a need to treat every member of a multicultural society as equals. Contemporary liberalism creates a condition that provides the basis for group rights and cultural equality. 2. The arguments made against various forms of individual inequality can be extended to justify special rights for minority groups facing inequality of cultural circumstances. 3. Defines a liberal theory of minority rights as “freedom within the minority group, and equality between the minority and majority groups.” 4. Refers to a group right granted to members of a particular cultural group which tend to exempt them from general applicable laws as “group differentiated rights.”</td>
<td>1. Multiculturalism is a threat to national unity; may undermine the solidarity of the USA as “one people”; may result to a balkanization of the United States. 2. Multiculturalists are ethnocentric separatists. Their goal is: to classify all Americans according to ethnic and racial criteria; replace assimilation with fragmentation and integration with separationism; belittles anum and glorifies pluribus; replaces civic assimilation with the celebration of ethnic differences. 3. National unity may only be achieved through civic assimilation, depicted under the slogan “E pluribus unum” : one out of many. It requires that all Americans do away with ethnic interests. 4. Individuals must melt away their ethnic differences, and assume a new national political identity that absorbs and transcends the diverse ethnicities that come to American shore.</td>
<td>1. Intolerance, and not multiculturalism, is a threat to national unity. Toleration is a necessary condition for the peaceful coexistence of individuals and cultural groups in a pluralist democracy. 2. Toleration is an attitude of accommodation enacted within a political and legislative practice. 3. It is a necessity for any society that embraces differences in race, ethnicity, gender, and religious, cultural, and way-of-life differences. 4. Toleration is sustained through human emotion; it is built on deeper human capacities and compassion that make possible the broadening of one’s hermeneutical horizon or allows one to legitimate another’s public expression on diverse beliefs.</td>
<td>1. A multicultural state can only be supported by multicultural education that supports a common national identity, which does not legitimize multiple centers of allegiance. 2. If a multicultural nation is not constituted through a single people, the emotional and intellectual commitment of the citizens will be insufficient to sustain order, stability, and cooperative endeavors across cultural and interest group boundaries. 3. A society that seeks to recognize groups rather than individuals will redirect loyalty away from a common national good to more particularistic goods. 4. Citizens of a multicultural democratic society must respect the rights of those that are different from them. Respecting the rights of those that are different from us does not oblige a personal likeness of a person or people from other cultures, or the way they live rather, it establishes a condition for self-restraint in the expression of individuals’ freedom. 1. Cultural survival is not a goal guaranteed in constitutional democracy. 2. Although there are legitimate collective goals whose pursuit will require giving up proceduralism, there is a dangerous tendency for multicultural politics to gloss over the tension between personal and collective identities, such as those shaped by religion, gender, ethnicity, race, and sexuality. 3. The politics of recognition requires that one’s skin color, one’s sexual body, should be acknowledged politically in ways that make it hard for those who want to treat their skin and their sexual body as personal dimensions of the self.” However, individual’s autonomy is preeminent over collective identities.</td>
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Taylor (1994) asserts that the connection between democracy and diversity is centered on a right to cultural recognition. “Democracy,” he writes, “has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form of demands for the equal status of cultures and of genders” (p. 27). Equality of status is a key provision of liberal democracy, whereas “all men [and women] are created equal.” Thus, the “politics of equal recognition” is a moral entitlement -- one that supports positive development of an individual’s identity, whereby a person’s identity is shaped by the culture to which he or she belongs (Taylor, p. 25). The recognition of a person’s culture improves the person’s self-image and establishes a strong moral connection between the person and the democratic state. Equality brings about equal recognition, and equal recognition provides the reasons for people to work together for a common cause. Lack of recognition or “misrecognition” of a person’s culture, on the other hand, brings about a feeling of marginalization, discrimination, and alienation for the members of the unrecognized culture; therefore, it offers a negative connection.

Taylor suggests that liberal theory should make room for cultural group rights on the grounds that cultural group attachment is a feature of the human social condition. This is what he sees as “procedural liberalism” (p. 57). Taylor sees this form of liberalism as rooted in a Kantian view of the self in which the essential feature of the self is autonomy – that is, “in the ability of each person to determine for himself or herself a view of the good life” (p. 57). Taylor argues that while procedural liberalism is committed to the view that different cultures are to be tolerated and respected, it also
insists that we must live according to a common set of political rules that is uniformly applied.

The “right to cultural recognition” offers a reasonable connection to democracy however, it has been observed that “cultural survival is not guaranteed by the constitution” (Appiah, 2005; Kymlicka, 1991). The strongest connection, in my view, is a connection that is guaranteed by the constitution -- one that promotes individual freedom, and does not subject individuals to “tight scripting” (Appiah, 2005, p. 110). Individual autonomy, as a strong connection, empowers the individuals to express their individual rights of freedom which ultimately generates multiple identities and a pluralistic society. However, it should be noted that the development of individual autonomy is contingent upon the connection between identity and recognition wherefore one’s cultural membership becomes crucial in the process of defining himself as an authentic being whose goal is to experience self-fulfillment (Taylor, 1994, p. 31). Individual authenticity and self-fulfillment, according to Taylor, is never achieved alone but in dialogical relationship with others. Therefore, to be autonomous, an individual needs a cultural context through which he can assert his authentic individuality, which is a pre-condition for the development of individual autonomy.

From this perspective, minority cultures seek recognition in order to be treated with equal respect and human dignity as do the members of the mainstream culture. Thus, the demand for group recognition is premised upon the right of the individuals that make up the group to be recognized as equal human beings who were “created equal and are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The minority cultures such as the Blacks, Native
Americans, and Gays and Lesbians (among others), have been treated with disrespect that characterizes them with unequal human dignity based on their cultural identity. They have been ignored and systematically discriminated against for a long time. As Taylor (1994) pointed out in his writing, the discrimination against the “individual” the “Black person,” for example, is linked to his cultural heritage, as an offspring of the African race. Hence the misrecognition attached to “him” is based on the physical characteristics of a black person rather than the worth of the individual. Thus it may be argued: the individual minus the physical characteristics of a black person is recognized whereas, the individual plus the physical characteristics of a black person is unrecognized or misrecognized. Wherefore, the “supposed link between recognition and identity,” is undeniable whereby, an individual or a people’s “identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence” (Taylor, 1994, p. 25). The same holds true with members of the other racio-cultural groups such as the Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latino/a Americans, etc. It then holds that if the cultural group (the source of the individual identity) is recognized then, the individual (the bearer of the cultural identity) will be recognized. Thus, the role of multicultural education is to seek equal cultural recognition which may lead to equal educational and economic opportunity, that may ultimately result to fairness to all hard working Americans who have been mistreated and discriminated against based on their skin color/physical characteristics, cultural heritage, and sexual bodies, despite their relentless efforts, for centuries, in upholding the integrity of America through individual and group sacrifices.

From the perspective of a right to cultural recognition, it is argued that the core values of equality and liberty of a liberal democracy are achievable through a shared
space of recognized multiple cultural groups, one that respects human equality and equal recognition of all cultures that constitute the diversity. Multiple cultural groups are made up of authentic individuals who are valuable contributors of the patriotic acts that keep the nation united. The individuals’ identity is linked to the cultural group that produced and socialized them into authentic beings. In this order, patriotic individuals were created by a cultural context, which gave them individual’s identity through dialogical interaction with capable others. It is through the individual-cultural link that humans are able to assert their authentic individuality -- a pre-condition for the development of individual autonomy. Multiculturalism, in this sense, supports multiple cultural contexts through which dialogical identity features prominently, and produces authentic individuals who become patriotic leaders of this great nation.

It will be argued below that the fundamental democratic right to cultural recognition and authenticity demands a mainstream multicultural education, and in turn, such an educational approach requires a multicultural philosophy based upon cultural recognition and inclusion, for it is through a guarantee of a right to cultural recognition that democratic inclusion of all persons as equals is attained. We turn now to a discussion of a potential such philosophy, a praxial philosophy, and then argue that it serves as solid philosophical foundation for a mainstream multicultural education fulfilling the democratic imperative. Chapter Four will provide an overview of the development of Praxial philosophy, while Chapter Five will explore it as a potential philosophical framework for a conception of multicultural education.
Chapter Four

Development of the Praxial Philosophy

What is Praxial Philosophy?

Praxial philosophy is a framework that provides insight into the nature and value of human cultures around the world. It conceives culture as a conscious act of human engagement that is sustained through action and practice from generation to generation. The term ‘praxial,’ hence the noun ‘praxeology,’ originates from the word ‘praxis,’ which is defined by the Merriam Webster Dictionary as the “exercise of [human] action, or a customary practice or conduct.” Praxis involves “action” and “practice.” “Action” is the exercise of “an act of will” in the process of doing something, while “practice” – an application or use, as in knowledge or skills -- as distinguished from theory, is the process of doing or performing something in a customary or habitual manner. Thus the term praxeology implies the study of human action and conduct that engages the practical side of human action, habit, or established/accepted practice or custom of a people as opposed to a focus on theory.

The first use of the term “praxis” may be traced “back to the time of ancient Greece whereby Aristotle used the word ‘praxis’ in his Poetics to connote action that is embedded in and responsive to a specific context or effort. As observed in chapter one page 2, praxis etymologically, designates the “right action” or a human activity that is goal directed and which is carried out with close attention to norms and standards” (Bowman, 2005, p. 52). Praxis is related to two distinct Greek terms, “techne” and “theoria,” which is epistemologically linked to the classical tripatriate constellation: the
theoretical, the practical, and the productive” (Bowman, 2005; McCarthy, 1978; Regelski, 1996, & 1998).

My adoption of the praxial philosophy and its application to the philosophical context of multicultural education owes a great deal to the previous work of the Canadian scholar and music educator, David Elliot (1995) who popularized praxial philosophy of music education in his book *Music Matters*. Influenced by earlier works of Francis Sparshott (1987) and Philip Alperson (1991), Elliott challenged the canonization of a particular type of musical practice and the normative value ascribed to it as opposed to the other musical practices all over the world. He argues that music makers throughout the world are practitioners of “a diverse human practice” called “music,” which serves and sustains their musical needs (socially, politically, educationally, and religiously) through generations. Elliott’s philosophy focuses on different cultural forms of musical activity practiced throughout the world as a significant human engagement. Informed by a variety of cultural perspectives and different disciplines, he underscores the role that different forms of musical activity play in everyday life, as well as its emphasis on diversity and social justice. The praxial philosophy has been influential in providing a broad-based framework for the inclusion of music in the school curriculum.

The launching of Sputnik in 1957 alarmed the American public, making them think that their schools had failed to teach science and math to an entire generation of students (Tozer, 2006, p. 241). Coupled with the event of the Sputnik was a concern for perceived Russian superiority in space exploration and the onset of the cold war – both triggered public awareness and a call for immediate governmental response toward a volatile social and political development that was perceived as affecting national security.
in the twentieth century and beyond (Roberts, 1991). In 1958 the US congress under President Eisenhower, passed the *National Defense Act*, which allocated millions of dollars for upgrading the teaching of science and mathematics (Tozer, p. 241). The focus on science and mathematics led the “American educational community to challenge the curricular inclusion of such apparent ‘frills’ as music in a search for subjects of importance and merit” (Roberts, 1991). The result was that music education became marginalized, no longer considered an important part of the curriculum, in order to lay priority to the teaching of science and mathematics. Despite America’s gains in science and technology in later years, music was never restored to its rightful place in the curriculum. Rather, it was further alienated in the 1980s after the publication of *A Nation At Risk*, which “sought to define excellence in terms of measurable results in standardized achievement tests targeted at traditional academic curricula” (Tozer, p. 445).

**A Search for A Philosophy of Music**

Having reduced the role of music education in the curriculum, music educators feared that the end of music in the public school, as well as their career as music educators, was on-sight therefore they sought a philosophically compelling means to convince policy makers that the study of music was still important in students’ lives and could aid the efforts toward the study of science and technology. *Math-Music*, and *Music-Magic* were some of the educational programs developed by music educators in an attempt to link music with mathematics and the sciences while trying to make important connections to the value of music in the study of science and technology (MacMillan, *Spotlight on music*, 2008). Twentieth Century music composers such as Philip Glass, and John Cage also published a series of space-age music, creating new genres such as
Indeterminacy and *Minimalism*, as well as unusual titles of musical compositions such as Daniel Adam’s *Between Stillness and Motion*. They created new musical effects using obscured sound media; adding non-traditional musical instruments to existing repertoire of orchestral instruments; and using computer generated sounds, to simulate outer-space technologically-bound sonority (Grout, 1988, pp. 867-878). The use of non-traditional and non-western musical instruments in the orchestration of these new genres seems to foreshadow the advent of the praxial philosophy as a new theory of music which would eventually accommodate a wider spectrum of musical practices from around the world, thereby laying the foundation for an inclusive approach to the study and performance of music in America. At about the same time, social and political forces brought about by the cold war and the civil rights movement led influential music educators (such as Allen Britton, Charles Leonhard, Bennett Reimer, and Abraham Schwadron) to become discontented with the prevailing “functional” conception of music; therefore, they sought “a stronger theoretical foundation, a more academically credible basis, upon which to explain the importance of music in the curriculum” (McCarthy & Gamble, 2002, p. 1).

**The Birth of Aesthetics Philosophy of Music**

In a desperate move to save music education from being completely eliminated from the K-12 curriculum, Bennett Reimer in 1970 published his *Philosophy of Music Education*, which was an attempt to present a rationale for the inclusion of music education in the curriculum. He adopted an aesthetics approach to music education and urged other music educators to join his efforts to call for “a philosophy which shows how and why music education is aesthetics in its nature and value” (Reimer, 1970, p. 2). Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and expression of
beauty. Although the expression of beauty may be found in virtually everything in the world, this philosophical concept has been associated mostly with fine arts, with a view to establishing the meaning and validity of critical judgments concerning works of art and the principles underlying or justifying such judgments. Although Reimer and his associates might have thought that the implementation of aesthetics education may lead to the inclusion of music as an essential subject in the curriculum, the reality is that aesthetics education did little or nothing to improve the perception of music education or provide a compelling justification for the retention of music in the curriculum. Unfortunately, in view of these efforts music education was not restored to its central place in the K-12 curriculum.

The goal of Reimer’s (1970) *A Philosophy of Music Education* was to find a place for the study of music in the curriculum – hence the public school. Like Horace Mann, the advocate of the *Common School* movement, and John Dewey, the champion of *Democracy in Education*, Bennett Reimer wanted to see that all American children had the opportunity to learn the language of music in public schools – at least, to acquire a basic understanding of the rudiments of music. Through active engagement in pursuit of his goal, K-12 music was allowed to exist in the public schools as aesthetics education, based on the premise that music could be valued for its appreciative and artistic qualities.

**Opposition to the Aesthetics Philosophy**

Reimer’s view was not received without questions from fellow music scholars. Charles Plummeridge (1999) questioned the prevailing orthodoxy that music education should be perceived as aesthetics education. He argued that such conception is essentially flawed because aesthetics is not only associated with the arts but can also be
applied to almost every area of human activity. He explained that the term “aesthetics,” in philosophy, is associated with the context of beauty, elegance, and grace, which are primarily attached to recognition, appreciation and internalization of certain types of intrinsic values and qualities that pertain to human experiences and judgment and therefore is not restricted to the arts alone. Thus, the term “aesthetics” can be generously applied to things that are impressive or that appeal to a deep sense of appreciation or admiration, such as the appearance of homes in a neighborhood, the colorful display of light when reflected through a prism, and the appearance of a well-designed automobile. Both Plummeridge (1991) and his associates: Roberts, 1991; and Bower, 2002, contend that the view of K-12 music programs are merely aesthetics education has created a problem whereby music in the public school is valued only for its appreciative qualities and has often been retained to serve a functional, rather than a musical purpose. For example, classroom music under the aesthetics philosophy emphasizes the development of listening skills as opposed to experiencing music through singing, moving to time, and manipulation of musical instruments in a manner that involves problem solving and the thinking processes. Band music is retained in some schools purposely for cheering the crowd at athletic events, while the school choir is retained for singing during holiday celebrations and other special events.

Adhering to the aesthetics philosophy, school administrators and policy makers developed a low expectation for school music programs and indeed treated music education as unimportant to the overall education of the students. School administrators generally regard music programs as an ancillary service, which provides an instructional break for classroom teachers of “essential subjects” for planning and instructional
development. Disgusted by the situation, Plummeridge and his associates seem to blame the aesthetics philosophy for the lack of value placed on music education in educational systems. Whether this development signaled the failure of the aesthetics philosophy to accomplish its goal of retaining music in the curriculum, the result is that a less enthusiastic attitude toward music education became widespread among educators, policy makers, and parents. The popular opinion was that musical knowledge is a “frill,” which does not directly teach employable skills needed in a post-industrial society (Roberts, 1991). Such attitude has led to a near elimination of music education from public schools’ curricula at a time when school policies advocate the teaching of subjects that teach employable skills over the teaching of music and arts (Roberts, 1991). Subjects that teach employable skills include reading, writing, and arithmetic, otherwise known as “the three Rs” (Kovacs, 2007). Achievement in “the three Rs” has become a mark of success in the public schools and has formed the basis for high stake tests associated with the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) legislation (Kovacs, 2007). Because of the perceived view that music education does not teach “employable skills” and is not directly connected to the teaching of “the three Rs,” the role played by music and music educators in the overall education of all students is being diminished. This problem has extended to the K-12 music programs in the twenty-first century, whereby the emphasis on teaching of “essential subjects” continues to dominate formal education of American children while the contributions of music in human development continues to be undermined.

The fore-mentioned development caused a great concern among music educators who feared that their profession was nearing extinction. They began to look in different
directions seeking a sustaining philosophy that might unify the music education profession and at the same time position music education as an essential part of learning and worthy of inclusion in the K-12 curriculum. Central in their concern was: 1) how to respond adequately to the issues of inequalities and discrimination raised by the Civil Rights movement; 2) how to meet the musical/curriculum needs of changing demographics caused by recent influx of immigration; and 3) how to make music multicultural owing to the fact that Western classical music has taken stronghold on every aspect of public school music – even before the advent of Reimer’s Aesthetics philosophy. Concern for equity and fairness tends to dominate every aspect of the music curricular discourse. There was the concern for unequal access to quality musical experiences in American education, addressing a range of mitigating factors that make music education a rich and robust experience for some, while it is an anemic or nonexistent experience for others (Johnson, Jr., p. 125). Richards (2007) addressed the issue of elitism in the study of music whereby few students are able to engage in formal music studies after the elementary school, where music is meant to be studied by every child (p. 207). Reimer (1997) observes that secondary school music serves approximately 9-15% of the student population who are admitted through audition ensembles (p. 34). Richardson (2007) added that a prerequisite for a successful audition into the instrumental ensembles is a minimum of five years of parent-funded private instruction (p. 207). The implication is that most minority students could not afford to acquire five years of private instruction as a prerequisite for admission into instrumental ensembles because of economic disadvantages that plagued their parents. Johnson, Jr., (2004) addressed the concern for a lack of equal access, equal opportunity, and the focus
on hegemony in the practices of Western classical tradition. Minority students and the physically challenged are hardly seen as members of the school orchestra and other instrumental ensembles whose membership is almost exclusively comprised of White students. Therefore, he argued: “music education must adapt both curriculum and methods to meet the cultural backgrounds of a changing national student population and provide quality music experiences for all, if music is to remain a viable curricular option in public education” (p. 118). In view of the emphasis on the study of Western classical music in K-12 education, some “music educators called for a pan-cultural approach to music education, asserting that music, as a basic expression of human culture represents a distinctive yet global means of human discourse and communication” (Blacking, 1982; Kwami, 2001; Johnson, Jr., 2004, p. 119).

To respond to the above concerns, music educators sought a philosophical framework that would include all the music that affect students’ lives in the communities where they live. Such music could include the different music practiced by different ethnic groups and cultures in the United States, including but not limited to Jazz, Salsa, Rock and Roll, African music and dances, and Latino-Latina music and dances. They reasoned that the inclusion of different cultural music in the classroom would satisfy the demand created by multiculturalism, and would ultimately present curriculum planners with the justification that the knowledge and skills acquired through music education serves all students, and is also consistent with those acquired through the study of “essential subjects.” They believed that such justification would present the view that the study of music in K-12 education is necessary to improve students’ self-esteem and would support their overall cognitive development. The search for a new philosophy of
music that is inclusive enough for all the students in K-12 education led to the introduction of the praxial philosophy by David Elliott.

**A New Philosophy of Music**

David Elliott (1995), a Canadian scholar, music educator, and a former student of Bennett Reimer, developed the praxial philosophy as a theoretical framework that may remedy the concern created by the aesthetics approach, which addresses the question of inclusiveness -- the non-inclusion of the cultural music of minority students in the study of Western classical music, as well as the concern for inequality and other social justice issues that is prevalent in current practices of music education. He believes that music is both a cultural and a global practice that share common practices. He argues that music makers throughout the world are practitioners of “a diverse human practice” which is called “music.” The praxial philosophy expresses the ideology that the act of teaching and learning (praxis) is an encounter between “action and reflection” (Freire, 1993), whereby a teachable moment becomes a learning opportunity for both the teacher and the student. Elliott’s praxial philosophy focuses attention on the practice of different cultural forms of musical activity as significant human behaviors. Informed by a variety of cultural perspectives and different disciplines, he underscores the role that different forms of musical activity play in everyday life, as well as its emphasis on diversity, social justice, and its capability to unify the curriculum. The praxial philosophy is a multicultural music education approach best suited to unify the profession and also position music education to gain acceptance in the curriculum. As a multicultural music education approach, praxial philosophy emphasizes diversity and multiple perspectives in music learning and practice. It unites the profession by encouraging action and research.
that will focus on important democratic issues of multiculturalism, social justice, unequal access, and equity in music education. Above all, the praxial philosophy encourages dialogue among music educators and supporters who are committed to seeing that American children are given equal access to an effective and holistic education.

**Competing Philosophies of Music Education**

Due to the social and political circumstances associated with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, two competing philosophies of music education developed and competed with each other: 1) the aesthetics conception of music popularized by Bennett Reimer (1970), and 2) the praxial conception of music developed by David Elliott (1995). It is worthy to note that neither Reimer nor Elliott, solely on their own, originated the movements that gave rise to either the aesthetics or praxial philosophies. Each of the philosophical views was created by the prevailing social, political, and cultural dynamics of the time. However, the efforts of these two scholars, as demonstrated in their compelling books, are authoritative representations of the two philosophical movements that affect the music profession. A fuller account of the evolutionary development of the praxial philosophy – as an opposition view of the Aesthetics philosophy – will be considered in the next pages.

**Music as Aesthetics Education**

Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the concept of beauty (especially in the arts), its sources, forms, and effects. The aesthetics philosophy of music education focuses on preparing students to perceive and respond appropriately to musical works as forms of art (especially great works or “masterpieces”) in order to “educate their feelings” and to evoke in them “aesthetics experience” -- i.e., a unique,
highly pleasurable state of mind (McCarthy & Goble, p. 2). The aesthetics education movement blossomed in the 1970s, beginning with the publication of Bennett Reimer’s landmark book, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (McCarthy & Goble, p. 3). In Reimer’s words, “the arts in education are both unique and essential for all children” and should therefore be retained in the curriculum (Reimer, p. 27). He called for “a philosophy, which shows how and why music education is aesthetics in its nature and value” (Reimer, 1970, p. 2). Reimer’s philosophical position is centered in the concept of “absolute expressionism,” which was originally espoused by Meyer (1956) in his theory of musical expression. Absolute expressionism holds that “the meaning of a given musical work is primarily internal to that work and that the expressive emotional meanings evoked by the music exist without reference to the extra-musical world of concepts, actions, and human emotional states” (Meyer, p. 3). It means that “the relationships within a musical work alone are capable -- in and of themselves -- of exciting feelings and emotions in the listener” (McCarthy & Goble, 2002, p. 3). Reimer hoped that his work would provide intellectual grounds for retaining music in schools’ curricula and for unifying the music profession.

Reimer’s efforts brought a mixed reaction in the music education community. Some educators heralded his work as an important step to save music education from being “wiped-out” from the curriculum while others thought that Reimer’s attempt would reduce music education to a mere “ancillary service” which would further alienate it from the mainstream curriculum. Those that accepted aesthetics education as a “given” made every effort to “inject the principles of aesthetics education into curriculum delivery without questioning the presumption that it should be the ideal, and even more seriously
this injection principle was pressed into service to the exclusion of, or replacement for, all other logical justifications for the inclusion of music in the curriculum” (Roberts, 1991).

On the other side of the debate, Hargreaves (1979 & 1982) expressed concern that relegating music education to aesthetics education may result in what he calls the “cult of individualism,” whereby children would grow up to be educated in "feeling," and in "knowing" musical events but unable to get the full benefit that authentic music education provides for “whole development” of the child. Roberts (1991) also suggested that the idea of “aesthetics education might be considered [a] little more than a hoax perpetrated upon music education at a time when [the] discipline appeared to need an academic shroud to conceal its curriculum inclusionary authority” (Roberts, 1991). Aesthetics education, he argues, is rooted in philosophy and not in music making. While it is true that aesthetics often attempts to explain the response to music, “it is not epistemologically derived from the same activity as music-making” (Roberts, 1991).

Elliott (1995) also challenged the theory of aesthetics music education and questioned the modernist view that music is an art object (p. 50). Asserting that “music listening is a complex form of thinking that can be taught and learned,” Elliott argues “that music students can achieve competent, proficient, and expert levels of music listening through performing, improvising, composing, arranging, and conducting” (p. 106).

The point of the debate is that the aesthetics conception of music tends to focus mainly on the performance aspect of Western music, viewing music strictly from the artistic point of view hence the music profession is in need of a philosophical perspective that will represent every aspect of music learning and performing – including music practiced in other cultures. Also important in the debate is the fact that the teaching of
Western music alone does not meet the needs of all the students from diverse culture who must also study music in American public schools. Importantly, the focus of the debate is the education of all American children. A compelling philosophical groundwork must consider diversity in the classroom, recognizing that the purpose of the curriculum is to educate all American children, and not just the children from the mainstream culture.

**The Philosophical Basis of Aesthetics Music Education**

The philosophical basis for the aesthetics conception of music was rooted in the writings of John Dewey, who viewed the arts as experience (Dewey, 1934); Susanne Langer, who articulated a modernist vision of music as “a tonal analogue of emotive life” (Langer, 1948); and Leonard Meyer, who drew upon John Dewey’s philosophy of arts, and Gestalt psychology to address issues of musical meaning, communication, value, and greatness associated primarily with Western classical music (McCarthy & Goble, p. 2).

The writings of these scholars, which supported the aesthetics perspective, tended to focus on music as a form of art that has intrinsic and extrinsic values. They employed conceptual vocabularies usually associated with Western classical music and emphasized the notion that all music similarly expresses human feelings (McCarthy & Goble, p. 2).

**Historical Precedents to Reimer’s Aesthetics Music Education Philosophy**

In its historical context, aesthetic education was initially launched in the 1950s as a response to functional values of music. The movement was supported by the Music Education National Conference (MENC) – the umbrella organization of music educators – and by scholarly writings. The book, *Basic Concepts in Music Education*, stemmed from a Music Educators National Conference (MENC)-sponsored commission, emerged in 1958 featuring chapters written by prominent music education scholars on the subject
of aesthetics concepts, and served to launch the new philosophy in a formal way (MENC, 1958). The movement was further advanced by the publication of Charles Leonhard and Robert House’s (1959), *Foundations and Principles of Music Education*. This book, used as a college text, contributed immensely to establishing the profession’s acceptance of an aesthetics-based philosophy as its theoretical foundation (McCarthy & Goble, p. 2).

In addition, professional journals and dialogues such as the 1963 Yale Seminar, the Seminar on Comprehensive Musicianship in 1965, and the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium, also helped to promote the movement. The movement received a boost in 1966 when the *Journal of Aesthetics Education* was published. This journal served as a forum for debate of philosophical issues in music education. Social and political changes of the 1960s spawned new perspectives in education, which ultimately resulted in the challenge of the aesthetics paradigm by a new direction in music education – the praxial philosophy.

Although the aesthetics paradigm had once been heralded as a “savior” of music education, popular opinion now sees it as a liability for its inadequacy to encompass diversity and multicultural perspectives in its approach. Proceedings from the Tanglewood Symposium indicate that while most participants agreed that the aesthetics paradigm was suited to the changing societal values of the 1960s, some believe that it was inadequate for accommodating musical practices and cultures outside the Western musical canon, which now reflect the social and cultural realities (multiculturalism) in American schools and society. As a result, the final report of the Symposium highlighted the need for a “new aesthetics theory,” based on the new developments in ethnomusicology, anthropology, and communication (McCarthy & Goble, p. 2).
Abraham Schwadron, a critic who was once a supporter of the aesthetics approach, worried about the limitations of the aesthetics philosophy, which includes its narrowness and inadequacy in accommodating musical practices outside Western culture, and doubted that it would indeed unify the profession on a global basis. He therefore advocated the adoption of “a more relativistic philosophy,” one that would emphasize “more inclusive understandings of socio-musical values and related educational means and ends” (Schwadron, 1967). Generally, it was believed that the adoption of the aesthetics basis for music education resulted in a singular and cohesive philosophy for the profession but resulted in a narrow focus that would not ultimately accommodate shifting social and cultural realities (McCarthy & Goble, p. 3).

Elliott (1995) offered an in-depth explanation of the concept of aesthetics by saying: "To look at or listen to something aesthetically means to focus exclusively on its structural or aesthetics qualities, in abstraction from the object's context of social use and production" (p. 22). This means that aesthetics in music refers solely to a finished product such as an already composed and performed piece of music. It does not refer to the process of teaching, learning, or creating music, which has both humanistic and intellectual attributes. Aesthetics refers to the quality of a piece of art, or a piece of musical composition. In other words, aesthetics is a language of critique through which a piece of music or a piece of art is evaluated by a consumer or an observer. It makes direct reference to the product of artistic expression rather than the process of artistic creation. Elliott (1995) believes that the distinction between musical works and musical process occurred between the Enlightenment period and the postmodern era. During that time, he claims, “a mode of thinking evolved in Europe whereby the ontological notion of
music changed from the art of music making to that of a piece or a composition" much like we think of a visual artwork (p. 22). Consumers of music during that time sought to ascribe glory, honor, and adulation to music composers (for the god-like nature of their work as creators). Performers, through whose artistry the works of composers were brought to life, learned how to fulfill those wishes (Bower, 2002). The act of music making (starting from that time) was given little attention; rather, the idea of music was concentrated around the concept of a musical work (Bower, 2002). Since the Enlightenment the aesthetics approach to music education has focused on the product rather than the process (Bower, 2002).

**Positive Aspects of Aesthetics Philosophy**

Despite its narrow focus, music education as aesthetics education has some positive effects. McCarthy & Goble (2002) have identified the positive effects of the aesthetics approach to music education: 1) It highlighted the distinctiveness of Western art music as an art form and validated it as a curricular subject having academic content, thereby elevating the educational status of music and lending respectability to the music education profession. 2) It provided a single conceptual basis around which music educators could unite in their efforts to explain the importance of their subject in the curriculum. Thus, it helped to professionalize music education. 3) It helped to establish a conceptual framework and a vocabulary that explains the meaning and value of music. 4) The movement afforded a means by which teachers, parents, and administrators could discuss the importance of music in education, thereby supporting the profession’s advocacy efforts (p. 7).
Limitations

The aesthetics approach has obvious limitations. When considered in relation to the advancement in the studies of anthropology and ethnomusicology, one may note that the theory of absolute expressionism (upon which the aesthetics philosophy was built) is limited in scope because it does not consider the meanings that particular forms of music carry within the social contexts in which they originated. The aesthetics approach places high value on Western classical music alone, and does not hold equal regard to other genres of music such as jazz, rhythm and blues, salsa, and all forms of popular music (Elliott, 1987). It places a considerable amount of emphasis on listening as the most compelling way of appreciating music. This notion is flawed in that it focuses only on one aspect of the many benefits of musical studies – its appreciative element -- while the practical/skills aspect of musical training is ignored. Studies have associated musical knowledge with the development of overall skills including self-efficacy, self-regulation, and perseverance – all of which are useful for the development of a productive personality (Bakker, 2005; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Renwick & McPherson, 2002; Chaffin & Imreh, 2001).

By emphasizing the art of listening as a compelling way of appreciating music, the aesthetics philosophy of music education tends to position students/learners as passive listeners and consumers of musical products who are not capable of contributing to musical practice. The idea falls into what Paulo Freire (1993) describes as the “banking concept of education” (p. 72), whereby students are largely passive listeners and do not contribute in the process of making music in the classroom. In the banking concept of learning, as in a music appreciation class, the teacher makes all decisions
regarding the selection of music, the genre, and the medium through which it will be played; the students sit quietly in class and listen to the music against the back-drop of the teacher’s lectures and explanations. Because of the students’ lack of expertise on the particular piece of music selected by the teacher for class appreciation, the teacher solely assumes the position of “the expert” and a “depositor” of knowledge, which the students must receive in its absolute forms and divulge when required in an examination.

**Praxial Philosophy of Music**

The praxial approach to music education focuses attention on different cultural forms of musical activity as significant human behaviors, challenging the Western art tradition’s focus on musical “works” as objects (McCarthy & Goble, p. 7). Informed by a variety of cultural perspectives and different academic disciplines, praxial philosophers have urged music educators to illuminate for their students the important role that different forms of musical activity play in everyday life (McCarthy & Goble, p. 7). The idea of the praxial approach to music education came to light after David Elliott, a Canadian scholar and former student of Bennett Reimer, published his article on “Jazz Education as Aesthetics Education” in 1986. In it, he discussed the limitations of aesthetics philosophy, and questioned its narrowness in accommodating all types of music. In 1995, he published his *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, in which he integrated multicultural and sociological perspectives on music within a praxial framework. Justifying his stance, he argued that members of different cultural groups throughout the world who make music are the practitioners of “a diverse human practice” which is called “MUSIC” (McCarthy & Goble, p. 6). His ideas of a praxial approach to music education focuses on engaging students in the musical practices of
different cultural groups and helping them to understand the intentions of those who undertake them, as well as the social, historical, and cultural conditions in which they originate, exist, and have meaning. This approach promotes the kind of knowledge characterized by reasoning and critical thinking necessary for getting “right results” for the benefit of people in a given domain or situation (McCarthy & Goble, p. 6). The praxial approach to music making in the choir, band and orchestra, or instrumental ensembles will enable students to be critical participants in musical problem-solving, and to be independent participants who can stand on their own and make musical decisions as required when necessary.

Emphasizing the importance of praxis (action committed to achieving goals and feedback arising from one’s reflections) in music education philosophy Elliott (1995), asserts:

the questions raised by music teaching and learning form a kind of philosophical hub at the center of practical life. Like the spokes of a wheel, they take us to the heart of what it means to be human. They raise complex issues of knowing, meaning, thinking, feeling, teaching, learning, acting and believing. As Aristotle emphasized centuries ago: "It is not easy to determine the nature of music, or why anyone should have a knowledge of it.” (p. 5).

He emphasizes the centrality of listening, practice, and performance to teaching and learning in music education. To him, all aspects of musical knowledge are connected to teaching and learning, just as the spokes are connected to the hub of a wheel.

In developing his praxial approach he links issues of *musicing* -- a common behavior of music-making as practiced around the world, (McCarthy & Goble, p. 6 ), listening, musical works, and creativity to elements associated with constructivism (educational psychology), such as targeting attention, coaching, modeling, problem
finding, problem solving, scaffolding, articulation, and fading. He believes that music listening ought to be taught in classroom situations that music teachers deliberately designed to approximate actual musical practices – in a teaching-learning situation that he calls “curriculum-as-practicum.” He maintains that a music curriculum based on authentic music making serves to contextualize and situate listenership and its component knowings (pp. 101-102). His ideas challenge traditional beliefs, draw on new sources, and offer alternative perspectives.

Elliott’s praxial philosophy of music education emerged as a compelling perspective that would eventually challenge the once held popular aesthetics music education view. It drew upon Aristotle’s notion of praxis as action rooted in practice rather than in theory (p. 69). Central in the praxial approach, he argues, is the concept of embracing differences and diversity (in musical instruments, musical practices, and repertoire) in the music classroom. Meanwhile, the aesthetics approach has been widely criticized for its inadequacy in accommodating cultural differences and diversity in the United States. Elliott argues that the absolute expressionist basis of Reimer’s aesthetics philosophy could not account for the range of effective responses beyond those typically associated with Western art music (Elliott, 1987). He “took issue with its (aesthetics approach) emphasis on listening, observing that jazz [a Western music] is a way of performing; a way of being in music; and participation, not contemplation, is the hallmark of jazz aesthetics” (McCarthy & Goble, p. 5). Pointing out a unique characteristic of musical practice all over the world, he “asserted that a universal aspect of ‘musicing’ is that ‘musicers’ (practitioners of music) are typically engaged in what psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi called ‘flow’ and thereby bringing order to their
own consciousness, engendering personal growth, greater self-knowledge, and raised self-esteem” (McCarthy & Goble, p. 6).

The Philosophical Root of the Praxial Philosophy

Although praxialism is relatively new in the philosophical discourse of music education, David Elliot (1995) was not the originator of the concept and theory of praxial philosophy. The first use of the term “praxis” may be traced “back to the time of ancient Greece whereby Aristotle used praxis to designate ‘right action,’ human activity that is goal directed and carried out with close attention to norms and standards” (Bowman, 2005, p. 52). To better understand the meaning of praxis, two other related but distinct Greek terms, “techne” and “theoria” may be brought into consideration. “The classical account of knowledge assumed a tripatriate constellation: the theoretical, the practical, and the productive” (Bowman, 2005; Regelski, 1996, & 1998).

Theoretical knowledge (theoria) was contemplative knowledge of things unchanging and eternal, knowledge for its own sake. Productive knowledge (techne, poiesis) on the other hand was theory-free: a knowledge manifest in workman-like skill at making useful of beautiful things, and in the ability to see concrete tasks through to successful completion. Practical knowledge (praxis) was concerned with prudent understanding of variable situations and was situated in the sphere of human action (Bowman, 2005, p. 52).

Practical knowledge, according to Bowman, “was centrally concerned with the moral-political idea of virtuous conduct,” while the contemplative life of theoria which led to the “cultivation of virtuous character, fell primarily to the realm of practical knowledge.” Thus, “the praxial realm shared with techne an interest in execution of tasks (in-doing), and shared with theoria an emphasis on mindfulness” (p. 52). A detailed discussion of praxial philosophy will occur in chapter five.
Praxialism first appeared in music education discourse in Philip Alperson’s (1991) article “What Should One Expect of a Philosophy of Music Education” (p. 215). In his article, Alperson argues that a “music philosophy should be conceived as reasoned understanding of the practices related to the making, understanding, and valuation of music and the social, institutional, and theoretical contexts in which such practices have their place” (p. 218). Proper understanding of musical practice entails an exploration of the social, political, ritual, “institutional, and theoretical context which lie beyond the pale of music[al]” context (Bowman, 2005, p. 54). Alperson maintains that “comprehensiveness and inclusiveness are important measures of philosophical adequacy” (p. 218). Praxial philosophy is the theoretical framework that provides the comprehensive and inclusive requirements of an adequate music education philosophy.

Bowman (2005) asserts that both Alperson’s and Elliot’s praxial orientation owes a great debt to Francis Sparshott (1987), “a philosopher who although had relatively little to say about music education, has a great deal to say about the philosophy of music and art” (p. 57). Sparshott’s influence on the developing philosophy of music education became apparent in his 1987 essay entitled Aesthetics of Music – Limits and Grounds. This essay renders his speculation on the nature of music, the purpose of music, and the value of music (Bowman, p. 57).

Sparshott argues that the question of the nature of music may be approached through deductive and inductive reasoning. The deductive approach, he asserts, “designates a particular musical or artistic practice it finds exemplary, then proceeds normatively, judging all musics in light of the assumptions and priorities inherent in the practice, while on the other hand, [the] inductive approach works outward from grounded
observations and instances” (p. 37). Sparshott observes that “the risk from the former is that it applies to all music the assumptions and values that are only locally valid, while the later, though promises to remain faithful to the plurality of the ways music manifests itself, fails to attain the systematic unity usually deemed desirable in a general account” (p. 37). In the end, Sparshott clearly shows a justifiable preference for the latter.

Implicit in Sparshott’s argument is the fact that aesthetics approach (the deductive approach) to understanding the nature of music, describes a certain range of musical practice that is only locally valid, and not generally inclusive in what is generally construed as musical practices in a cosmopolitan sense. Sparshott explains that “aesthetics accounts assume music’s highest, inherent value lies in its capacity to sustain appreciative, contemplative reflection in a privileged group of consumers, not themselves musicians . . .” (p. 40). As such, Bowman (2005) adds, “aesthetic explanations ironically underplay the engagements and actions of the people without whom music will not exist. Moreover, aesthetic accounts take an inordinate interest in questions of intrinsic musical worth, an abstract musical value presumed resident in the inner dialectics of music” (p. 58). Bowman (2005) maintains that the concern by the musician, in an aesthetics account, “to get things right in relation to specific standards of practice, as well as the rapt contemplative vigilance idealized by aesthetic accounts, and the self-denial implicit in their doctrine of object directness, seem to subtly denigrate music’s sonorous and sensuous pleasure” (p. 58).

The praxial approach (the inductive approach), on the other hand takes a comprehensive and inclusive approach to understanding musical conception. It does not judge all musics in the light of a normative conception of the assumptions relevant to a
common practice situated in a particular locality. Bowman asserts that the praxial approach, like “conversations” creates “events in which people engage each with their own distinctive voices; in which divergent experiences, values, and assumptions are shared with one another; in which interpretation and misinterpretation inevitably figure significantly” (p. 62). “Just as conversation is made up of different people with different selves as well as different voices,” Sparshott maintains, “so we may speak of a musical field that holds together people differently related. It is not so much that we all play, hear, study, the same music . . . as that we all participate differently in musical experience that is the same as languages and conversations are the same” (p. 85).

Sparshott also questions the claim that music is an art. He asserts that “arts are unified organizations of practical skills” while “music is found in cultures so disparate that there seems to be little basis for claiming such organization.” He insists that “there may be arts of music (or musics) but can be no one art of music” (p. 42). As a “unified organization of practical skills,” the term “art” has often been associated with individual works of art, specific design, architectural display, works of engineering, ceramics, paintings, and murals to mention a few. It is common to identify individuals such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Picasso, Rembrandt, and John T. Bigger with their works of art. But music, in general, has often been associated with and identified in the context of people, practice, places, and collective identity. Thus we often speak of African music, American music, French music, German music, and Russian music, to mention a few. Bowman (2005) identifies music as “something that people do” in different cultures -- a human doing, which results from a conscious experientially-driven action -- an engagement in what is construed as a musical behavior, which may be
radical, diverse, and unstable. Because of the cultural dimension of musical behavior, different people may have different conception of music, whereby what one group of people accepts as a musical engagement may totally be rejected by the other group who may dispute its validity as having equal valuation as does their own type of music. Sparshott insists that “music is a significant type of human behavior” -- a practice which varies among different people. Musical behavior occurs when “people anywhere engage in singing, playing the drum, blow and finger pierced pipes, scrape and pluck strings in ways controlled by the intention to produce some specific sort of controlled sound” (p. 43). Bowman asserts that “to focus [exclusively] on the behavioral commonalities of musical productive practices [as in aesthetics conception], however useful that may be, tends to exclude culturally-functional aspects: aspects that may be, for a given practice, a constitutively musical as the piping or plucking” (p. 59).

In the end, Sparshott argues that “the word ‘music’ covers an inherently unstable variety of practices linked functionally, and/or procedurally and/or institutionally, in all sorts of ways” (p. 44). As such, he asserts, “there can be no impartial basis for declaring one musical practice better than another [whereby] the best music is the music that best satisfies musical interests” -- which is situated among different people (p. 73). The praxial orientation, according to Sparshott, “appears to relativize claims to musical significance both historically and culturally, reducing them to consensual agreements among participants in particular universes of socio-musical discourse” (p. 77). He argues that the idea of calling music ‘an art’ is mistaken because, “there are aspects of music’s relations to human life that the notion of an art misses entirely” (p. 77). He cites examples with “musics whose significance is bound up in spontaneous enjoyment – less
concerned with craft and contemplation than living in the here-and-now? And music whose appreciation is predominantly a function of their social embeddedness?” He suggests that “we will be better served if we were to think of musical practices as talk-like, as forms of social reason, rather than art” (pp. 78-79).

Bowman (2005) clearly summarizes the argument by saying:

> Although praxial reflection makes it sufficiently clear that “music is a culturally unstable term, (Alperson, 1987, p. 10), covering a radically diverse range of practices and undertakings, the praxial orientation also insists that such diversity is undergirded by functional, procedural and institutional links. The concept of music, though fluid, is moored in human practices. Thus, while ‘music’ does not designate something with an essential, immutable core, neither is it open to utterly any meaning and value one might wish to assign it. Whatever forms it takes, whatever values and functions it assumes, it is invariably situated in the social world of human relations and interactions, in practices and traditions that answer to consensually validated standards” (p. 64).

Aesthetics view, on the other hand, holds that music’s worth can only be gauged in reference to specific human needs and interests. However, both Alperson and Elliott agree that it is wrong to promote the aesthetics view as the whole of musical practice, and that music’s values are not intrinsic, unconditional, or absolute, and that it has no meaning outside the practices and interactions in which it is embedded (Bowman, p. 71). Evidently, Alperson, Elliott, and Sparshott agree that any effort to reduce all musical practices to ‘aesthetic’ value is essentially flawed. Praxialism holds that all musics are multidimensional, fluid, polysemic, and unstable (Bowman, p. 71). Praxialism gives legitimacy to the cultural source and origins of all music along with its authenticity to its comprehensiveness and inclusiveness. It provides the rationale for the making, understanding, and valuation of music in human cultures. It links all musical practices
functionally, procedurally, and institutionally in different ways. Furthermore, praxial approach gives equal recognition to the important cultural elements and the people without which the musical practices, knowledge, growth, and expression will not exist.

**Acceptance and Support for the Praxial Approach**

The idea of the praxial approach was supported by a shift in social perception of “others” in the late 1980s and 1990s in the United States, namely, a greater acceptance of differences and cultural diversity. This socio-political development paved the way for music educators to embrace the praxial philosophy based on its inclusiveness of music from other cultures and its cosmopolitan worldview. Another reason for the shift toward the praxial approach is the fact that the importance of music in the curriculum (under the aesthetics approach) began to be questioned, while funding for music and arts programs was cut from school budgets. This development led to a debate in the *Music Educators Journal*, “with aesthetics educators voicing the merits of their chosen philosophy while others asserted that the ‘purposelessness of music’ implied by the aesthetics philosophy would likely doom the profession” (McCarthy & Goble, p. 3). The result was that some of the supporters of the aesthetics philosophy began to reconsider their views. Many music educators welcomed the perspective of the praxial philosophy and hoped that it would provide a solid ground for unifying the profession.

Notable music scholars and critics expressed their views of the new approach. David Bowman says, “the praxial view is not so much an alternative music philosophy as a dramatic effort to redefine the traditional bounds of music philosophical discourse. Clearly, the praxial turn draws into the ‘musical’ fold much that conventional thought has
strived to lock outside” (p. 56). Regelski (1996), a contemporary of David Elliott, has this to say:

David Elliott’s innovative *Music Matters* (1995) offers a comprehensive challenge to traditional aesthetic philosophies of music education and an in-depth analysis of curriculum theory. His critique of abstract, atomistic content and isolated skills of the conventional objectives-oriented and structure-of-the discipline approaches to music curriculum drew upon and thus reflected the most recent trends in curriculum theory in the early 1990s. He also advanced a provocative and incisive theory of curriculum-as-practicum, designed and organized “to engage learners in musical actions, transactions, and interactions that closely parallel real music cultures” and making, in consequence, “the music classroom . . . a reflective musical practicum, a close representation of viable music-practice situations, or music cultures” (p. 206).

Abraham Schwadron (1973) asserts that the praxial movement was necessary because the aesthetic philosophy could not account for “the nature of the pluralistic society, the many musics, and the variety of accepted modes of thought” (p. 49).

Regelski, also said that philosophical accounts of music and music education must extend beyond the Western art tradition to account for all forms of musical praxis. By this, he endorses the cosmopolitan world view of the praxial approach. He advocates a curriculum that is open to and validating of all forms of musical activity (e.g., recreation, entertainment, ritual, and ceremony). He further asserts that “to teach music properly is to teach what in all the world music is good for” (Regelski, pp. 35-36).

David Bower (2002) also expressed concern that the concept of musical knowledge, as emphasized in the aesthetics approach, can be easily misconstrued to imply that the nature of music study is restricted to the learning of skills related to music appreciation only. The nature of musical knowledge, he argues, is far deeper than that
and must include complex critical and reflective cognitive processes including thinking, knowing, and listening far beyond mere facts and skills (Bower, 2002). He believes that the aesthetics conception of music education “is fed by the modernist assumption that music is simply an "art-object" rather than a complex process culturally and socially bound in creative, critical thinking” (Bower, 2002). Therefore, he argues that aesthetics theory is insufficient to inform successful practice in music education, and that a praxial approach, as pioneered by David Elliott (1995), assists educators to successfully inform their practice by considering the whole child and placing music making as a central value in their philosophy and subsequent practice (Bower, 2002).

Popular support for the praxial approach soon modulated into grass-root support by the MENC, which in the 1990s sponsored research and symposiums in support of the new philosophical movement. Among them are the Special Research Interest Group (SRIG), the MayDay Group (an international community of theorists), and the International Symposium on the Philosophy of Music Education. The result was the publication of the first issue of the journal Philosophy of Music Education Review in 1993 (McCarthy & Goble, pp. 5 & 6). In support of the praxial approach, the 1990s conventions “sought to apply critical theory and critical thinking to the purposes and practices of music education, and also affirmed the importance of musical participation in human life and, thus, the value of music in the general education of all people” (Gates, 1999, p. 15).

Praxial philosophy also received a boost from Howard Gardner’s (1983) publication of his influential book, Frames of Mind. Drawing support from decades of research in cognitive science, Gardner challenges the notion of human intelligence as a
single general capacity. He postulated the existence of seven relatively discrete human competencies or “intelligences” (linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal) (Gardner, p. 12). Gardner’s theory supports the idea that musical sound and the manipulation of sound is a natural form of human cognition, and that musical intelligence has relationships with other intelligences (McCarthy & Goble, p. 5). The implication is that educators and curriculum designers should recognize the importance of encouraging and nurturing musical development in K-12 education and understand that musical intelligence is connected with other intelligences in the process of cognitive development.

Opposition to the New Philosophical Movement

Although the praxial approach received overwhelming support by members of the music education profession, there were a few dissenting voices who thought that a new philosophical view was not necessary. One such voice was that of Phillips (1983), a critic of the praxial approach to music education. He questioned whether a Board of Education member might better understand the "intellectual, moral, and physical forces of music more than the aesthetics." Evoking a utilitarian argument, he cites a father's comment that "My son's participation in the school music program didn't add one dollar to his earning upon graduation" (p. 30). Roberts (1991), a defender of the praxial approach, quickly rebutted this argument, pointing out that the father’s statement can easily be applied to other subjects besides music in the school program. He argued that “it is hard to conceive how calculus will be used by a cashier in a department store whose cash register makes virtually every calculation, including charge totals, discount, taxes and change, all by itself” (Roberts, 1991). He maintained that “almost no single element
of the school curriculum can be held up as vital or necessary [over the other].” He expressed no surprise to read about the father’s comment, adding that after all “few music educators and fewer school administrators seem to understand [the danger of excluding praxial music from the curriculum] let alone the lay population” (Roberts, 1991).

The important issue in the above dialogue is that the praxial philosophy may, according to Schwadron (1973), “account for the nature of the pluralistic society, the many musics, and the variety of accepted modes and thought” in the U.S.A. (p. 49). As a multicultural approach the praxial philosophy instantiates the values of cultural recognition and inclusion in our multicultural and democratic society, for, in part, it encourages multiple perspectives in teaching and learning, which ultimately connects teachers and learners to knowledge from many cultures around the world.

**How and Why Praxial Philosophy is a Multicultural Approach**

The multicultural approach to music education is one that encompasses musical practices from many cultures. It “supports and extends the concepts of culture, diversity, equality, social justice, and democracy in the formal school setting” (Gollnick & Chinn, p. 5). Therefore, the praxial philosophy is a multicultural approach because it builds its strengths on a diverse cultural perspective from musical practices of a diverse range of cultural groups (Elliott, p. 197). David Elliot (1995) believes that the “praxial philosophy supports multicultural music education” (p. 209), and should therefore be a part of the K-12 curriculum. To that effect, he argues that children should be given the opportunity to learn more than one style of music because multicultural music provides musical experiences from different perspectives – a necessary condition for students’ intellectual, social, and musical growth. He asserts:
There are thousands of musics around the world. To argue against multicultural music education is to ignore musical reality, to restrict students’ musical knowledge and creativity, is to enforce a kind of ‘school music imperialism’... Multicultural music education allows us to develop students’ understandings of these values and meaning; teaching music with a multicultural mindset allows us to deepen students’ knowledge and feel for the ways in which music is deeply social, cultural, ideological, political, and personal (Elliott, p. 209).

Maintaining that students’ musical experiences should not be limited by the narrowness of the aesthetics approach to music education, he argues: “limiting students to one musical practice counts as an extraordinary form of cultural and creative censorship” (p. 209). He therefore contends that students should be encouraged to learn more than one style of music just as they are given opportunities to learn more than one language under multicultural education. As in multicultural education, the praxial approach to music education makes it possible for teachers to develop a “curriculum that holds rich possibilities for deepening students’ understandings of musical practices from different cultures” (Elliott, p. 205), an approach that may help to develop students’ analytical thinking when they are able to compare and contrast musical styles, instrumentation, and mode of practice from different cultures.

Perhaps a compelling characteristic of praxial music is its ability to help all students to connect to their self-identity. Elliott (1995) believes that “students’ identity includes a personal awareness of who they are [as well as] their fundamental defining characteristics as human beings” (p. 212). Multicultural music “has enormous power to affirm students’ self-identity because the development of personal identity rests importantly on the deliberate and accurate recognition of a person’s cultural doings, experiences, beliefs, and values” (Elliott, p. 212). In addition to developing a sense of
self-identity, multicultural music enables students to develop mutual appreciation for one another and to appreciate everyone’s cultural heritage.

Praxialism urges teachers to engage students in musical experiences from many cultures, and it encourages multiple perspectives as opposed to the unitary perspective associated with the aesthetics philosophy. Multicultural music values cultural diversity and draws on the cultural experiences of every student, including multiple ways of creating and appreciating music. Like multicultural education, multicultural music is about all students and their cultural heritage. If, according to Banks & Banks (1995), the goal of multicultural education is to “educate all students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a multicultural democratic society” (p. xi), then multicultural music education fulfills that goal because it places all students and teachers in a position that will expand their musical knowledge and develop the attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for one another. This writer believes that the praxial approach to music education provides a sustaining philosophical framework that would unify the profession and will as well provide a justification for the inclusion of music education in the K-12 curriculum.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The main task of this chapter is to trace the development of the praxial philosophy. Through this exercise, it has been determined that the praxial philosophy offers a sustaining framework for unifying the music profession and ultimately position music education to gain full acceptance as an essential part of learning worthy of inclusion in the K-12 curriculum. A careful analysis of the arguments underlying each of the philosophical views reveals, on the one hand, that the aesthetics philosophy justifies
the study of music as an end in itself (Johnson, Jr., 2004). The implication is that music, as a piece of art, stands on its own merit and does not need to serve a utilitarian purpose in order to exist in the curriculum. In other words, music should not be included in the curriculum because it helps students to achieve non-musical objectives. The aesthetics philosophy argues that the beauty of music in itself justifies the study of music regardless of the nonmusical benefits it may yield (Leonhard, House, & Robert, 1959; Reimer, 2003). Thus, it may be argued that the aesthetics philosophy was a reaction to utilitarianism. The utilitarian view seeks to justify the study of the arts in terms of nonmusical, social, and intellectual benefits to the individual and society (Boyer & Eisner, 1987; Deasy, 2002; Eisner, 1998; Scripp, 2002). Praxial philosophy, on the other hand, justifies the study of music as a means of understanding the values expressed within and across cultures (Blacking, 1973; Elliott, 1986; McCarthy & Goble, 2002). It attempts to extend the philosophical conception of music and musical practices “beyond the Western [classical] tradition so that all forms of musical praxis are considered” (Johnson, Jr., 2004). I argue that praxial philosophy posits the idea that music as a universal language is created and learned through human designs, and that it conveys a unique meaning and function to individuals within the cultural context where it is practiced. African music, Latino music, Oriental Music, Western music, and all “World music” grew out of praxis and at the same time convey qualities of beauty within their own context. In view of the multicultural strengths of the praxial approach, I maintain that the praxial philosophy will unify the music profession and will sustain the blossoming of music education in the curriculum because it provides a fertile ground for the growth and practice of multicultural music education – a dimension of knowledge
which is lacking in K-12 education today, at a time when America has become so multicultural. I believe that the praxial philosophy, a multicultural music education approach, is best suited to unify the profession and may encourage action and research that may address important democratic issues of social justice, unequal access, and equity in music education.

Multicultural music education is an aggregate component of multicultural education -- the umbrella concept under which the idea of cultural diversity in the practice of music learning, teaching, and practice, developed. It compliments multicultural education, which according to Gollnick & Chinn (2002) is an educational strategy in which classroom instruction and school environment are developed on the basis of students’ cultural background, which also supports and extends the concepts of culture, diversity, equality, social justice, and democracy (p. 5). In the multicultural music class (as in multicultural education), every student’s cultural background is considered an important part of the classroom experience. The benefit is that students are exposed to diverse cultures which lead them to view the world differently and to become appreciative of one another. In addition to curriculum content, multicultural music education improves human relations, encourages the study of ethnic and other cultural groups, develops critical thinking skills, and the examines issues such as racism, power, and discrimination (Blacking, 1973; Elliott, 1986; McCarthy & Goble, 2002).

In conclusion, the praxial philosophy is a multicultural approach which by its nature encompasses both Western and non-Western music. It provides a compelling platform that supports the teaching, learning, practice, and appreciation of multicultural music. The praxial approach is best suited for the educational need of American public
schools, which have become so multicultural in recent years. Unification of the music profession under a multicultural approach can be possible because praxial philosophy creates the possibility for inquiries to develop on different aspects of multicultural education, which may ultimately give rise to many voices and multiple perspectives on dealing with current challenges in K-12 education.

The aesthetics philosophy, with its emphasis on developing an appreciation for Western classical music, seems to be inadequate for justifying the inclusion of music in the curriculum because it gives the study of music a narrow focus and fails to meet the diversity requirement of educating students in a multicultural society. This contrasts sharply with the praxial philosophy, which is inherently a multicultural music approach. The nature of musical knowledge, according to David Bower (2002) “is far deeper than its appreciative qualities, and must include complex critical and reflective cognitive processes including thinking, knowing, and listening far beyond mere facts and skills.” Like Bowers, I agree that aesthetics theory is insufficient to inform a successful practice in music education, and that a praxial approach authentically informs music educators in their practice, and presents a compelling justification for the inclusion of music in the K-12 curriculum. This conclusion is drawn from a careful evaluation of dialogues and scholarly views of leading music educators that have contributed immensely to the debate.
Chapter Five

Praxial Philosophy: A Philosophical Foundation of Multicultural Education

Praxial philosophy is a multicultural philosophy. It operates upon the rationale that all cultures are important, relevant, and meaningful to its adherents, and therefore are inherently equal with other cultures. Its underlying assumption is cultural recognition: “any culture that has provided meaning for many people over a long period of time will have something that deserves our admiration and respect” (Taylor, 1994, p. 66).

Praxial philosophy is multidimensional in nature. It is comprised of a multidimensional concept of cultural understanding; a multidimensional concept of cultural expression; a multidimensional concept of cultural value in human life; and a multiple approach to achieving these values by developing cultural competence in appreciation, tolerance, research, and critical reflective assessment of different cultural practices in objective ways.

Praxial philosophy emphasizes that the practice of cultures (practical engagement) as a means of understanding and appreciating their values should be at the center of a multicultural education curriculum in a liberal democracy. This is contrasted with a passive reflection based on recorded documents such as those obtained in documentaries of audio or video recordings. The problem created by such a passive approach to learning about other cultures includes a lack of objectivity for the subjects presented in the recordings, as well as the individual biases that infiltrate a recorded document through the imperfect views of a stranger-researcher whose knowledge of the indigenous practices is lacking and sometimes appears to be crude. The ‘stranger-researcher’ often looks at the subjects’ culture normatively based on his/her cultural viewpoint. The
conclusions that are often drawn from such a normative assessment often leads to stereotypes about the subjects’ culture. Improper presentation of foreign cultural events through the media may influence some type of prejudice, and eventually contributes to what Taylor (1994) calls “misrecognition” of things that positively matters in other peoples’ lives. This does not negate the value and importance of recorded information in the process of teaching and learning about other cultures.

Recordings and information obtained about other cultures is crucially important in multicultural education, and they become more effective when such documentaries are used as reinforcement to actual practical experience. As an example, a video recording of the *Ohafia Cultural War Dance* would most likely emphasize what may seem to foreign observers as an exotic dance of men clothed in straws and tassels, with painted faces, and bodies littered with feathers and animal blood, while the dancers display complex dance moves in an unusual manner. Both teacher and student-observers in a foreign classroom would nevertheless view the dance, the subject, and the costume with a degree of ‘otherness’ most probably with a certain degree of bias, prejudice, and unequal respect – simply because of their lack of true knowledge of the phenomenon, which they can only relate through mental association. Such recordings will bear little or no relevance to the actual cultural meaning of the dance steps being executed. The costumes and the particular drum beat are associated with the cultural significance of the *Ohafia Cultural War Dance*. The question may be asked, how can an outside observer who has no pre-existing knowledge of the cultural rite and rituals associated with the dance become an objective reporter of such a phenomenon? The question is rendered even more complex when the factor of language barrier between the observer/reporter and the cultural
performers are brought into focus. To be objective and authentic, such a recording can gain more credibility and authenticity when produced as a collaborative endeavor between a capable researcher and a competent partner with cultural background in the *Ohafia Cultural War Dance*, as an example. A multicultural education approach to cultural materials procured under the praxial philosophy encourages in-depth collaborative engagement between the learner and the cultural source of the information.

Praxial philosophy upholds that such a recording should be woven into experiential observations and understanding of the actual phenomena and events that precipitates cultural performances. Such an experience calls for an action (for example, a field trip and physical observations) supported by practice (as in actual engagement with the subject of the study). By so doing, students are able to observe intelligently, critique intelligently, evaluate objectively, and are able to express the value of a cultural engagement in the life of its people. Such an approach will be useful in developing students’ multicultural knowledge, and enable them to develop a critical reflective ability of understanding the multidimensional concept of cultural action, practices, and knowledge.

**The Aim of Praxial Philosophy in Multicultural Education**

The praxial philosophy upholds that culture has important values in the life of people. The formation of individual identity, the development of self-esteem, and the development of mutual respect, are among the primary aims of the praxial philosophy of multicultural education. These values are among the central aims of multicultural education. The values are achievable by all students on the condition that the students have been led to develop a cultural understanding of who they are, the cultural fabrics
that produced them, the role they must play as individuals to maintain this cultural continuity, and how different cultural values relate to each other through human action and practice.

Individual identity, self-esteem, and mutual respect are all products of cultural interaction. This idea has been carefully articulated by Taylor (1994) in his conception of individual identity. Taylor asserts that a person’s discovery of his or her true identity is contingent upon the cultural membership to which that person belongs. That cultural membership, Taylor maintains, enables the person to define himself as an authentic being (p. 31). In Charles Taylor’s formulation, individual authenticity and self-esteem is never achieved alone but through “dialogical interaction . . . a rich human language of expression” -- with capable others in a cultural setting (p. 32). Anthony K. Appiah (2005) explains that it is through dialogue with other people’s understanding of ‘who we are,’ beginning in infancy, that we are able to develop a conception of our own individual identity (p. 20). This means that an individual’s sense of self-identity is shaped through cultural group interaction, whereby an individual's sense of self-worth is deeply tied to the value that others attach to his/her being – in definition of that person’s place in the society. Appiah further explains that the material we respond to, throughout our lives, in shaping ourselves is not within us but outside us – “out there in the social world” (p. 21).

Since the materials that shape a person or people – the “dialogue with other people’s understanding of ‘who we are,’ beginning in infancy” (Appiah, p. 20) – are profoundly powerful in defining who we are and the essence of individual identity. The question may be asked: how does a negative portrait of a person or a people (in terms of stereotypes, or character defamation) affect a person’s development of authentic
individual identity? Appiah has identified some of the sources of our identity development as “religion, society, school, the state, family, peers, and friends” (p. 20). Other sources include social media, our work environment, and our oppressive environment – wherever we may consider that to be. This brings the question of how the praxial philosophy can frame and inform the process of achieving self-formation and the conception of individual identity that truly defines a person in the most credible, authentic, and unbiased ways.

**Praxial Philosophy, Dialogical identity, Cultural Membership, and Individual Identity**

Charles Taylor’s (1994) observation that “dialogical interaction with capable others” in a cultural setting is crucial in the process of developing individual authenticity and self-esteem; and that “a person’s discovery of his or her true identity is based on the cultural membership to which that person belongs” (p. 32) is noteworthy. Taylor’s argument seems to be supported by Anthony Appiah’s (2005) assertion that the development of self-identity does not originate from within a person and is never achieved alone from a personal effort but, results from what other people from the outside world say about the person -- the “material we respond to throughout our lives, in shaping ourselves” (p. 20). The effect of dialogue and cultural membership in the formation of individual self-identity is made more crucial in a pluralistic society where an individual’s cultural membership has often defined his/her place in the society. Understanding that dialogical identity and cultural membership are crucial in the development of individual identity, one can turn to praxial philosophy for guidance in the development of individual identity based on dialogical identity and cultural membership.
As observed in chapter four, p. 116, the praxial philosophy upholds the elements of the classical account of the tripatriate constellation of knowledge: the theoretical (contemplative knowledge of things that are unchanging and eternal, an absolute knowledge for its own sake); the practical (knowledge which is concerned with prudent understanding of variable situations that are situated in the sphere of human action); and the productive (knowledge manifested in a workman-like skill at making useful of beautiful things, and in the ability to see concrete tasks through to successful completion) (Bowman, 2005; McCarthy, 1978; Regel ski, 1996, & 1998). Perhaps the tripatriate constellation of knowledge may form the base upon which praxial philosophy may frame and inform dialogical identity, cultural dialogues, and individual identity.

It will be noted that positive dialogical interaction creates a positive individual identity, while negative dialogues do the opposite. Therefore, the praxial philosophy upholds dialogical interactions that builds positive character and does not condone negative elements that destroy an individual or a group of people based on their cultural membership. That being said, the praxial tripatriate constellation of knowledge could form the blue print that will establish a moral ground for the formation of a positive dialogical identity and cultural dialogues, which may ultimately result to a positive development of individual identity.

The praxial philosophy upholds that positive dialogical interaction should reflect the concept of a theoretical, contemplative knowledge of things that are truthful; things that are unchanging and eternal. Bowman (2005) asserts that the contemplative life of theoria leads to the “cultivation of virtuous character, and lays emphasis on mindfulness” (p. 52). Theoretical knowledge, stands on its own merit, and does not accommodate
untruthful assumptions that tend to skew other people’s opinion of an individual or a
group of people based on individual prejudice. A theoretical dialogical exchange about
an individual or a cultural group should focus on understandings that are verifiable based
on a personal experience with the subject. It seeks to define an individual based on a
direct experience with that individual, and the content of his character. Praxial
philosophy provides ample opportunities for individual social and cultural interaction
through which everyone enjoys equal opportunity to represent themselves in a concrete
manner that does not dwell on assumption or presupposition of an individual or a people
based on who they are and their cultural membership. The second of the praxial
tripatriate constellation of knowledge that informs dialogical identity is the practical
knowledge (praxis). Bowman (2005) observes that the practical knowledge is “centrally
cconcerned with the moral-political idea of virtuous conduct” (p. 52). The moral-political
idea of virtuous conduct is an observable attribute that may come to light during some
type of interaction – social, political, cultural, or dialogical. Praxial philosophy creates
the environment in which practical knowledge of an individual or a group of people is
attainable. The productive knowledge (techne, poiesis), the third element of the praxial
tripatriate constellation of knowledge, is one that is “theory-free” (Bowman, p. 52). This
knowledge is manifested in “a workman-like skill at making useful of beautiful things,
and in the ability to see concrete tasks through to successful completion” (Bowman, p.
52). Praxial philosophy provides that the productive aspect of dialogical interaction
concerning an individual or a cultural group of people should present a beautiful picture;
a positive outlook; a truthful unbiased point of view of the individual. It calls for the
presentation of a grand summary of candidly observed and experienced conduct of the
individual based on the authentic evaluation of the *theoria* (theoretical knowledge), and the *praxis* (practical knowledge). Thus the *techne poiesis* embodies the authentic reflection of the *theoria* and the *praxis*. By upholding the tripatriate constellation of knowledge, the praxial philosophy tends to establish a grand rule for individual and cultural groups to engage in dialogical interactions that would eventually define an individual or a group of people, and ultimately create the affection or disaffection that goes with such individuals or cultural groups for the rest of their existence.

Alperson (1991) observed: “comprehensiveness and inclusiveness are important measures of philosophical adequacy” (p. 218). The praxial philosophy is built on the platform of comprehensiveness and inclusiveness. It advocates a representation of all the cultures in the United States in the curriculum. It embraces a dialogue that includes all people in our multicultural society whereby everyone has equal opportunity to be heard and to contribute in matters of common interest. The praxial philosophy advocates a comprehensive and inclusive approach to understanding an individual or a cultural group. It does not judge anyone in the light of a normative conception of assumptions based on isolated incidents. Bowman asserts that the praxial philosophy creates “events in which people engage each other with their own distinctive voices; in which divergent experiences, values, and assumptions are shared with one another; in which interpretation and misinterpretation inevitably figure significantly” (p. 62). Sparshott suggests that the praxial approach holds together people that are differently related (p. 85). It enables people from different walks of life to participate in sharing cultural experiences in distinct languages and conversations that are culturally worthy. Praxial philosophy promotes social interaction among people from different cultures. Positive social
interaction leads to the development of mutual respect among the people that we associate with. Mutual respect, in turn, generates positive dialogue – the essential element in the conception of our individual identity. Therefore, the aim of praxial philosophy in multicultural education is to develop a rich multicultural education curriculum, which will promote social interaction, mutual respect, and positive dialogues among all students, the staff, and the community. Such are the values that are needed in the dialogical identity, cultural membership, and individual identity – the values which are inherent in praxial philosophy.

What Knowledge Should Be Taught Under Praxial Philosophy?

Multiculturalism under praxial philosophy implies the simultaneous existence of many cultures with equal recognition accorded to the importance of every one of the cultures that constitutes a multicultural democracy. Therefore, equality of cultural recognition is the main focus of the knowledge that is central to the curriculum of the praxial philosophy. At the center of the curriculum of praxial philosophy ought to be courses in women’s study, gender studies, human race, race relations, ethnic studies, religious diversity, world cultures, folklores, cultural diversity, cultural aesthetics, world music, cultural music and arts, and international studies. Equal recognition accorded to all cultures in a multicultural state gives rise to what Taylor (1994) calls “the politics of difference.” The politics of difference entails the recognition of “the unique identity of all individuals or groups, their distinctiveness from everyone else . . . the distinctiveness that has [for long] been ignored, glossed over, and assimilated to a dominant or majority identity” (p. 38). The importance of recognizing all cultures stems from the fact that some cultures have been imposed on others “with assumed superiority that powers this
imposition” (Taylor, p. 63). “Western liberal societies are thought to be supremely guilty in this regard, partly because of their colonial past and partly because of their marginalization of segments of their populations that stem from other cultures” (Taylor, p. 63). The demand placed on cultural recognition is “that we all recognize the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive, but acknowledge their worth” (Taylor, p. 64). Therefore, from the perspective of the praxial philosophy, knowledge about various cultures should be at the center of the curriculum. The curriculum should give equal recognition to all the cultures that constitute a multicultural society. This perspective may nevertheless be challenging to members of the society who are either opposed to multicultural education, or those that have yet to realize that the tide of cultural marginalization has been replaced by the era of multiculturalism whereby those groups of people in the society who have been marginalized are now seeking ways for their voices to be heard.

**Teaching of Cultural Competence and Tolerance**

An important knowledge to be acquired in a multicultural education setting is the teaching of cultural competence. Cultural competence has to do with developing the ability to deal with members of other cultures with mutual respect. This includes the cultures of those individuals whose cultural practices do not compare or agree with our own cultural ideas; respecting the rights of other individuals to engage in their cultural affairs; the development of positive attitude toward other people’s way of life even if we disagree with them; not engaging in any type of scripting of other people’s lives simply because they do not belong to our own culture; treating others as you would like to be treated; imparting important lessons of anti-bullying, non-sexist; and anti-racism
pedagogy. Through these lessons students will learn the true meaning of human dignity, and the importance of living a democratic life where everyone should have equal opportunity to grow and enjoy individual freedom and the pursuit of happiness. Cultural competence is highly advocated by the praxial philosophy. It champions comprehensiveness and inclusiveness. It is directly connected to the development of the practical element of the praxial tripatriate constellation’s moral-political idea of virtuous conduct. Cultural competence should be taught starting in kindergarten. As Feinberg (1998) observed, the teaching of respect for other cultures entails that the students learn to respect other people’s right to express their cultural tradition in the ways they choose (p. 129).

Toleration is informed by all three domains of the praxial tripatriate constellation of knowledge: *theoria* (contemplative knowledge of things that are unchanging and eternal); *praxis* (knowledge which is concerned with prudent understanding of variable situations that are situated in the sphere of human action); and *techne poiesis* (knowledge manifested in the ability to see concrete tasks through to successful completion). The theoretical, the practical, and the productive domains of the praxial tripatriate constellation of knowledge are linked to toleration and the acquisition of cultural competence. Toleration is an attitude that requires patience and forbearance especially for the things that are unchanging. It calls for a prudent understanding of changing situations in human action, and it calls for mutual understanding and perseverance needed in the successful completion of a given task. Toleration is an aspect of cultural competence that should be a part of a multicultural education curriculum. Michael Walzer (1999) observes that toleration is a necessary tool to be developed for the
coexistence of different individuals and cultural groups in a multicultural democracy. He acknowledges that toleration is an attitude of accommodation that may play a role in sustaining a multicultural society (p. xii). He asserts that toleration is a necessary tool for the “peaceful coexistence of different peoples, with different histories, cultures, and identities, and for the valuing of life and basic human rights, liberty, and maintenance of tradition” (p. 2). As such, toleration is an important part of a multicultural education curriculum. But, how do we teach toleration starting at the basic level of primary education? Teachers are obligated to establish a culturally sensitive classroom, which ushers equal appreciation, tolerance, and recognition for all students. Students should be encouraged to acquire conflict resolution skills, and to participate in peace-makers’ clubs as a way of developing the skills needed in tolerating one another. Acquisition of tolerance requires action and practice – the very essence of the praxial philosophy. Students should be exposed to the practical knowledge of other cultures. That will help them to develop tolerance for other peoples’ ways of life which are different from theirs. They should be encouraged to ask questions and to discover the similarities and differences which exist between their own culture and that of others. A proper educated exposure to other people’s culture and practices would encourage and sustain toleration.

**Multicultural Education Framed by Praxial Philosophy**

The design of education intended to benefit a multicultural students’ population or people with ‘uncommon identity,’ as Feinberg puts it, demands a different kind of wisdom as well as a different kind of approach – different from that used in formulating the ideology of liberal education which was designed to improve a homogeneous group of people – constituted mainly of members of the mainstream culture. Liberal education
was elitist in its nature and in practice – because, it was designed to serve a particular population who were deemed members of a ‘superior culture,’ according to the worldview of the time. This elitist system of education formed the blue print upon which the current educational enterprise is operated. The result is very clear: minority students are still making the least academic progress even with the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. The reason for the low academic progress among minority students may be linked to unfamiliarity with the system upon which they are educated – an education and testing system, which is as foreign to them as the ideology that created it. All new strategies that are directed toward improving minority test performance and narrowing the achievement gap tend to fall short of intended goals because its programs and strategies are designed based on the rationale of liberal education and the elitist goal which is paradoxically related to the social condition of the targeted population – students from the minority culture. This is evidenced by the remarkable achievement gap that continues to separate students of the mainstream culture from those of the minority cultures. This is clearly what Feinberg means when he asserts that “the current public education in the United States was designed to serve a ‘more particular interests,’ as opposed to the general interest of the public . . .” and that the dominant group uses the school “as a weapon with which it can reproduce an arbitrary social class structure” (pp. 7-8). Shouldn’t ‘the general interest’ of a multicultural society reflect equality of educational opportunity for all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or physical condition? Educational opportunity in a multicultural democracy should provide equal opportunity for human growth and development, serve the diversity of people, and may lead to the ultimate goal of national unity.
In historical perspective liberal education, as proposed by Thomas Jefferson reflected the educational ideals of classical Athens. Aristotle argues that the best type of education seeks to develop “. . . the whole of excellence which ought to be cultivated, and cultivated for its own sake,” and the aim is to equip citizens for “a life of action and war,” and other such “necessary or useful acts,” which more importantly includes the qualities that equips the citizens “to lead a life of leisure and peace” and “to do good acts” (Tozer, 2006, p. 341). As a part of educating “the whole of human excellence,” Aristotle laid a strong emphasis on the study of philosophy and music, as well as literature and the arts (Tozer, p. 341). Classical Athenian liberal education emphasized “the development of the good person” and extra emphasis was laid on developing the qualities of the mind and character needed to perform both intellectual and vocational assignment. However, Aristotle’s design of educating the whole of human excellence through liberal education was directed to benefit only the Athenian citizens, who actually constituted the minority of the Athenian society, while women and non-Athenian workforce (metics) were excluded from citizenship (Tozer, p. 342). Whereas “Aristotle reflected classical Athenian society in promoting education for all its citizens, rich and poor, classical Athens excluded the majority of its inhabitants from citizenship and failed to provide a liberal education for them” (Tozer, p. 342).

The Athenian model of liberal education was adopted in America. The crust of American liberal education was elucidated by the famed Yale Report released in 1828 which, among other things, “embraced the historical liberal ideal of an educated person as one who is familiar with the knowledge of various disciplines and through careful, disciplined thought can apply that knowledge to the full range of human pursuits” (Tozer,
Much like the Athenian model, liberal education in America was directed to the benefit of the White elites while Blacks, women, Native-Americans, and other non-white males were excluded from education. In his *Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* (1776), Thomas Jefferson “provided for literacy for white children but not for children of African-American or Native-American descent” (p. 258).

Unlike the underpinning ideology of liberal education, the praxial philosophy of multicultural education informs an educational practice that values diverse viewpoints and experiences. It does not designate or uphold a particular cultural group’s ideals, customs, and practices as *the* normative standard while misrecognizing and marginalizing the ideals, etc., that have sustained other cultures over a period of time. The praxial ideology sees all cultures as valuable contributors to knowledge and educational growth. It explores abundant intellectual resources in cultural varieties that include language, cognitive processes, religion, ideology, and technology. Above all, the praxial philosophy upholds that both the educators and learners bring a variety of knowledge -- linguistic, cognitive strengths, and identity traits -- from their cultural communities into the classroom. The praxial philosophy teaches respect and appreciation for all the knowledge that serves the interest of education and the exchange of views that result from cultural transmission of knowledge. While it encourages the development of the cultural skills that the students and teachers bring to the classroom, it does not try to ignore or replace those skills with normative attitudes from a favored culture.

**Multicultural Education in a Liberal Democracy**

Multicultural democratic education recognizes the importance and value of all peoples and cultures in American society. Its main focus is to provide equal educational
opportunities for everyone in the United States – the diversity of people, cultures, religion, and social class—thereby fulfilling the value of inclusion. Multicultural education should promote equal educational opportunity for all. It establishes a fair play ground for all its citizens, and does not advocate the superiority of one culture or a group of students over others. Dewey has defined democracy as “a mode of associated living of conjoint communicated experience” whereby people from different cultures interact and share common experience with one another (p. 87). Multicultural democratic education provides a common ground where students are prepared for the future role of associated living and conjoint communication experience with other people from diverse cultural background. Dewey identifies the ideals of democracy as “a shared common interest; greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control; freer interaction between social groups; and mutually interpenetrating interests, where progress or readjustment is an important consideration (pp. 86-87). Multicultural education should be rooted in the ideals of democracy, founded on the platform of equality of all humans; equal recognition of all cultures; equality of educational opportunities; diversity as the strength of the nation; and free human association and communication as the key to human development. It further creates equal educational opportunity which sustains human growth and development in the society, which according to Dewey, is the moral end of our educational and political participation.

The praxial philosophy links all cultural practices functionally, procedurally, and institutionally in ways that gives recognition to the important cultural elements and the people that created them. Just as Bowman (2005) stated, “the praxial approach, like conversations, creates events in which people engage with their own distinctive voices, in
which divergent experiences, values, and assumptions are shared with one another, in
which interpretation and misinterpretation inevitably figure significantly” (p. 62). The
praxial philosophy creates the forum for divergent views, which generates the
conversations and events through which distinctive voices of individuals and groups are
heard. That, in this writer’s opinion, is what Dewey means when he defined democracy
as “associated living and conjoint communication experience with other people from
diverse cultural backgrounds” (p. 87). Multicultural education, informed by a praxial
philosophy, makes it possible for different people to come together, learn together, and
participate together, in the full exercise of their democratic rights. As Sparshott inferred,
the praxial philosophy “holds together people [that are] differently related.” It creates the
forum for people to come together but, it does not force any one to give up his or her
individual cultural heritage in favor of any one particular culture. Rather, it encourages
individuals to “participate differently in [cultural] experience” much as in languages and
conversations (p. 85). That is the essence of a multicultural education in a liberal
democracy-- the educational setting which enables different people from different places
to come together to participate in communal events, engage in conversations through
which distinctive voices are heard, and contribute freely to divergent views and
experiences that are necessary for human flourishing.

This writer asserts that the success of a multicultural democratic society depends
on a successful education of its leaders and citizens on the fundamental moral principles
that guide multiculturalism which rests on the principles of justice, equality, and freedom
– all which are important in the development of humanity. Since multiculturalism seeks
equal recognition of diverse talents of all people and cultures of the world, multicultural
democratic education then becomes a proper tool for directing the thoughts of the students toward the path of justice, equality, and freedom in the nation.

The Praxial Philosophy in Relations to Cultural Recognition, and Dialogical Identity

Taylor argues that there is a close connection between [individual] identity and [cultural] recognition (p. 27). He states: “identity, a person’s understanding of who they are, is partly shaped by recognition or its absence.” As such, he explains, “nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, and can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (p. 25). This lends to the fact that equal recognition of all the cultures in a multicultural society is crucially important if we are to achieve national unity under the democratic ideal of fairness and equal opportunity for all. Cultural recognition seems to be linked to dialogical identity in the sense that people who are culturally recognized share the impetus to dialogue openly with one another without fear of reprisal, political, or social intimidation. Through dialogue, they are able to identify with one another and to define themselves and their individual roles in the society. Taylor maintains: “we become fully human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence defining our identity through the acquisition of dialogical character – a rich human languages of expression” (p. 32). It is in the process of acquiring our dialogical identity that we are able to achieve cultural recognition. Taylor clarifies that our identity is not worked out in “isolation” but is “negotiated through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, and with others” (p. 34). Hence, our dialogical identity is negotiated in the course of our social interaction with others.

Praxial philosophy favors multiculturalism and justifies a wide exposure to different forms of culture. However from Taylor’s point of view, it may be argued that
one does not need a wide exposure to other cultures in order to be recognized in a multicultural society. In other words, Taylor’s argument does not suggest that a student be exposed to cultures other than their own. This raises a question of how the praxial philosophy fits as a framework for multicultural education.

The aim of the praxial philosophy of multicultural education is to expose the students to other cultures that make up the multicultural society, and to enable them to develop appreciation for the cultures of other members of the society — such as those of their fellow students. Feinberg (1998) outlines three goals of multicultural education as: 1) to inform students about cultural diversity; 2) to encourage respect for the practices of other cultural groups, especially disempowered minorities and women; and 3) to encourage members of these groups to have pride in their own cultural heritage (p. 123). As in music education, a praxial approach requires close attention to “the social, historical, and cultural conditions and forces in which practices of musical production arise and have meaning” (Alperson, 1991, p. 236). The emphasis is to understand culture in terms of the variety of meaning and values it provides to different peoples that live in a multicultural society.

Like the praxial philosophy of music, multicultural praxialism “combines an interest in [cultural] aesthetic appreciation with an interest in the productive aspect of [cultural] artistic practice and the cultural contexts in which the [cultural] arts are created, deployed, and enjoyed” (Alperson, 1991, p. 234). An important element of the praxial philosophy is its recognition of plurality and continuously evolving nature of human culture. There are many cultures in a multicultural society. Each of the cultures change forms, grows, is inherently unstable, and is neither stationed nor determined. However,
each of the cultures is sustained by the recognition accorded to it as an entity, and by the
dialogical relationship that exists among members of that culture and between members of
different cultures in the society.

The relationship between cultural recognition, dialogical identity, and praxial
philosophy is so interwoven that the praxial philosophy establishes the democratic,
multicultural environment, which supports the development of dialogical identity and
cultural recognition. In essence, cultural recognition is contingent upon the development
of dialogical identity. For example, a people begin to talk with one another about their
social condition. The dialogical interaction that ensues may soon translate to a definition
of their social condition whereby their individual and collective voices may be heard in
the forum. Such a group of people may collectively make a demand aimed at addressing
their social condition, and or improving their condition of living. Consequently, the
people may be recognized based on their cultural identity, and the organization of their
membership in a cultural body.

**Praxial Philosophy, a Philosophical Foundation of Multicultural Education**

As a philosophical foundation of multicultural education, the praxial philosophy
is premised upon the idea of equality of all humans, equality of all cultures, and justice
and freedom for all. The praxial philosophy is rooted in democratic ideals and therefore
is a democratic approach to education. At the core of the praxial philosophy is the idea of
moral equality of all peoples and cultures of the world. This goes that “people that are
morally equal also possess equal rights, inviolable claims to the actual enjoyment of
particular social goods guaranteed by the society” (Snauwaert, 2002; Dahl, 2000; Shue,
1980). This argument holds that any society that claims the ideals of democracy are
morally equal and possesses equal human dignity by virtue of their membership in a democratic society. This argument may be extended to the rights to cultural equality even though liberal constitution does not yet guarantee cultural protection to any group of people. Protection of cultural rights and equality may be justified by the fact that the development of individual identity is somehow tied to the culture that produced the individual hence one’s culture is undeniably an integral part of his or her individual identity.

As an advocate of moral equality the praxial philosophy is premised upon the logic of justice for all. At the center of its provision is equal access to educational opportunity – especially to the disenfranchised and to those who have been denied equality of opportunity to education through generations. This group includes African-Americans, Native-Americans, women, gays and lesbians, and individuals with disability. In the end, praxial philosophy promises equal educational opportunity for all Americans and not just a few.

A most compelling aspect of the praxial philosophy is the fact that it promotes dialogues among individuals of “uncommon identity,” (Feinberg, 1998) and among different cultures of the world. Nussbaum believes that dialogue and respect for diversity is the heart of the relationship between democracy and multiculturalism. The benefits of dialogue in a multicultural setting are numerous and includes exchange of worldview, critical thinking, respectful of other peoples worldview, respect of pluralism, as well as the imparting of understanding of the histories and contributions of other groups of people within our nation and in the international sphere of life (Nussbaum, p. 295). A mainstream approach to multicultural education, carefully articulated, would ensure equal
representation of knowledge from all cultures that constitutes a diversified state. It may be argued that the logic of the praxial philosophy is cosmically relevant to globalization. All the cultures of the world practiced in the USA – including the cultures of African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latino/Latina-Americans, and Arab-American cultural heritage have an equal chance of engaging in dialogical relationships with one another, and within each other. This alone is educative in that it may lead to some form of action and reflection, as well as self-re-examination of one’s beliefs and actions.

Furthermore, individual and cultural communication that arises through the praxial philosophy may improve tolerance, recognition, and mutual respect among people of uncommon identity. Walzer’s argument that toleration is a basic good in a multicultural democracy is premised upon the fact that people who tolerate one another are most likely to learn from each other. Lack of toleration, on the other hand, breeds hate, disrespect, and disenchantment. It is a natural feeling that individuals and cultures that tolerate one another would also recognize themselves on equal levels. A lack of respect breeds nonrecognition or misrecognition, which, according to Taylor, has detrimental effects on the individual and cultures as well. The quest for multicultural dialogue, tolerance, recognition, and respect is possible and achievable under a carefully designed curriculum that may instill those values in American students. Such a curriculum can be designed and implemented under the platform of the praxial philosophy as a foundation of multicultural education.
Chapter Six
Conclusion

This study contributes to the understanding of the philosophy and intellectual history of multicultural education. It presented praxial philosophy as a potential philosophical framework of a multicultural education in the context of a liberal democracy. The praxial philosophy directs attention to the practice of different cultures, by different people, as significant human endeavors necessary for the continuity of life. It promotes the idea that education is a practice of teaching and learning that exists in every culture around the world, which also sustains different people in different cultures. It further upholds the equality of all cultures in its ability to sustain its people over a period of time. It then logically holds that the praxial philosophy is suited as a philosophical framework for multicultural education because it upholds the critical principle that all cultures are equal, and no one culture is greater than the other because all cultures play important roles in the life and learning of its people, thereby being consistent with values of cultural recognition and inclusion.

Praxialism is proposed as an inclusive approach to gaining a diverse knowledge of all the cultures that share membership in a multicultural society. A mainstream multicultural education gives rise to a mainstream curriculum which accords equal treatment, and equal recognition to all the cultures that constitute the membership of the multicultural community in which the school is located. It is not limited to any one or a few ethnic groups rather it includes people from all walks of life, including all the ethnic groups in the United States of America, women, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities. This conception of multicultural education provides an orientation that values diverse viewpoints and experiences. It does not see any one culture as the sole
source of knowledge rather it sees all cultures as valuable contributors to knowledge and educational growth. It explores abundant intellectual resources in cultural varieties that include language, cognitive processes, religion, ideology, technology, food, and clothing.

With its emphasis on diversity education, a multicultural education informed by praxial philosophy promises to create an equal educational experience that will serve all students. It promises to improve the curriculum to encompass diverse cultural elements, which will present the subject matter from a diverse point of view. Under the current educational system, the growing minority population is being subjected to a curriculum that is neither diverse nor culturally friendly to all students. Millions of minority children (including African American and Latino-Latina children) have been left behind because the current educational system solely promotes the culture of the dominant group, and supports a curriculum that is neither diverse nor multicultural. When students are presented with a curriculum that enables them to see themselves as a part of the educational process, they naturally will respond by expressing ownership of the material that is constructing their future. Seeing each other as a part of the school curriculum, and not alienated by it, will play an important role in improving students’ performance, and lower the dropout rate. The current curriculum and school culture has been criticized for alienating the minority students through presenting stereotyped images and conceptions of the minority culture. Presenting negative images of the students and their cultural background is an act of “misrecognition,” (Taylor 1995), which has a detrimental effect of demeaning the students and distorting their reality. Ultimately, low academic performance and dropping out of school becomes an unavoidable outcome. With its root on the classical tripatriate constellation of knowledge, the praxial philosophy of
multicultural education promises a future that will enable students to develop their
cognitive strength, physical strength, and aesthetics ability.

It has been suggested (above) that the aim of the praxial philosophy of
multicultural education is to develop a rich multicultural education curriculum, which
will promote social interaction, mutual respect, and positive dialogues among all
students, the staff, and the community. The praxial philosophy promises to create an
environment that will promote positive dialogical engagement among different peoples
that share a community space. Bowman (2005) observed that the practical knowledge
provided by the praxial philosophy is “centrally concerned with the moral-political idea
of virtuous conduct” (see chapter four, p. 116). Sparshott (1987) also suggests that the
praxial philosophy holds together people that are differently related (see chapter five, p.
139). Both Bowman and Sparshott concur that the praxial philosophy has the ability to
support a curriculum that will unite people that are racially, culturally, and economically
different; a curriculum that could bolster the students’ moral, political, and virtuous
conduct.

**Central Tenets of a Mainstream Multicultural Education**

The tenets of a mainstream multicultural education may be conceptualized in this
manner:

- A mainstream multicultural education values the variety of cognitive strengths,
languages, and learning styles which students and teachers bring from their
cultural background to the classroom.
- A mainstream multicultural education values and respects the indigenous
perspectives to teaching and learning – perspectives which are abundant in
different cultural communities -- through which knowledge and learning has
sustained its people through generations.
- A mainstream multicultural education values the existence of different cultural
communities, each contributing its own voice and perspectives in decision
making, and problem solving that affects the society in general.
A mainstream multicultural education recognizes the fact that an individual’s identity is a reflection of the cultural community that bred the individual. Therefore, it respects the authenticity of the different ways that cultures educate their members from childhood to adulthood, and believe that all cultures have something important to contribute to the education of their people.

**Central Tenets of the Praxial Philosophy**

- All cultures matter because they play an important role in the lives of the adherents.
- All cultures contribute to learning and human knowledge. They have cognitive strengths that contribute to human flourishing.
- Knowledge is not culturally situated. All cultures are sustained by the knowledge and the wisdom that flourish among them.
- Praxial philosophy brings cultures together. It is an agent of diversity, variety, tolerance, appreciation, and mutual respect.
- Praxial philosophy explains the purpose of education. It establishes a strong link between education and the society that it serves. It enacts a true symbiotic relationship that should exist between school and the society.
- Praxial philosophy enables us to realize that an education that serves a multicultural society must serve not just one dominant group but the overall demographics and economic constituents of the school community.

The praxial philosophy as a foundation of multicultural education promises to shape the school environment for cultural dialogues that will foster mutual respect, tolerance, and equality of opportunity for all. Praxial philosophy requires that educators influence the future generation to develop positive attitudes supportive of inclusion and cultural recognition. Educators who adopt the praxial philosophy will engage in the act of humanization through critical reflection. Praxial philosophy does not support the act of dehumanization, which, although a social reality, is a distortion of the ontological reality, and does not constitute a part of the harmonious development of the mental, physical, and spiritual aspect of our ontological vocation to become more fully human. Attitudes such as humanization, mutual respect, equal recognition, and cultural sensitivity are important attributes of leadership that is ontologically desirable in human development.
The praxial philosophy is a philosophy of multicultural education, and it provides the rationale for cultural recognition and the development of self-identity. The misrepresentation, stereotypes, and the distortion of the images of the minority cultures in basal series as observed by Rehyer, 1986; Reimer, 1992; and Pirofski, 2003, is an example of what Charles Taylor (1994) called “nonrecognition or misrecognition” which according to him “is capable of inflicting harm, and can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (p. 25). A person who has been denied recognition over a period of time may suffer a loss of self-identity or mental imprisonment. Nonrecognition and misrecognition has been used as a social oppressive tool against members of the minority culture, especially in the public schools. Jonathan Kozol, in his Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools (1991) uncovers disparities in education between different social classes and races; the crowded unsanitary and understaffed environment where school children from minority cultures are educated; and the gross inequalities in school funding collected through taxation. Such are examples of nonrecognition and misrecognition because the minority students, who may be disproportionately poor, were not recognized in the same light as that of the students from the affluent mainstream culture. They were only seen as unequal to their Anglo-American counterparts and were not recognized as equal citizens who deserve equal educational opportunity. Furthermore, the nonrecognition and misrecognition became more hurtful to the extent that the very textbooks that are used to teach the minority students (the basal series) presents a negative, stereotype image of their culture and race whereby their acceptance of their misrecognized nature was only imperative. Ronald Takaki (1993) in his A Different Mirror, articulated similar situation when he
observed that the “American schools have perpetuated cultural divides by holding up the mirror of history only to the experience of whites” (pp. 51-52). Praxial philosophy promises to raise the unbiased mirror of the histories and the experiences of all individuals, cultures, and ethnicities that have labored and sacrificed to make America great.

Unlike the rationale upon which the Anglo-based educational framework is grounded, the praxial philosophical framework is rooted on the rationale of equal recognition of all students, teachers, and administrators in public schools. The equal recognition extends to all aspect of education – from equal school supplies to a balanced approach to the images and cultural content of the basal series and other text books, and to the equal recognition of all people who will be treated with equal human dignity in all cases related to the educational process.

A praxial philosophy of multicultural education is grounded on the classical tripatriate constellation of knowledge, which is rooted in the harmonious development of the three faculties that guides/directs human action: the theoretical, the practical, and the productive (Sparshott, 1987; Bowman, 2005). The Theoretical (faculty of the mind) is a contemplative knowledge of things that are unchanging and eternal. It is an absolute knowledge for its own sake, and is manifested in mental development; knowledge acquisition; cognitive strength; the ability to engage in organization, dialogue, questioning, improvising, analyzing, and creative thinking. The Practical (faculty of body development and physical action) is the knowledge, which is concerned with prudent understanding of the human body – manifested in psychomotor skills; spatial engagement; healthy living; and physical strength. The Productive (faculty of the mind
and soul) is the knowledge manifested in a workman-like skill at making things useful and beautiful, and in the ability to see concrete tasks through to successful completion. It is manifested in emotion; spirited action; human relations; aesthetics; and beautification. These faculties are interdependent and act holistically to achieve optimal human development – defined as the internal peace/harmony that is desirable for human development. Thus, the praxial philosophy of multicultural education is the harmonious development of the theoretical, the practical, and the productive faculties of human knowledge, which is necessary for optimal human development. In other words, the praxial philosophy of multicultural education may be seen as an educational theory that supports the harmonious development of the mind, the body, and the soul, and it may facilitate the peaceful coexistence of all members of the human society in the pursuit of peace progress and happiness.

Advocates of school reform such as George Counts, Steve Tozer, and John Dewey, have called on educators to create a new system of schools based on the needs of an emerging multicultural democratic society. The changing demographics, as noted by Michael Dantley (2005) and Sam Dillion (2007) is a compelling attribute of the current school system that makes the course of school reform irreversible – thus making the schools more effective to serve a diverse multicultural society. As observed by Banks and Aburime (1998), “The minority group continues to grow seven times faster than the Anglo-American population.” The praxial philosophy and its mainstream multicultural vision are needed to enable the schools to meet the needs of the society by adopting a mainstream multicultural education curriculum that will serve all, and not a few of the students. Praxialism is an inclusive educational approach that embraces diversity, equity,
fairness, and freedom—a philosophical framework that advocates mutual cultural respect, cultural recognition, the coexistence of all cultures in a multicultural democracy, and the unobstructed diffusion of knowledge. The primary goal of multicultural education is to provide equal grounds for overall students’ achievements, to deconstruct racism and racial stereotypes, to share commitment to social justice, and to encourage positive interaction among teachers, students, and families within the school community (Nieto, 1996, and 1999).

**CODA: A Symphony of Many Cultures**

The mainstream approach to multicultural education proposed in this study may be likened to the functioning of a symphony orchestra. In a symphony orchestra, different groups of instruments play together heralding an existing melody and creating the harmony of a musical work. A symphony orchestra is a large ensemble of musicians who play together different instruments composed of bowed stringed instruments, percussion, wind and brass instruments. Each instrument has a different sound and is played in a different way. In fact, the instruments are grouped together by the way they are played. An important thing about the orchestra is that although the instruments produce different tones and are played in different ways the sense of organic unity is profoundly expressed. Every instrument in the orchestra forms its own special team. Every member of the orchestra plays with members of their own team. Although there are key players in the orchestra, everyone has to play together to produce a great sound.

The different instruments that play in the orchestra are organized in different teams such as the strings, woodwind, brass, and percussion – each playing with members of their own team. The instruments vary in appearance, techniques, and in the sound they
produce. For example, string instruments are played by pressing fingers on to the finger-board while the strings are plucked with fingers or the bow is dragged across the strings. Woodwind instruments are played with either single or double reeds while their fingerings also differ from one another. The brass instruments are played by buzzing into the mouth-piece of the instrument while the pitches are controlled with the valves or the slides (as with the Trombone). The percussion instruments are played by creating an impact on the instrument -- such as using a padded drumstick and beating them on the drum-head.

The instruments vary in size just as they vary in tones. Although the Double Bass and the Tuba are bigger than all the other instruments in their groups, they are played in such a way that no one instrument overpowers the other due to its size and preference. They all contribute equally to the magical sound that makes the orchestra phenomenally great among all other ensembles elsewhere. Doubtlessly, the success of the orchestra depends on the diversity of the different instruments and musicians who work closely together to produce a beautiful sound.

The type of harmony created in a symphony of many cultures (multiculturalism) is a harmony produced not only by the cultures of Western canon but, it is a harmony that constitutes the tones of many voices from around the world. It is a harmony that is deeply entrenched in the mutual respect and recognition accorded by all, to all members of the human race who are worthy contributors to the dignity and integrity of our great nation. Like the symphony orchestra, the success of a multicultural education depends on the working together of all the different peoples and cultures of the society who are committed to the welfare of our great nation. The sound of the harmony that results from
the orchestration of talents of humankind in a multicultural society may invite listeners and observers from other nations who may find the symphony of multiculturalism so compelling that they may urge their own nations to imitate and ultimately adopt the same approach to human freedom.

When Antonin Dvorak, a Czech composer of late Romantic era, wrote one of his best known works, the “New World Symphony,” he was indeed echoing the symphony of human freedom which celebrates the struggles and victories of all humankind. That victory was enthralled in the celebration of the brotherhood of all peoples without the ambience of superiority (accorded to some people), and the discriminatory discrepancies that jeopardizes the peace of human unity. We, in our time, have been urged to bring this dream to a fulfillment by celebrating a due recognition, respect, and integrity of all nations, peoples, and cultures of the world. We have been urged to recognize the harmony that exists behind the curtain of the different cultures in our cosmopolitan society. The human race around the world has been sustained by their indigenous cultures for thousands of years. People need to see and appreciate how other people live their lives -- the things that they do, and what they may have to offer us. People need to be taught, and they need to discover the secret of the survival, mysteries, and success of other cultures around the world.

It is argued in this study that the ideological ingenuity that sustains the organic relationship in an orchestra may provide a framework for uniting the various historical movements and the ideologies that ultimately gave rise to multicultural education. That ideology is the praxial philosophy which according to Elliott (1995) is a philosophy that “emphasizes that music ought to be understood in relation to the meanings and values
evidenced in actual music making and music listening in specific cultural contexts” (p. 14). As Bowman (2005) states, “music education is not just about music, it is about students, and it is about teachers, and it is about the kind of societies we hope to build together” (p. 75). That society is a multicultural society in our democracy. The aim of building a multicultural society in a democratic government is to achieve national unity. National unity in a multicultural democratic society is achievable when students are taught about themselves in relation to students from diverse cultural backgrounds through the praxial philosophy. Praxial philosophy is premised upon the rationale of diversity, equality, mutual respect, mutual recognition, and the development of self-identity. To Aristotle, “praxis,” from which praxialism is derived, means the “right action.” Regelski (1996) defines “right action” in music education as “active engagement in active music making” (p. 227). In the same respect, praxialism in multicultural education denotes the “right action”; and “active engagement” in building the multicultural society. In other words, the teaching of the “right action,” (which I interpret to mean the teaching of values: personal responsibility, family value, community value, and cultural value, that are necessary for the development of good citizenship) is the core ingredient of the praxial philosophy, which makes it suited to be the philosophical framework of multicultural education. Another aspect of the praxial philosophy that makes it suited as the philosophical framework of multicultural education is what David Elliott (1995) describes as the concept of “procedural knowledge”: essentially, “the process of developing musicianship” (p. 54). To Elliott, the act of “listening” and “musicing” (the process of making music) “are mutually interdependent” (p. 103). Elliot (1995) states:

Music listening ought to be taught and learned in classroom situations that music teachers deliberately design to
approximate authentic musical practices . . . the name for this kind of teaching-learning situation is curriculum-as-practicum. A music curriculum based on authentic music making serves to contextualize and situate listenership and its component knowings (pp. 101-102).

“Listening” and “musicing” in a music education classroom may be likened to the engagement of ‘dialogue,’ and ‘getting along with everybody’ in a multicultural education class. Both concepts are quite indispensable in the development of citizenship in a multicultural democratic society. The benefit of dialogue in a multicultural democratic society cannot be underestimated. Paulo Freire (1993) states that “dialogical relationship that involves two or more people sharing equal spaces of conversation . . . affirms men and women as being in the process of becoming – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with likewise unfinished reality” (p. 84). Charles Taylor (1994) also observes that the “crucial feature of human life is its fundamentally dialogical character [through which] we become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our rich human languages of expression . . .” (p. 32). Furthermore, in his *Ethics of Identity*, Anthony Appiah (2005) explains that “it is through dialogue with other people’s understanding of ‘who we are,’ beginning at infancy, that we are able to develop a conception of our own individual identity” (p. 20). The above references point to the fact that dialogue is crucial to human development. It is a process of knowing one another, and of knowing more about oneself. Music listening employs careful attention to details; hearing the different parts of the whole; and understanding how all parts of the orchestra work together to render a sensational unity. ‘Getting along with one another’ is a product of the dialogical approach to learning. Important elements of ‘getting along’ are mutual co-operation,
mutual respect, mutual acceptance of one another, and mutual trust. Sparshott (1982) believes that praxialism has the power to achieve “consensual agreements among [multicultural] participants in particular universes of [socio-cultural] discourse” (p. 77). Bowman (2005) also observes that praxialism has the ability to foster “conversations and cultural events in which people engage one another with their own distinct voices; in which divergent experiences, values, and assumptions are shared with one another; in which interpretation and misinterpretation inevitably figure significantly” (p. 62). Dialogue is the essence of multicultural education and the important element of unity in a democratic society. Hence, it may be argued that the central element in praxial philosophy is dialogue -- being conceived in terms of equal participation -- which leads to the ultimate goal of human development, mutual respect, shared equal space, expression of individual responsibility, and ultimate commitment to national unity. Therefore, it may be argued that the ultimate goal of a praxial philosophical approach to multicultural education is respect for the inherent dignity and intrinsic value of all human beings.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This study was based on literature that presented a partial view of the issues related to multicultural education. It is hoped that the idea of the praxial philosophy proposed as the philosophical foundation of multicultural education in this study will yield scholarly responses and dialogical reflections on the tenets of praxeology as a key reform element in the multicultural education movement. Additional research is needed to ascertain the effectiveness of the praxial philosophy in redefining the school curriculum in an effort to achieving equality of educational opportunities for all. Further research is also needed to see if there are other philosophical concepts that may better
serve as the philosophical framework of multicultural education. Furthermore, a comparative study of the practices of multicultural education in the USA versus other multicultural states like Australia, Canada, Nigeria, and South Africa, may provide ample information about the existence of a possible philosophical framework as well as the practices of multicultural education, and the rights of minority cultures in those places.

The rationale that informs my adoption of the praxial philosophy of music as a philosophical foundation of multicultural education stems from the fact that music is both universal and multicultural in practical conception. Music is innately a cultural phenomenon. It exists in all cultures and serves the cultural need of its people. The close link with culture and music may make music’s praxial philosophy a strong candidate to serve as the philosophical framework for multicultural education. My philosophy of music education and my professional practice as a musician deeply informs my approach to multicultural education and to my teaching in general. I am committed to the study and practice of teaching and learning, multicultural education, and the importance of the recognition of all cultures for the study and practice of education throughout the world.
References


Hibbard, L. (2012). KKK banner found outside Rockingham County schools administration building. Huffington Post, posted 07/13/12.


Appendix A

Legislation to Promote Equalization

In 1965, the US congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (P.L. 89-10). The purpose of this act, and its corollary sections, identified by Title, was to improve the educational opportunities of all children in America (Reed & Bergemann, 1995, p. 188).

Title VII: Race and Ethnic Discrimination

Title VII (1974) of ESEA (P.L. 93-517) gave power to the Department of Health, and Welfare (HEW) and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to reshape aspects of the educational program such as classification practices, testing procedures, guidance and counseling programs, extracurricular activities, disciplinary procedures, special education, instructional methodology, and the curriculum in general in order to balance the schools racially. The purpose was to ensure that no student be discriminated against because of race or ethnicity (Reed & Bergemann, 1995, pp. 188-189). (Title VII of ESEA Racial balance in schools should be maintained – 1974).

Title IX: Sex Discrimination

Title IX (1975) of ESEA barred discrimination on the basis of sex in all aspects of employment in schools, including recruitment; leaves of absence; rates of pay and other compensation; fringe benefits; and tuition, training, and sabbatical assistance. Schools were prohibited from barring pregnant women or placing them in separate classes unless they specifically requested it. Schools were required to treat childbirth, termination of pregnancy, and recovery as any other disability. Pregnant women who left school had to be reinstated to the status they held before they left. Schools were prohibited from
discriminating against both women and men in their admission policies and in their classes. Physical education classes had to be integrated by sex but could be segregated for contact sports, but expenditures for women’s and men’s sport did not have to be equal (Reed & Bergemann, 1995, p. 189). (Title IX – Women’s Educational Equity Act – sex discrimination must be eliminated – 1975).

Equal Access

Even after winning a milestone of success against discrimination, the right of women to gain equal access to certain institutions has been challenged. For example, Shannon Faulkner’s admissions application to Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina, was accepted until it was discovered that she was a female. After her application was rescinded, Faulkner sued the state-run institution, and was declared eligible to attend by a court order (Reed & Bergemann, p. 193).

In 1978, Part C of Title IX (P.L. 95-561) known as Women’s Educational Act, was passed, and it states: The Congress finds and declares that educational programs in the United States, as presently conducted, are frequently inequitable as such programs relate to women and frequently limits the full participation of all individuals in American society. The Congress finds and declares that excellence in education cannot be achieved without equity for women and girls (Reed & Bergemann, 1995, p. 189).

The Handicapped and P.L. 94-142

The 1975 education for all Handicapped Children has been described as “the cornerstone of federal policies dealing with students who are mentally and physically disabled as well as those who are learning disabled” (Reed & Bergemann, p. 191). Disabled students have been described as “those who are mentally retarded, hard of
hearing or deaf, orthopedically or otherwise health impaired, visually impaired, speech impaired, or emotionally disturbed” (Reed & Bergemann, p. 191). The law calls for schools to provide “appropriate” programs, “Individualized Education Program” (IEP), “mainstreaming” such students into a regular classroom with non-handicapped students, and the removal of barriers such as stairways and narrow hallways that may impede students accessibility to a mainstream classroom (Reed & Bergemann, p. 191).

Education of the Disadvantaged

“The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the first federal legislation to extend equal educational opportunity to all Americans” (Reed & Bergemann, p. 190). Researchers and bureaucrats broadened the definition of the disadvantaged to include multicultural, bilingual, and disabled students (Reed & Bergemann, p. 190).

As a result, the 1968 Bilingual Education Act (P.L. 94-247) “began the trend to expand bilingual education in schools (Reed & Bergemann, p. 190). This legislation provided federal funds to those states with large numbers of non-English speaking students to develop and maintain bilingual programs, provision of needed equipment and materials, and to develop pre-service teacher training (Reed & Bergemann, p. 190).

This law was supported by the Supreme Court ruling, *Lau v. Nichols* (483 F.2d, 9th Cir., 1973) which stated that schools must help students who “are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible” because they do not understand English (Reed & Bergemann, p.190). In the same year, the Denver school system was required by the court in *Keyes v. School District No. 1, Denver* (414 U.S. 883, 1973) to develop a pilot bilingual-bicultural program (Reed & Bergemann, p. 190).
Title VI (P.L. 93-380) of the 1974 Civil Rights Act, called for instruction in two languages for children whose native tongue is not English. Federal aid would not be granted to schools that did not meet this provision:

Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, [it] must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency to open instructional programs to these students (Reed & Bergemann, p. 190).