

Reproduction of racialized hierarchies: Ethnic identities in the discourse of educational leadership

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Abstract

This case study focuses upon the (re)production and positioning of ethnic identities in the discourse of educational leadership as embodied in the official newsletter of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA). Specifically, this study focuses on the occurrence and positioning of ethnic identities found in the text of the UCEA Review. Ethnic or racialized social identities were largely absent in the discourse; of those that occurred, minority ethnicity was more likely to be attributed to children and students; while on the other hand majority (White/Anglo/Caucasian) were more likely to be made to adults. No ethnic attributions were made to leaders, administrators, or teachers. Given the prevailing racial stratification in our society, the history of the infantilization of minorities, and current efforts to end affirmative action, taken together with Henze's (2005) findings regarding the manner in which principals "see" minorities in relation to equity, the effect of the discourse found in UCEA is to (re)produce subaltern identities for minorities and promote an ideology for ending affirmative action.

Keywords: Leadership, Affirmative action, Ethnicity, Colorblind, Power, Discourse, Identity

Introduction

Pennycook (2001) indicates a need for critical research that seeks, "to incorporate views of language, society, and power that are capable of dealing with questions of access, power, disparity, and difference and that see language as playing a crucial role in the construction of difference" (p. 18). This study, therefore, focuses upon the (re)production of ethnic identities in the discourse of educational leadership as found in *UCEA Review*, the official newsletter of the prestigious University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA). Social actions and the power relations enacted through them are largely (re)produced and organized through discourse (defined here as the use of language within specific social contexts). As a social practice, discourse "both reproduces structures and has the potential to transform them" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 122). The role and structure of schooling in the United States makes the discourse of educational leadership particularly influential in the maintenance or transformation of disparities in power, in part through its construction of different social identities. This introduction briefly describes the sociopolitical context in which the language of educational leadership takes place and the relationship between schools, discourse, ideologies, and racial hierarchies.

Sociopolitical Context

My interest in the discourse of educational leadership began when I became a member of a department of educational leadership and policy studies four years ago. I was the only member whose doctoral training was in the social foundations of education. I was startled and continue to be nonplussed at the different perspectives that my colleagues trained in educational leadership bring to bear during our departmental discussions. Also, I began to better understand the difficult, yet pivotal, role of educational leadership for either transforming or reaffirming the status quo. As van Dijk (2001) writes, and as is the case in the discourse of educational leadership and this research, "theory formation, description, and explanation ... [is] sociopolitically 'situated' whether we like it or not" (p. 353). Being sociopolitically 'situated' means that the discourse is both influenced by the sociopolitical context and at the same time may act to change that sociopolitical context. Thus, if one wishes to understand the effects of discourse, one must look at the sociopolitical context in which it is produced and consumed. A sociopolitical context is always the product of history.

US racist practices, including discourse that promotes racism and racial stratification and exclusion, have been part of the US since its colonial period (see for example, Spring, 2004 or Ellis, 1996). Although enslaved people achieved legal emancipation in 1865 and *de jure* academic and social segregation of racialized groups was declared unconstitutional in 1954, legal and illegal as well as formal and informal means of subordinating ethnic minorities continues into the present (see for example, Santa Ana, 2002). Reasons for this continuing subordination can be traced to three dramatic and far-reaching changes that occurred after the closing of the "American frontier" during the Progressive era (roughly 1870-1920): 1) An increasingly economically and ethnically diverse citizenry due to the emancipation of African Americans and immigration from places other than western Europe; 2) the development of evermore hierarchical industrial relations and social stratification; and 3) the development and dissemination of Americanization practices.

These changes penetrated schools, which were also dramatically increasing the percent of children that they enrolled (in 1870 only 7% of 14-17 year-olds were enrolled, but by 1920 over 32% of 14-17 year olds were enrolled in school, Tozer et al. 2005); in addition the students enrolled were also increasingly diverse. Schools perceived problems with teaching an increasingly diverse student body and looked to business for solutions to these perceived problems; accordingly, they began to adopt the structures, practices, and discourse of industry which are inherently stratifying in nature (Pillow, 2000). Concurrent with these events was the proliferation of scientific racism, which purported to differentiate different races according to their degree of evolution--including "scientific" racist claims such as, people with African ancestries were less intelligent and less evolved and thus more infantile than Whites in both physical and mental aspects (see Gould, 1996). Furthermore, Americanization discourse and practices also penetrated the schools during this same period. The effect of these various factors was to (re)produce and make even more intransigent racialized hierarchical relations within schooling and social systems.

Ricento's study (2003) reveals that Americanization discourse began to predominate throughout the nation, including schools, during the progressive era and that strands of this discourse continue today. Americanization discourse was concerned with the construction of an "American" identity, an identity which was largely constructed as

Anglo; much of the Americanization discourse, such as that produced by then US Secretary of the Interior, Franklin Lane, constructed the "American" identity as Anglo in part by implicitly excluding all other identities except Anglos, a (Ricento, 2003). Americanization was not only imported into the schools, it was deemed by many to be the duty of the schools especially those schools whose populations were largely non-Anglo (see Spring, 2004). The discursive combination of an Anglicized American identity with proliferating hierarchical relations imported from industry combined in schools to re-enact and strengthen a racialized academic and social hierarchy.

This hierarchy has been and is pervasive throughout the United States' system of schooling, realized through a variety of practices. These practices include such activities as second generation segregation produced through the tracking of students and the ranking of students, teachers and schools through, for example, the increasing use of standardized tests (see Gabbard, 2000). Practices of this sort have been quite successful in facilitating the (re)production of identities (and attendant ideologies and practices) conducive to maintaining a racialized stratified society. Despite the fact that these hierarchical (re)producing practices are detrimental to students (e. g., Anyon, 1981; Oakes, 1985) and teachers (e. g., Louis, 1990; Spring, 2001), they have not only persisted, but, in fact, intensified during the last decade. The persistence and intensification of racialized academic hierarchies and their attendant practices are due to a number of factors. In this paper, I explore the micro-power relations enacted through the constitution and positioning of ethnic identities in the discourse of educational leadership.

Schools, Discourse, Ideologies, and Racial Hierarchies

Hierarchies are necessarily social in that the enactment of a hierarchy inevitably entails more than one being. Racialized hierarchical practices are achieved through intersubjective (shared) understandings, which are largely achieved through discourse, especially discourse that is widely disseminated. Intersubjective understandings must be achieved before collective actions can occur; and although intersubjective understandings can be achieved through nonlinguistic means, they are largely produced and maintained through discourse. Likewise, for the same reasons, changes in social understandings and hence practices can also be accomplished through changes in discourse. According to Foucault (1980b), power relations embedded in

social practices are manifested in the construction of specific identities, which in turn support those same power relations by making the social practices seem justified and reasonable. Thus, one of the ways in which hierarchical academic and social practices come to be constructed and construed as reasonable is through the discursive constitution of different identities - that is, the constitution of identities differentiated in a manner that suits them to operating within hierarchical systems.

Given the intransigent racialized hierarchical power relations of schooling and society, it is likely that educational discourse (re)produces ethnic identities appropriate to the different levels of academic and other societal hierarchies. And more importantly, if educational discourse constructs ethnic identities suited for hierarchical practices, then determining the manner in which it does so, allows us to begin changing the nature of educational discourse into one that constitutes more democratic identities. To have a full understanding of the manner in which power relations constitute social identities and relations, power relations must be examined at both micro levels and macro levels. Van Dijk (2001) notes:

Language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication belong to the micro level of the social order. Power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macrolevel of analysis. This means that CDA [critical discourse analysis] has to theoretically bridge the well-known "gap" between micro and macro approaches ... (p. 354)

Schools are one of the major venues whereby the micro-relations of power embedded in public texts are transmitted to and thereby help to constitute the various groups of society. The purpose of US schools is to impart the knowledge (or the public discourses) needed for future citizens to participate in the political economy (e.g., Tozer et al, 2002). From a Marxist perspective, the political economy of a society determines the discourses and groups of society (e. g., Wallerstein, 1988). That is, the political economy determines both the discourses of schools and the groups necessary to maintaining its functioning. Conversely, Foucault (1980a, 1980b) maintains that it is the micro-relations, such as those enacted by discourses, which determine identities and social practices out of which arise the macro relations of a society. Rather than positing micro-relations or macro relations as determinant, I concur with Pennycook (2001) and others who see them as co-determinant. Thus, the macro relations of

power are both constituted through the discourses of schools and at the same time constitute school discourses.

Discourse analysis, itself, has proceeded at both the macro propositional level (e. g., Gülich & Quasthoff, 1985) and at more micro levels such as the use of metaphor (e. g., Santa Ana, 2002). Micro levels of discourse may operate at a less than intentional or conscious level. An example of the micro level of discourse is the manner in which the male pronoun was formerly used whenever writing inclusively of females and males. Although all might understand this inclusive use of "he" as a simple writing convention, such conventions, when used in a patriarchal social context, (re)produce the primacy of men over women and help to make a patriarchal practices seem "natural" for both writers and the readers. So a person using this convention while explicitly espousing democratic relations between men and women, could implicitly background women, and by doing so, naturalize their subordination. Santa Ana (2002) illustrates a similar phenomenon in his analysis of metaphors used in public discourse. He observes that the choice of metaphor used to discuss certain issues and social groups influences public understanding of those issues and groups, sometimes in opposition to the actual macro propositions of the text. Furthermore, according to Scheurich & Young (1997), racism ranges from highly overt expressions to extremely subtle institutional expressions. Santa Ana's (2002) study indicates that the overt expressions of these sorts of biases have largely disappeared from mainstream public discourse such as major newspapers; however, more sophisticated and covert expressions remain and may be more effective for their subtlety. Thus, analysis of micro levels of discourse may help us understand the means by which unequal identities are covertly (re)produced through discourse. The present study begins at the micro level of discourse analysis, but connects this analysis to the meso relations of schooling and the macro relations of society.

The more pervasive a particular discourse is, the more it is able to shape public ideas concerning group identities and "members of more powerful social groups and institutions, and especially their leaders (the elites), have more or less exclusive access to, and control over, one or more types of public discourse" (van Dijk, 2001: 356). Therefore, given the pervasiveness, purpose, and hierarchical nature of schooling in the United States, it is likely that the discourse of educational leadership

(or administration) would be especially influential in the production and maintenance of disparate identities. The discourse of schooling is of particular importance in the production of disparate social identities, as it and the media are the primary means whereby common understandings are developed among U.S. citizenry; these shared understandings become the basis for social action. The importance of educational leadership programs is that they are the primary institutionalized means whereby the discourse of educational leadership is codified and passed onto future school leaders. In addition to creating school policies, school leaders translate federal policies into state policies and practices, into district policies and practices, and into local school policies and practices for teachers, staff, and students. Niranjana (1992) describes the relationship between language translation and power: "translation as a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power ... " (p. 2). And, "In forming a certain kind of subject, in presenting particular versions of the colonized, translation brings into being overarching concepts of reality, knowledge, representation" (Niranjana, 1991: 124-125 quoted in Pennycook, 2001: 14). Although Niranjana is writing about translating one language to another his statements apply to the translation of centralized schooling policies to more local and particularized schooling policies and practices. School administrators, who shape and are shaped by power relations, are those who do such translating and, as Niranjana (1992) indicates is the case in translating languages, the ideologies of educational leaders greatly influence the degree to which they reproduce or transform asymmetrical power relations in their translation of schooling policies. Their ideologies are, in part, an effect of their training in educational leadership programs. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to determine the power relations enacted through the constitution and positioning of ethnic identities by the discourse of educational leadership programs.

For the most part, the discourse of educational leadership within the United States has been unexamined (Henze, 2005), especially in regards to the sorts of identities it (re)produces. Educational leadership programs are one of the primary sites whereby the discourse of educational leadership is codified and passed onto future educational leaders. The UCEA newsletter is an ideal beginning point as it contains both formal and informal discourse. Therefore, this study examines the identities that are constructed through the *UCEA Review*. In particular, this examination will make explicit the differential construction of identities by investigating which ethnic

identities are (re)produced and which identities are not as well as the types of ethnic attributions made to particular identities.

Method

Data Source

The data sources used in this study are sampled issues of the *UCEA Review* from 1995 up to and inclusive of 2003. The University Council of Educational Administrators (UCEA) was formed in 1954 by Teachers College at Columbia University. UCEA institutional members include seventy major public and private research universities, sixty-nine in the United States and one from Canada. All UCEA member departments and associates receive *UCEA Review*, "its circulation is about 4500 per issue" (UCEA, 2004). UCEA's stated purpose is to "advance the preparation and practice of educational leaders for the benefit of schools and children" and "to create more effective pathways and networks for exchanging new understandings and better methods among persons working to advance educational administration" (UCEA, 2003). These goals are to be achieved by, "Promoting, sponsoring, and disseminating research on the essential problems of schooling and leadership practice; [i]mproving the preparation and professional development of educational leaders and professors; and [p]ositively influencing local, state, and national educational policy" (UCEA, 2003). Thus, the two explicit goals of UCEA are to affect the way that schooling, particularly the problems of schooling, is understood and to influence educational policies and practices. Such explicitly stated goals make the text of the official UCEA newsletter, given its influential positioning, an ideal beginning for the critical analysis of educational leadership discourse.

I received recent issues of the *UCEA Review* directly from UCEA; I acquired earlier editions from the UCEA (2003) website. I randomly selected two of the triennial *UCEA Review* newsletters issued each year from 1995 through and including 2003 for the purpose of analysis. *UCEA Review* primarily consists of three text genres: (1) announcements (jobs, upcoming events, awards, etc.), (2) research articles concerning educational issues, and (3) discussions of educational policies. The two genres examined in this study were research articles and policy discussions. The eighteen issues examined contained a total of fifty-six articles and policy discussions which

were analyzed in this study. The analysis of the UCEA Newsletters took place in five stages.

Analysis of Data

First, I read each of the discussions on policy and research articles. As I read the text, I highlighted or underlined each identity - except for given names (e. g., specific authors cited in a text) - used in the discourse; identities coded included, for example, *children, individuals, Latinos, teachers, departments, schools*, etcetera. I coded a total of 7460 instances of identities. In addition, characteristics explicitly attributed to each identity were also highlighted or underlined. Only humans, social groups, social institutions, or subgroups thereof were considered as identities. For example in the sentence, *Flowers lined the walk*. *Flowers* would not be considered an identity as it does not fit the above criteria. In the coding, if a social identity modified a non-entity (e.g., *child* in *the child's problem*) then it (in this case *child*) was considered as a separate identity, however, if a social identity modified another social identity (e.g., *children* in *children's families*), then it was considered an attribution. The following text excerpt provides an example of this step of the analysis:

For example, research shows that teachers consistently expect principals to shield them. While such groupings are usually and arguably based on student ability or interest, they also reflect differences in family background. For example, research shows that beginning as early as kindergarten, teachers place students in groups that closely correspond to students' socioeconomic background ... In addition, programs that provide students with breakfast and healthcare and their families with social services are aimed at buffering schools from conditions that can undermine their efforts to instruct students by minimizing uncertainties posed by hunger, poor health, and dysfunctional families' situations (Ogawa, 1996, p.12).

In the excerpt the identities recorded include: *students, schools, programs, principals, and family(ies)*. In addition, the characteristics directly attributed to each identity were also recorded. So in the above passage, *dysfunctional* and *their* are both attributed to *family* and *hunger* and *poor health* are attributed to *students*. Of these attributions only one, *dysfunctional*, was considered to be clearly evaluative and was entered on the table as a negative attribution. Although hunger and poor health are certainly not positive and certainly would be negative experiences they do not cast students in a

negative light. Thus, hunger and poor health were considered to be neutral attributions, not negative attributions.

Second, the results of the coding were entered on a spreadsheet. Each coded identity was recorded on the table as well as the number of times that it appeared. Singular and plural instances of an identity were recorded as the same identity (e. g., *teacher* and *teachers* were both counted as the same identity). In addition, each characteristic attributed to an identity was recorded as well as the number of times such an attribution was made. Only those attributions that were clearly evaluative were recorded as negative or positive.

Third, I calculated the prevalence of different identities and their various evaluative attributions. In all cases of calculation here and thereafter, numbers were rounded up to the nearest whole percent. I calculated the number of times each identity appeared against the total number of times all identities appeared in an issue to produce a percentage representation for each one. Then, the evaluative aspects of the attributions were calculated as a percentage. Each characteristic attributed was rated as positive, neutral, or negative. I calculated the ratio of positive attributions to the total number of evaluative attributions for each identity. I proceeded likewise for negative attributions. This calculation procedure was followed for all the data from the research articles and policy discussions of each of the eighteen issues. These data were represented on a table. Table 1 presents a sample portion of such a table representing such data.

Table 1
Sample section of Initial Analysis table of done for each Issue
Fall 1995 UCEA issue

Identities	#	Attributions	#	% pos	% neg	% occr
Leaders	5	Visionary	1+	14	0	3
		School	3			
		k-12	2			
		Such	1			
Faculty	36	Individual	4	10	0	21
		Recently hired	1			
		Veteran	1			
		Under age 40	1			
		Over age 50	1			
		Highly qualified	1++			
		Educational	6			
		leadership	6			

Note: The plus sign after *visionary* and *highly qualified* indicate that these attributions were recorded as positive. The other attributions were regarded as neutral. Since *qualified* was intensified by highly, it received two counts of positive.

Fourth, tables representing the data of each issue were collapsed into one overall cumulative table. This overall cumulative table was composed only of those identities that appeared one percent or more of the time in each issue. I also grouped some identities together. I grouped identities together that were used interchangeably in the *UCEA Review* (e.g., *author* and *scholar*). After grouping the identities, I averaged the percent of time in which the various identities occurred throughout the sampled issues and eliminated all the identities that did not appear one percent or more of the time overall. Other tables and figures were derived from this cumulative table.

While the institutions (e. g., schools, universities, districts) appear as nearly half (40%) of the identities in the *UCEA Review*, this analysis concentrates on social group identities that were constructed for people or groups of people (e. g., *leaders*, *students*, *Latinos*) rather than for institutions, systems, or programs; thus social group identities are the only ones that appear in the tables. In addition, pronouns and abstract unmarked social identities such as *individuals* or *people* are also not included in this table. In order to determine the relative prominence of the various social identities constructed in the UCEA Newsletters; the cumulative table was organized from greatest to least according to the percent of times identities occurred. From this cumulative table, I also organized the data to determine the average percentage of positive and negative attributions.

The fifth and final stage of analysis was not originally planned, but occurred because of the almost complete absence of ethnic identities in the sampled issues of *UCEA Review*. In order to index how these social identities were deployed, I calculated the rate that ethnic or racialized attributions were made to each of the social identities found in the overall cumulative table.

Results

In the text examined, the findings are as follows: (1) the term *students* occurred more frequently than any of the other identity terms, while ethnic or racialized social identities were largely absent in the discourse; (2) over fifty percent of minority ethnic attributions that occurred were to *children* and *students*; (3) on the other hand, majority ethnic attributions (White/Anglo/Caucasian) occurred less than fifty percent of the time to *children* and *students*; and (4) Of those identities that occurred at least

1% of the time and had negative and positive attributions, *leaders, administrators, professors, and principals* were most likely to be positively attributed, while *family, parents, practitioners, and students* were most likely to be negatively attributed.

Tables and figures depicting each of these findings follow:

Rate of Occurrence of (Re)produced Identities

Table 2 shows the percent of times each social identity occurred, ordered from greatest to least frequently occurring identities.

Table 2	
Overall Average Rate of OCCURRENCE	
Identities	% Occur
Pupils/ Student	8
Author/colleague/Scholar/ Researcher/Professor/	3
Children/Youth/Kids	2
Teachers	2
Leaders	2
Administrators	2
Superintendents/Principals	2
Members	2
Family	1

Parents	1
Practitioners	1
Faculty/Educators	1
	1
	1
*Only represents those identities occurring 1% or more of the time overall.	

Ethnic Attributions

Of the all the social identities, *students* and *children* were far more likely to have ethnic or racialized attributions than other social group identities. Table 3 shows the percentage of each ethnic or racialized attribution that was made to students or children rather than to the other social identities. On average sixty-nine percent of the minority attributions (e.g., *Latinos*, *Blacks*) were to *children* and *students*, but only forty-one percent of majority attributions (i.e., *White/Anglo/Caucasian*) were to *children* and *students* (see Table 3). In addition, far less than one percent of attributions of ethnicity are made to figures of authority such as *leaders* or *administrators*.

Table 3	
Percent Ethnic/Racialized Attributions Made to Children & Students	
Ethnic Attributions	% To Students & Children
Of Color	71
Minority	58
African American or Black	67
Latino	80
Caucasian, White or Anglo	41
Minority	Average = 69
Average Majority	Average = 41

Positive & Negative Attributions

Most attributions were neutral rather than evaluative. And overall, identities were more likely to be positively attributed rather than negatively attributed. The four identities with the greatest percentage of positive attributions were: *leaders* (11%), *administrators* (10%), *principals* (8%) and *professors* (8%). The four identities most likely to be negative attributed were: *family* (8%), *parents* (7%), *practitioners* (6%) and *Students* (3%).

Discussion

Given the racialized academic, economic, and social stratification that characterizes US society, it is likely that most discourse will differentially construct and position

ethnic identities. Specifically, I expected that in the *UCEA Review* minority identities would have more negative attributions than majority identities. However, I did not find this disparity; instead I found a near total silence in regards to ethnicity and that when ethnicity was part of the discourse, minority identities were more likely than majority identities to be attributed to *children* and *students*. In addition less than one percent of attributions of ethnicity are made to figures of authority such as *leaders* or *administrators*. Thus, this discourse, whether intended or not, re-enacts racialized academic and socioeconomic hierarchies that have predominated in United States since the colonial period; while at the same time promoting a "colorblind" ideology that encourages ending affirmative action efforts aimed at erasing such racial stratification. This section examines the implications of the findings concerning the identities (re)produced in the discourse and the attributions made to the different social identities. These results are explored in connection with the macro power relations of schooling and society.

Absence & (Re)Production of Identities

Undoubtedly, there are several identities that could have been (re)produced in the discourse of *UCEA Review* that were not. It is impossible to recount or even imagine them all. I was, however, expecting a differential construction of identity in regards to ethnicity; to my surprise, as independent identities, ethnicities were almost entirely absent. For example, *Latinos* as a group were rarely discussed nor were *African Americans*, *Native Americans*, or *Asian Americans* discussed much. Before discussing the identities that were (re)produced, I would like to discuss the implications of this striking absence.

Invisible Ethnicities

Only one issue of the *UCEA Review* (re)produced ethnic identities and that was only to a minor degree. Identities of *African American*, *White*, *Latino* and *Minority* appeared at a rate of one percent each in the spring 2001 issue. They appeared less than one percent of the time in all other issues examined. Asian Americans and American Indians and other ethnicities did not appear even one percent of the time in even one of the issues analyzed. Rather than being (re)produced as independent identities, ethnic or racialized identities occurred as attributions of other identities (for

example, *Latino children*), but even as attributions, they occurred less than one percent of the time overall. Thus, ethnicities were largely invisible in the *UCEA Review* discourse. Disparate positioning of ethnic groups within the social system cannot be problematized if they and their positioning are not opened as a topic of discussion. This silence is not limited to the written text of the *UCEA Review*. Rusch's (2004) research provides further support for such an interpretation of this strategic silence. She found that within UCEA member departments of educational leadership, "discourse about ... race is often limited or treated as a taboo subject" (2004, p14). Her findings coupled with the near absence of race or ethnicity in the *UCEA Review* would seem to indicate a pervasive rhetorical strategy of avoiding ethnicity within educational leadership programs. This discursive avoidance of race and ethnicity especially in regards to their differential positioning within schooling also has been noted in educational programs in Britain (Bowl, 2003). Furthermore, this silence is not confined merely to programs of Educational Leadership. In her interviews of principals of public schools, one of the strands of discourse that Henze (2005) found in regards to ethnicity and equity was a claim of being colorblind ... that is a refusal to recognize ethnicity as a factor. Thus as might be predicted there is a relationship between the discourse of educational leadership programs and educational leaders when it comes to race and ethnicity.

Such an avoidance strategy backgrounds ethnic and racialized groups, and makes the topic unimportant (Khalil, 2002). This omission of ethnicity from the discourse of educational leadership fits in with the historical patterns of marginalization, subordination, and oppression of minorities, a pattern that also made use of the rhetorical strategy of avoidance in regards to race and ethnicity (see Ricento, 2003). In addition this silence concerning ethnicity--especially ethnicity of educational leaders--is one that supports a colorblind ideology for ending affirmative action or even antidiscrimination laws especially in the current political climate.

Freeman (2005) notes that,

In rendering invisible the salience of race, the goal of colorblindness is to make advantage appear as the logical consequence of the natural order of things. The non-recognition of race as a form of political power tacitly enables the colorblind ideal to steer education policy toward the reinforcement of the dominant culture as the norm and the maintenance of the hegemonic social arrangements. The

insinuation of colorblindness into the culture of educational policy making ... suggests that substantive educational restructuring may not be part of the nation's racial agenda. (p.190)

I argue that when the discourse of educational leadership is largely silent about race or ethnicity, as represented in this study's findings, Rusch's (2004) findings, and Henze's (2005) findings, it reduces the salience of race and ethnicity (Kahlil, 2002) which supports an ideology of colorblindness if Freeman is correct. Such discursive tactics (whether intended or not) act to reify and further normalize the whiteness of educational leadership and the educational achievement gap between the dominant and minority ethnic groups. That is, if one ignores ethnicity when talking about achievement then the achievement gaps between minority and majority ethnic group disappears from discourse and becomes invisible. Instead what you have is a group of students who achieve differently. It is only by making ethnicity salient that one can point to an achievement gap according to one's ethnicity. Furthermore, supporting a colorblind ideology also supports a political policy of ending affirmative action policies and programs especially in the current national political climate.

The United States has recognized that a history of oppression and current racist practices continue to unfairly militate against the educational, socioeconomic, and political success of minorities. This recognition has been shown not just in national rhetoric, but programs and policies of affirmative action which are designed to ameliorate past and present injustices leading to ethnic stratification. However affirmative action programs and policies have increasingly come under attack at both the national and state level of legislation. Texas (whose former governor George W. Bush is now president of the United States) was one of the first states to legislate that government programs educational programs and scholarships cannot recognize or consider race as a factor in selecting participants - even national programs such as the McNair Program (whose mission is to increase enrollment of underrepresented groups in graduate programs) were forced to consider factors other than race or ethnicity when determining which groups were underrepresented in graduate schools. More recently the U.S. Department of Education publicized what it terms "race neutral alternatives for bringing about diversity through class rank, socioeconomic status, and other means" (Cavanaugh, 2003, p. 28). There are several other indicators that affirmative action policies and programs are under attack (e.g., the recent Supreme

Court case involving constitutionality of using affirmative action policies in university admissions). Thus the current political climate promotes ending the very programs which were designed to promote ethnic and racial equity and thereby dismantle racialized hierarchies.

Both those for (e.g., Eastland, 1996) and against (e.g., Chavez, 1998) ending affirmative action programs recognize that an ideology of colorblindness supports ending affirmative action policies and programs. The title of Eastland's book, *Ending Affirmative Action: The Case for Colorblind Justice*, bespeaks this relationship. Goodman (2004) notes that such a colorblind approach not only supports ending affirmative action programs but also leads to subverting antidiscrimination laws. Thus, the silence of the discourse of educational leadership in regards to race and ethnicity not only continues to support ideologies for the present racialized hierarchies, but also supports ideologies for ending affirmative actions programs.

Discursive rhetorical strategies of avoidance as a form of marginalization or subordination are much more subtle than overt negative attributions. However, as noted by Santa Ana (2002), such subtle institutionalized forms of racism (see also Scheurich & Young, 1997) may be even more successful in preventing the sort of transformation of schooling and society that would lead to more equitable relations of power between ethnic and racialized social groups. The text of the *UCEA Review* makes no explicit negative attributions regarding racialized or ethnic identities. However, in addition to rhetorical strategies of avoidance the sorts of social identities to which ethnicity and racialization are differentially attributed acts to (re)produce racial hierarchies.

The most commonly occurring ethnic or racialized attributions were: *of color*, *African American/Black*, *Minority*, *White/Anglo/Caucasian*, and *Latino* (organized respectively according to greater to lesser prevalence). In the text of the *UCEA Review* ethnicity is almost exclusively discussed in relation to *children* or *students*, and rarely in relation to *leaders*, *administrators*, or even *teachers*. Furthermore, minority attributions of ethnicity were far more likely to be attributed to subordinate identities such as children and students than were majority attributions of ethnicity (see Table 3). This pattern of ethnic group attribution fits with Gould's (1996) description of the historical ideology of the hierarchy of races, which represented

minorities as more childlike and less developed than white men and justified their disenfranchisement. Such a disenfranchisement is seen in the paternalism discussed by Fredrickson (1971) which acts to exclude minorities from decision-making. The pattern of ethnic and racialized attribution found in the *UCEA Review* text supports an ideology of racial hierarchies and at the same time an ideology that would eliminate affirmative action policies.

As noted previously, Foucault (1980a & 1980b) indicates that identities are both constituted by power relations and at the same time help to constitute power relations. Thus, (re)produced identities facilitate particular power relations. Foucault (1980a) also claims that dominant discourses fail to (re)produce identities that would disrupt power relations. His assertions seem to be borne out with this study's findings in regards to the construction of ethnic and racial identities. Thus, the pattern of the micro-power relations formed by the pattern of evaluative attributions in the discourse of educational leadership is one that supports the enactment and maintenance of racialized hierarchies. Given the near silence concerning race and ethnicity and the pattern of ethnic attributions that do occur, the emerging micro relations of power in educational leadership's discursive construction of identities further supports both academic and societal racial hierarchies. When ethnicity is (re)produced, it is largely in relation to *children* and *students* (who remain relatively equal in the positive/negative characteristics attributed to them). But, ethnicity is nearly completely disassociated from those in the upper echelons of the hierarchy (*leaders* and *administrators*) who, as compared to children, have a much greater percentage of positive attributions and fewer negative attributions. Thus, ethnicity is not associated with those who are in a superior position hierarchically, nor with those who also have the most positive attributions and relatively few negative attributions. When this study's findings are considered in light of Henze's (2005) and Rusch's (2004) findings, it becomes apparent that the discourse of educational leadership is, perhaps unwittingly, complicit in maintaining racial hierarchies of school and society. Given the importance of school particularly school leaders in the development of knowledge and ideologies of future citizens, the discourse used by school leaders and school leadership programs is particular influential (see van Dijk, 2001).

In sum, the discourse of the *UCEA Review* re-enacts many of the power relations found in the context of schooling and society. Ethnic identities are largely invisible, and when they are visible, ethnicities and racializations (except for White) are characteristics that are primarily attributed to subordinate identities such as children and students, not to leaders. Such a pattern does two things: It largely fails to open ethnic and racialized identities (especially their positioning in academia and society) as a topic worthy of discussion and, when it does, it limits such a discussion to children and students. This pattern of ethnic attribution is unlikely to bring about a more equitable positioning of ethnic social groups, but rather contributes to an ideology and practices that support racial stratification. If those constructing the discourse of educational leadership wish to help transform our schools and societies into more democratic ones with more equitable relations of power, they might attend to their discourse. For those in educational leadership who wish to constitute more equitable ethnic identities in their discourse, two suggestions emerge from this study. First, those in educational leadership should open up discussions of ethnicity, and second, ethnicity of educational leaders and administrators must become an open topic of discussion. Refusing to talk about such issues does not make them go away, rather it just promotes an ideology likely to exacerbate the educational, political, and social oppression of minorities. However, developing and maintaining such a strand of discourse in the discourse of educational leadership may help to bring about more equitable schooling and a more democratic society and help to end rather than being complicit in the perpetuation of traditional inequities.

Before ending this section one final point needs to be addressed. If race is a social construction whose purpose historically has been to create identities that differentially position groups of people along economic and sociopolitical hierarchies, then perhaps continuing to talk about "race matters" is to continue to reify race. If so, then perhaps one really ought to avoid mentioning race especially in regards to leaders. This is a tension that runs through this manuscript (see footnote 1). Pollock (2004) writes about this tension:

People connected to U.S. schools often do *not* say things "about race" very loudly, out of fear - a fear that is partly exaggerated and partly very important. It is regularly unclear when talking about people racially makes things better and when doing so

makes things worse - particularly because our race talk so often places blame for "problems" reductively *on* isolated "races" or reveals assumptions that racial inequality is either natural or someone else's problem. (p. 214)

At the end of her book, she gives thirteen guidelines for talking about race or ethnicity. Her first guideline, and presumably most important one, is that we begin all talk of race by recognizing that this is a social construct, not a biological fact. Rather than reviewing all thirteen guidelines, I would urge those engaged in the discourse of educational leadership to use those guidelines as they begin to integrate a ethnicity into their discourse, especially in relation to leaders.

This study is just the beginning of the analysis of educational leadership discourse especially in regards to the types of identities it produces and the types of power relations it (re)produces. Obviously this work needs to be extended in terms of the genre of texts examined (textbooks, curricula, actual conversations, etc.) and in terms of the discursive structures examined (metaphors, rhetorical strategies, delineation of the various competing strands of discourse, etc.).

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Notes

¹Rather than referring to race in this paper I tend to use the word ethnicity for two reasons. First, race is largely a social construction achieved through discourse, a discourse which falsely constructs race as a largely biological factor. Two continue to refer to groups of peoples as races tends to re-enact this false biological construction of race. Using the word ethnicity makes the social construction of those groups historically and currently referred to as races more transparent. I also use the term racialized as it also points to the social construction of races. At this point in time race

has been definitively shown to be primarily a social construction (see for example Briscoe, 2005 or Hausendorf & Kesselheim, 2002). So when I do speak of race, I am talking about a socially constructed aspect of identity. An identity which once constructed depending upon its construction encourages different sorts of understandings of the group so constructed, different sorts of understandings that lead to different sorts of policies and practices. So, race is not taken to mean a biological fact, but rather social designation.

² Although the discursive construction of gender is certainly of interest, this paper is focused on ethnicity only.

³For example it was suggested, by the department chair, that our department look to the College of business for guidance on how we should develop as a department. Given the history of schooling and business's dehumanizing influence on schooling, I was outraged, but my colleagues seemed to find such ideas completely digestible.

⁴Deciding upon what term to use in reference to ethnic groups that experience oppression was difficult. In and of itself using the term minority would seem to suggest numerically that this group is not as populous as other groups. Yet, when considered globally (or even just the western hemisphere) minorities are numerically the majority. However, minority suits the context of this article in two ways. First, oppressed ethnic groups are numerically the minority in the United States. Second some consider minority to apply to those groups with less power (whether measured in financial, social or cultural capital) to influence national or local policies The groups I apply the term to do have less power than the majority group in this second sense.

⁵For example, people may collectively understand they are in danger and start to run en masse without any discourse when confronted by an incoming tide of lava. They all share the same understanding (run or die), but this understanding was not brought about by linguistic means.

⁶I used a die to randomly determine which two of the three yearly publications I would include in the analysis. For each year of *UCEA Review* publication I rolled a die. After rolling the die, I selected the issues to be analyzed on the following basis:

"one" and "five" for spring, "two" and "four" for fall, "three" and "six" for winter). The exceptions to this process were the issues of 1995 and 1996. For these years, the UCEA archives only had two issues available.

⁷In fact, of the fifty-six articles analyzed in this study, one (McCarthy, 1995) even addressed the lack of ethnic diversity in educational leadership. But this was far less than two percent of the themes found and it was written about a decade ago before many of the anti-affirmative action laws had been passed.

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