

## Leadership for Social Justice: Social Justice Pedagogies

### Liderazgo para la Justicia Social: Pedagogías de Justicia Social

### Liderança para a Justiça Social: Pedagogias para a Justiça Social

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The relationship between educational leadership and practices of social justice is now entering its second decade with respect to empirical research studies. There have been three distinct research agendas: the first involves attempts to define the meaning(s) of educational leadership for social justice; the second is the descriptive documentation of school leadership behaviors which address social injustices and inequities within schools; and, the third focuses on the development of leadership preparation programs that include social justice as a curricular foundation. This paper is delimited to a review of literature documenting the relationship between social justice and leadership preparation programs, highlighting specific pedagogies, and building towards a curriculum. We take a chronological perspective moving from early theoretical conceptions of social justice to early studies on preparation programs and then focus on second generation empirical research centered on social justice pedagogies and curriculum development.

**Keywords:** Social justice, Social justice curriculum, Social justice pedagogy, Social justice andragogy, Educational leadership preparation.

La relación entre el liderazgo educativo y la práctica de la justicia social ha comentado una segunda década con respecto a los estudios de investigación empírica. Ha habido tres agendas de investigación diferenciadas: la primera se refiere a los intentos por definir cuál es el significado de liderazgo educativo para la justicia social; la segunda es la búsqueda de descripciones claras de los comportamientos de los líderes que se ocupan de las injusticias sociales y las desigualdades dentro de las escuelas; y, la tercera se centra en el desarrollo de programas de preparación para el Liderazgo escolar que incluyen la justicia social como eje del currículo. Este trabajo realiza una revisión de la literatura que documenta la relación entre la justicia social y los programas de preparación para el liderazgo en las escuelas. Desde una perspectiva cronológica, pasamos a revisar cuáles son las primeras concepciones teóricas de la justicia social y, a continuación, nos centramos en abordar la investigación empírica desarrollada en esta segunda generación de estudios sobre las pedagogías de la justicia social y el desarrollo del currículo.

**Descriptores:** Justicia social, Currículo para la justicia social, Pedagogía para la justicia social, Andragogía para la justicia social, Preparación de líderes educativos.

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A relação entre a liderança e a prática da justiça social educacional tem sido comentando a segunda década em relação a estudos empíricos. Houve três agendas de pesquisa distintas: a primeira refere-se a tentativas de definir qual é o significado de liderança educacional para a justiça social; o segundo é a busca de descrições claras dos comportamentos dos líderes que abordam as injustiças e desigualdades sociais dentro das escolas; e a terceira centra-se no desenvolvimento de programas de preparação para a liderança escolar, incluindo a justiça social no centro do currículo. Este trabalho é uma revisão da literatura que documenta a relação entre os programas de justiça e de preparação sociais para a liderança escolar. Do ponto de vista cronológico, revisamos o que as primeiras concepções teóricas de justiça social, então nós centramos na abordagem de pesquisa empírica desenvolvida nesta segunda geração de estudos sobre as pedagogias de justiça social e de desenvolvimento curricular.

**Palavras-chave:** Justiça social, Currículo para a justiça social, Ensinar para a justiça social, Andragogia para a justiça social, Preparação de líderes educacionais.

## Introduction

In this article, the authors examine how the many pedagogical/andragogical approaches to teaching social justice have resulted in different “ways of knowing” social justice. It is clear that if the goal of education is to provide the opportunity for all students to thrive both academically and socially, then there must be a democratically inclusive value of social justice undergirding any and all educational contexts (Counts, 1932; Dewey, 1888; Freire, 1971). Unfortunately, questions regarding the definition of social justice are easily confused with the educational processes of teaching, learning, and developing curriculum for the preparation of school leaders (Reyes-Guerra & Bogotch, 2011). This confusion is caused by the nature of both education and social justice where purposes, processes, and outcomes are all contextual, thus requiring educators to continuously assess the consequences of leadership actions in terms of social justice outcomes (Bogotch, 2002, 2008, 2014). Within this contextual dynamic, teaching social justice requires that educational leadership professors engage with students (aspiring leaders) to socially interpret and then re-construct school problems, practices and policies. The reality –socially, politically and economically– is that education is always practiced both in and out of schools across disparate material and social circumstances. However, when these disparate realities or unjust educational outcomes reflect patterns of discrimination and injustices in the wider society, it is incumbent upon educators to respond in opposition. Those are our professional, moral and legitimate discourses of practice. It is also what makes education wherever it is practiced political.

### 1. Early works in the development of school leadership for social justice

Two US publications in 2002 set the stage for the inclusion of social justice into the field of school leadership: a special issue of the *Journal of School Leadership* edited by Margaret Grogan and the 101st Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education edited by Joseph Murphy. A third text, a 2010 edited book by Autumn Tooms (now Cypres) and Christa Boske titled *Bridge Leadership: Connecting Educational Leadership and Social Justice to Improve Schools* provided the field with

personal reflective narratives describing this early stage in the development of leadership for social justice.

It is important also to understand that during this period not just its preparation programs but the field of educational leadership was under severe criticisms by practitioner associations, accrediting agencies, as well as prominent scholars (Levine, 2005). These criticisms created a space for a group of scholars under the leadership of Professor Catherine Marshall from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill to begin a rethinking of the field using social justice as a theoretical lens. Thus, following from the 2002 publications cited above were a number of alternative pedagogical models for the preparation of school leadership for social justice. Not surprisingly, it was another professor from UNC-Chapel Hill, Kathleen Brown (2004) who first addressed the issues of changing leadership preparation program content, course delivery, and student and program assessment. Her curricular and pedagogical strategies were aimed at increasing social justice awareness and the acknowledgement (of injustices) followed by a commitment (a call) to action. Among her classroom strategies were critical reflections (cultural autobiographies, life histories, reflective analysis journals), learning theories (adult learning, transformative, and critical social theory), and policy praxis (prejudice reduction workshops, cross cultural interviews, diversity panels, and activist action plans). Brown sought to engage aspiring school leaders in assignments that required examining assumptions, cultural and epistemological, and learning about competing worldviews.

In an empirical assessment of her effort, Brown herself (2006) studied 40 pre-service leaders looking at the effect of transformative learning strategies on the participants' attitudes toward educational diversity. Qualitative methods were then used to describe how the participants' beliefs and abilities connected to their theories and practices. Based on her findings, she recommended the direct teaching of critical social theory and its influences on re-defining the purposes of schooling. At no time, however, were the more traditional subjects of finance, law, personnel and other school managerial operations removed from the school leadership curriculum.

Also that same year, 2006, Capper, Theoharis and Sebastian published a curricular, pedagogical, and assessment framework for teaching leadership for social justice. Their focus was on teaching of critical consciousness tied to practical applications in a bi-directional way, meaning that program components of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment be taught in an emotionally safe environment. The university classroom needed to reduce the risk for students as they moved through critical consciousness and the knowledge and skills needed for social justice leadership development. As a program faculty, the authors argued that it was important to study student outcomes so as to inform the continuous improvement of the leadership preparation program.

In 2008, Fenwick English asked the following question:

*Beyond making them [aspiring school leaders] historically aware of the policies and practices which have defined, implemented and perpetuated social injustice in schools, what actions would they take to not only undo them, but work towards re-conceptualizing what schools do to create a more socially just society in the future? (pp. 113-114).*

English argued that professors and students needed a deeper understanding of the underlying theory of social injustices. Such a theory, according to English, requires that students and educational leaders engage in discourse beyond school and enter "the larger socio-economic arena to confront social concepts, beliefs and practices which

perpetuate social injustice” (pp. 114–115). That is, it is not enough to acknowledge social injustices (and complain or protest); rather, leadership for social justice has to “root out the mental models which often anchor socially unjust practices” (p. 145) embedded in economic and political dynamics. Thus, English’s call for action is, first and foremost, a call for a theory of social injustice in order to transform schools in society as they currently are – which serves the “the prevailing ideologies, the current politics, and the dominant economic interests....” (p. 145). For without a theory of social (in)justice (Bogotch & Shields, 2014), the world of schooling is all we [i.e., educators] see and experience, making ideas such as democracy and inclusive relationships seem impossible given current politics and educational policies.

English’s (2008) analysis of social power as a theory revealed that any particular injustice was not historically or morally determined; therefore it was neither fixed nor permanent. In other words, the injustices that we experience in our lives can not only be addressed, but also be overcome, politically, economically and socially, by leadership. The same temporal and contextual meanings which Bogotch (2002, 2014) had ascribed to the definition of “social justice” were, according to English, true for “social injustices.” In both instances, the experiences of social justice and social injustice are very real, and therefore subject to human intervention and change.

All university disciplines expound theories and frameworks. But we are still left with the question of how social justice is embedded in educational theory and how exactly should it be taught in universities. Beginning in 2004 and up to the present, Professor Carolyn Shields has advanced ideas on a leadership theory that strives to both understand educational theory and social justice. She wrote in 2014 that what distinguishes her theory of transformative leadership is that “it does not begin with either the leader or the organization but with an examination of the wider society and the material realities (including disparities and inequities) that impinge upon the ability of individuals to succeed within the organization and on the organization’s ability to attain its goals” (p. 326). This is what English (2008, p. 115) called the critical exteriorities which describe the larger societal or beyond school conditions (see also Foster, 1986). These conditions affect (promote or prevent) not only good teaching and moral leadership within schools, but also social justice beyond schools. Shields (2014) wrote:

*Because transformative leadership’s goal is to transform both the experiences and outcomes of schooling and the inequities in the wider society, it is ... the most appropriate vehicle for advancing social justice goals – goals that the theory deems to be foundational to attaining high intellectual and academic goals as well. (p. 326).*

The tenets of transformative leadership, according to Shields (2014:333), have been summarized as follows:

- Mandate to effect deep and equitable change
- The need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate the inequity and injustice
- A focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice
- The need to address the inequitable distribution of power
- An emphasis on both private and public (individual and collective) good
- An emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness and global awareness
- The necessity of balancing critique with promise
- The call to exhibit more courage

Shields argues that these tenets collectively serve as a purposeful guideline, a touchstone upon which to reflect and act as leaders for social justice. For a leadership theory to be truly practical, however, it has to be embedded in the work of school leaders. Mary Green (2014) describes a particular critical incident in her own life as school system administrator in Canada that demonstrates this:

*In the midst of hurried timelines, long days, and strained relationships, miscommunications resulted and mistakes occurred. Some people were left out of meetings they should have attended and there was little time to offer meaning background information and rationale for some decisions that were made. District policies and practices were inconsistent, contradictory, and even unpredictable. Many of us felt we were “flying by the seat of our pants” and struggling to keep some semblances of order for ourselves and other as we attempted to disassemble one system and recreate another. I wanted to care for people, accept their challenges and differences of opinion, and achieve as much “success” together as we could, but achieve that goal was impossible. My perceptions of myself and my priorities were transforming as much as our school system was. I realized back then that I was working in a position and in ways that conflicted with my personal beliefs and values. I was so absorbed in the turmoil ... (p. 165)*

Green (2014) takes us inside the daily life of a school leader and raises questions about values and beliefs, both personal and professional. The specific details of her dilemma illustrate and validate our own lived experiences within schools and school systems. The question here is whether we have a social justice theory that (1) can guide our decisions and actions, and (2) makes a social and material difference not only to the school employees, but also in the lives of others. Green's self-reflection reinforces the idea that we discover a social justice theory-in-action as part of our practices and that this is how we ought to teach leadership for social justice within preparation programs.

### **1.1 Beyond school and back into schools**

Confronting what English (2008) called critical exteriorities, that is, social, economic and political conditions which affect social justice, school leaders are not alone. That is, the need to identify critical exteriorities is relevant to all of social science disciplines. During the last century, sociologist Norbert Elias conceptualized foundational aspects of sociology which include the terms ‘civilizing’ and ‘decivilizing’ processes and figurational sociology. Relevant to the understanding of English's critical exteriorities, social justice leaders need to understand the concepts which Elias tried to expose: problems of restraint, a relational theory of power, and the formation and transformation of groups and their identities. According to Rundell (2005):

*... introduces the notion of civilizing processes as a corrective to three images and intellectual paradigms that have dominated the human and social sciences, whether they are imbedded in philosophy, sociology, or psychology. These three images and intellectual paradigms are methodological individualism, systems theoretic approaches, and units of analysis that place the emphasis on the investigation of the immediate present. Elias develops a three-dimensional counter-paradigm of civilizing processes that concentrates on the following aspects of human association: relational and power interdependence between social actors, which dissolves the distinction between individual and society; the interrelation between processes at the levels of social development and psychologically located drives and affects; and change and innovation over time. (pp. 3-4).*

Elias's critique and paradigmatic shift is precisely what educational leadership scholars like Foster, English, and Shields have said is necessary theoretically for educational leadership; that is, we must extend our into intellectual paradigms beyond the delimited arena of schools and enter into the complexity of human associations in order to understand relational and power interdependence, social and psychological

development, and history –all topics viewed as outside school improvement research. It should be noted that leadership researchers continue to build upon previous studies, incorporating seminal literature from philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences (Normore & Brooks, 2014). Nevertheless, the literature, for the most part, seems delimited to what English (2008) labels as schooling interiorities, suffering then from the same fanciful theories and false assumptions that by addressing the interiorities, reformers will also address social justice. As such, leadership preparation programs continue to focus almost exclusively on leadership standards and accountability mandates, particularly in the US.

We must ask: where in today's leadership preparation programs do we find deep discussions on the purposes of education as art, experience and democracy articulated by John Dewey, which also encompasses a love for education which is at the heart of Paolo Freire's writings, and a place for the human imagination to blossom within the curriculum as envisioned by Maxine Greene? Where in leadership for social justice do we align with the assessment of Elliot Eisner (2002), that "the function of schooling is not to enable students to do better in school. The function of schooling is to enable students to do better in life"? How could we have come to the shortsighted conclusion that by improving student scores on achievement tests that this outcome will somehow address the profound issues of social (in)justices? The answer to the latter question is often approached as follows: in the US and elsewhere, school leadership preparation programs are mandated by law, policy and regulations to address today's political realities which in today's neo-liberal environment are centered on and driven by standards and accountability measures.

Conversely, we take the position that social justice can and should operate within the traditional knowledge and skills of school management, but, in so doing, bring social justice to these traditional approaches as a necessary purpose of schooling which requires a broader knowledge-base and different skillsets for future school leaders. Educationally, this broader knowledge-base and different skillsets also reflect changing demographics, new technologies and social media, and cultural contexts. Integrating the social justice purposes of public education to already existing academic and socio-cultural theories is the goal of leadership for social justice. In today's world, more than ever, what goes on outside the school building is relevant to building an excellent curriculum and instructional program. All this is to say that "the long-established technical and professional knowledge and skills needed to manage schools must work with pedagogical leadership, advocacy leadership, community leadership, transformative leadership and innovative conceptual leadership" (Nicholson, 2014:1209). It is important to know that one cannot successfully bend or break rules without first having a firm grasp of the knowledge of "what is." Thus, the bringing together of leadership for social justice and management is commensurate with academic excellence.

### ***1.2. Defining Social Justice as ... confronting the "harder truths" of school leadership***

It was Malcolm Gladwell (2008) who popularized a 1993 psychology study by Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer regarding the number of hours needed to become an expert. Through a combination of natural talent and deliberate practice, it is possible to become an expert in playing and teaching of the violin, assuming one started in childhood, with a minimum of 10 years. This is where the average of 10,000 hours entered the discussion. But what relevance has this to school leadership, or for that matter becoming

an expert teacher when the learning of skills involved begin in adulthood? In the absence of any quantitatively valid findings, we turn to an educator with expert credentials, Larry Cuban. He writes in his blog, not in a peer-reviewed journal, the following:

*Only by the end of the fourth or fifth year of teaching do most newcomers become competent and confident in figuring out lessons, knowing the ins-and-outs of classroom management, and taking risks in departing from the routines of daily teaching. Of course there will be variation among teachers in whether it takes five years or less, depending upon the person and the setting. Nonetheless, by that time, most teachers will have mastered the craft. They will have developed a repertoire of practices that fit their subject and students, and, by the end of four or five years, can make substantial changes in classroom structures and lessons* (Cuban, April, 20, 2010)

Using the kind of math associated with ideas written on the backs of envelopes, Cuban estimates five to six years to become an expert. Assuming that learning the skills of school leadership are above and beyond the skills of teaching, then we should add another five years to the equation. Importantly, the duality of being both a skilled school manager and a transformative leader, the two main components of school leadership, must be learned. If so, then how many more years might it take to become a moral leader (Sergiovanni, 1992), a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1970), a democratic leader (Apple & Beane, 1995) or a transformative leader/leader for social justice? (Shields, 2014). Adding any of these educational leadership purposes to leadership thinking and behaviors requires that we enhance management learning on how to run schools, how to maximize student learning, and how to fulfill accountability requirements (all hard work to be sure) with leadership learning aimed at transformation. Adding new educational leadership theories to leadership qua leadership may be, therefore, beyond the scope of what is viewed as legitimate school leadership preparation by those steeped in the regressive notions of educational leadership as non-transformational.

We begin with the hard truths that school leadership is difficult and complex regardless of which theory-in-action is applied to it. It is hard to be good at anything in education; it is even harder, therefore, to be outstanding. It is understandable, therefore, why dedicated and committed educators who put all of their energies, mentally and physically, into building a good school would be hesitant –if not also resistant– in confronting social injustices beyond their school buildings. Where will the extra time come from, they ask? Time is definitely a major factor – teachers and administrators typically put in 12 to 16 hours days. Organizationally, there are school systems and governmental authorities which have rules prohibiting teachers and administrators – within the scope of the law– from community and social engagement, if such work is seen as being in any way political. It will not be easy to overcome the factors of time, systems, and politics. It will not be easy to go from hard truths to leadership for social justice.

Nevertheless, students and leaders for social justice have themselves come to understand that there is an urgency to the social, economic and political agendas such that any delay in addressing injustices will have consequences for one or more generations of students and teachers are not adequately served within-schools. When it comes to leadership for social justice, the assumption that we begin with is that being good or outstanding [or even world class] is not sufficient. The pathways to good, outstanding and world class must also travel the pathways to social justice and that becomes the harder truths of leadership. If years of study and experience matter, and they do, then it is imperative

that the study of leadership for social justice begin as early in one's career as possible, perhaps even before one enters a graduate university leadership preparation program. That said, the focus of this review of literature is delimited to graduate leadership preparation and development only.

The key point is to differentiate between becoming competent, good and moral (i.e., mastering the knowledge and skills of managing the learning environment, school reform and change, and school improvement) and the knowledge and skillsets of practicing harder truths of leadership for social justice which we identify as human development indices across health, education, and fulfilling human potential. Within the latter skillset we include understanding and negotiating problems of poverty, race, and discrimination and their intersections with student achievement (Shields, 2014).

To repeat, we do not minimize how hard it is to become competent as a teacher or teacher leader or a school leader; yet, the goal for leadership for social justice requires that school leaders also be able and willing to address social, political, and economic injustices (as the harder truths) while on-the-job. The knowledge base for learning the harder truths often travel through philosophy (i.e., theories of justice, political theory and ethics), social theories, and economic theory. In each instance, the learning involves an intense study of theory, a study which has not been widely accepted by professors or practitioners in the field of school leadership – particularly in the US (Starratt, 2014). Educational theorists such as those who contributed to the text *Radicalizing Educational Leadership: Domains of Social Justice*, (2008) made their cases for why a “theory” of social (in)justice is relevant to everyday practices.

## **2. Initiating moves (Pedagogies) and pathways (Curricula) to leadership for social justice**

Second generation research on leadership for social justice that focuses on leadership preparation were published in the *International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Social (In)Justice*, Part VII “Leadership preparation as intervention.” edited by Bogotch and Shields (2014:1105-1246). This body of work represents seven unique reviews of literature and studies, authored by 15 US and international researchers. Each study presents arguments for why and how school leadership need to be re-conceptualized beyond policies, standards, and accountability measures. They position themselves in reference to the hegemonic thinking which still dominates the field of educational leadership. This recent literature has been analyzed as interconnecting themes triggered by initiating moves for pedagogy (Bellack, Kliebard, Hyman & Smith, 1966) which are then used as pathways to curriculum inquiry and development defining the practices of leadership for social justice. Initiating moves are those that begin the pedagogical interaction between teacher and learner, either by directly defining context for the learner or soliciting response from the learner.

Social justice pedagogical/andragogical initiating moves have related purposes in mind, such as initiating difficult and courageous conversations (Dodge & van Wyk, 2014), raising consciousness (Mullen, Young, & Harris, 2014), identifying barriers to implementing alternative ideas and theories of leadership (Theoharris, 2007, 2010), understanding and appreciating differences (Boske, 2014), initiating transformative adult learning (Mezirow, 1978), and addressing resistance and attitudes towards

subordinates (McGregor, 1960). These initiating moves are not only meant to raise consciousness, but also to deliberately create spaces, tensions, paradoxes, dilemmas etc. in order to allow for deeper reflections on social, political and economic problems.

From the perspective of an educational researcher, the initiating moves and pathways need to be described carefully through qualitative methods (Donmoyer, 2014; Theorharis, 2007, 2009). Yet, their use in university courses, scholarly conversations, and programs are difficult to isolate as standalone variables, however that difficulty does not mean that researchers ought not try to apply sophisticated measurement theories and construct validation methods to study of curricular and pedagogical pathways to leadership for social justice (Bogotch, Schoorman, & Miron, 2008; Donmoyer, 2014; Kose, 2009). We say this to point out the still existing methodological limitations in all leadership for social justice descriptive studies to date.

The first initiating move we identify here is the use of already existing educational theories to apply to the study of leadership for social justice. Feldman and Tyson (2014) offer such an approach to teaching leadership for social justice. The authors first assert that school leaders are woefully underprepared to negotiate problems of equity and social justice. However, to be prepared involves the study of more than one theory and the learning of more than one skillset. Their aim in teaching and applying multiple theories is to raise students' consciousness. The four theories they identify are: anti-bias education, critical pedagogy, multicultural education and Whiteness studies. Feldman and Tyson define the concepts underlying each theory, and then ask students how these theories-of-action can be applied to the practice of school leadership – strategically and intentionally.

Here is an example they offer with respect to anti-bias education:

*Learning caused by the careful construction of discomfort and its resolution. Identity development follows a developmental continuum of intra/interpersonal psychological processes that lead to anti-oppression activism. Enactment requires that leaders have fully developed racial identities. The graduate school leaders need to understand the theory and practice of the program and fully support it when students complain about the discomfort of identity crisis. Internships [in the program] must be reconceived. [not just more hours] (p. 1115).*

They assert that the professors teaching in this program must be highly skilled in facilitating socially constructive conflict engagement. They are certainly correct in identifying this requirement which may in and of itself give pause to faculty wanting to follow Feldman and Tyson's approach. This issue is even more in play with respect to the teaching of Whiteness studies. Feldman and Tyson write as follows:

*Address race and the system of advantage based on race and the central rationales that stabilize the system of advantage based on race. Resist becoming another way to draw attention to whiteness and to locate whiteness back in the center of leadership. Foster awareness to end racism by exposing whites to their own history, politics, and identities. Awareness is understood as fundamental to inspiring a moral imperative to act for just purposes. (p.1121).*

Words such as “understand,” “awareness,” “discomfort,” “conflict,” “identity,” “advantage,” “resistance,” “locate,” etc. – are closely tied to problems of race (Whiteness), poverty, politics, and ethics. We would ask, can these terms be learned in a single leadership course, in a leadership preparation program or by experiences in practice, over time? Further, are there faculty in the field today who can teach such a theory(ies)?

What Feldman and Tyson are doing is creating tensions for students in order to create spaces for self-reflection and consideration of alternative new leadership actions. They do so in a university setting, not in actual practice. The assumption is that by experiencing tensions and learning how to think critically while in this safe classroom space, the pedagogies will allow future leaders to further develop consciousness and then use these skills in their future practice. These are some very big assumptions. But what applies to students also apply to university faculty in terms of their knowledge and preparedness to facilitate this learning. Unlike many other disciplines, educational leadership is a professional study that is best learned through the interactions of theory and practices. Neither leadership nor social justice can be served by academic study alone.

### ***2.1. Working inside tensions***

Working within tensions is often antithetical to current leadership practices and may in some school situations be perceived as being a poor leader (Feldman & Tyson, 2014). That is, even as tensions and conflicts are part of the everydayness of school leadership, “best practices” and other mandated educational reforms make the tensions (dilemmas, paradoxes, and contradictions) invisible. Mary Green (2014) in her book *Caring Leadership in Turbulent Times*, cited earlier, used a quote by Blackmore and Sachs (2007) to emphasize how the absence of tension has been a deliberate construction of educational reformers:

*Leadership during educational reform was linked to hard-nosed aggressive and authoritarian behavior, stereotypically masculine. The management paradigm mobilized during the 1990s was about reengineering education in “hard line” ways, promoting images of being tough, entrepreneurial, and decisive, sidelining the human costs, and utilizing demoralizing and dehumanizing strategies of downloading responsibility, downsizing organizations, and outsourcing or casualizing core work. (Greene, 2014:132).*

In other words, under today’s standards and accountability measures, the role of the school leader is still to manage a traditional school which runs smoothly without acknowledging the unintended consequences and human costs created by the school system itself. The role of the traditional school leader is to find and eliminate within-school obstacles that cause some students to struggle to learn. School leaders are told to “turn around” their schools and restructure the learning environment, the learning experiences, and the learning outcomes in order to keep their jobs (Knapp & Copland, 2004; Portin et al., 2009). But the realities of tensions, dilemmas and contradictions have been ignored.

Blackmore (2009) argued that at the policy level, there is a “refusal to address the structural and cultural factors that will make a difference” (p. 4) in practice. The invisibility can apply to leaders’ own self-reflections of their values and identity and the identities of others with whom the work and teach. In other words, people are not seen for who they are racially, ethnically, economically, etc. Johnson and Campbell-Stephens (2014), citing Lumby and Heystek (2012) reported that the White school leaders in their study tended to ignore issues of race, even when their school had experienced dramatic demographic changes. The changes did not result in how leaders viewed themselves and others differently nor did it reveal exclusionary practices in their schools. Therefore, many researchers engaged in teaching leadership for social justice assert that leadership development programs should encourage aspiring leaders to reflect on their own cultural/racial identities and confront the meanings of terms such as “colorblind” which

disregard racial identities and diversity. And yet, paradoxically, Johnson and Campbell-Stephens (2014) found that white school educators believed just the opposite! That is, to see race is to be a racist.

Hence, faculty have to help aspiring leaders understand how race creates diversity of lived experiences and, for white educators, to reflect on their own taken-for-granted institutionalized privileges (see Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). In so doing, it becomes a leadership responsibility to attend explicitly to how systems perpetuate inequities and disparities.

These tensions, argues Christine Forde (2014), often emanate from the mismatch between policies and practices.

*... there remain significant tensions which relate partly to assumptions about the egalitarian nature of public education and the continued existence of persistent social marginalization and poverty. Tensions are partly to do with the role of school leaders and the enactment of government policy. (p. 1131).*

In concluding this subsection on working inside tensions, Nicholson (2014) quotes Meyerson's (2001) on her description of the 'tempered radical': "operat[ing] on a fault line...organizational insiders who contribute to and succeed in their job," yet continuously work to insert "ideals and agendas that are somehow at odds with the dominant culture" (p. 5). Tempered radicals live with a continuous tension between conformity and rebellion and they engage a spectrum of strategies to inspire positive change varying according to their intended scope of impact, from a few people to the provocation of large-scale learning and change, and their level of visibility, from public and pronounced to stealthy and covert. While some actions are almost invisible and therefore, do not result in strong opposition, others manifest more publicly and incite strong resistance and disapproval. The promise of Meyerson's continuum ranging from "resisting quietly and staying true to one's self" to "broadening impact through negotiation" "leveraging small wins" and "organizing collection action" is the inclusivity in defining how individuals contribute to social change. Meyerson's theoretical understanding of change is emergent and continuous, responsive to "little prods" that catalyze adaptation versus episodic and dramatic transformations.

Meyerson's views of organizational and social change...

*... makes room for lots of normal people to effect change in the course of their everyday actions and interactions. It is an inclusive model that sees people on the margin as well as the center making a difference in a wide variety of ways. Change agents are not just those characterized by bold visions and strategic savvy, but also those characterized by patience, persistence, and resourcefulness. In this model, change agents are sensitive improvisers who are able to recognize and act on opportunities as they arise. This view of change and change agents is less dramatic, less inspiring and less breathless than portraits of grand transformation and revolutionary leaders. It is also more inclusive, more realistic and more hopeful for most people who care to make a difference in their worlds. (p. 13).*

Meyerson's theory, like many other pedagogical approaches to change, starts with the self or as Generette, Perry, & Henderson (2014) note, those closest to you. It is, however, at the next stages beyond self-reflection that actually determines whether a leader will obey, comply with fidelity, or resist the policy, directive or dominant discourses. When this phenomenon is shared with others relationally who have similar thoughts and values, then there is greater self-and collective efficacy and courage in taking further actions. According to Nicholson (2014):

*Meyerson's conceptualization of leadership as embodying a continuum of strategies for change provides an inclusive space for working across diverse sectors and wide-ranging roles. In short, the admitted blank spot of transformative leadership theory, that is, everyday practice, can be embedded as theory into practice for leadership for social justice. (p. 1213).*

## **2.2. From tensions to spaces**

One central purpose for simulating tensions in a university classroom is to identify spaces within the current school systems for critical reflections and alternative ideas. According to Mullen, Young and Harris (2014), by having to struggle with self-reflections personally, professionally, and communally, aspiring leaders can begin to make sense of work situations in socially just ways which create spaces for change. The question – as is always the case in terms of “reflective practice” (Schon, 1983) – is reflection on what? Forde relates a survey of headteachers in Scotland conducted by Woods, Woods, & Cowie, 2009: 246) which indicated that as school leaders, 62 percent wanted more time for reflection on their values:

*Time for reflection can be for the individual but can also comprise periods of shared reflection in which a group of headteachers take time out to consider and re-evaluate their principal values, as one headteacher found with his preparation for headship (that is in the SQH). (p. 1133).*

Forde then makes another important contribution to the literature:

*However we need to interrogate this idea for it seems to suggest that social justice is simply a matter of understanding the needs of each child and addressing these. It is at this point that the tensions between policy discourses, around ‘getting it right for every child’ ‘achievement for all’ and ‘realising full potential’ need to be exposed and interrogated particularly in a context where the high accountability regimes still largely focus on attainment data related to public examinations. (p. 1136).*

Forde concludes that constructing leadership in terms of influence and pedagogy while vital aspects of any program are not sufficient in themselves. She writes:

*... not only to understand and articulate values related to social justice, equality and fairness and to appreciate the dilemmas posed in seeking to work towards these but to use these principles to challenge structures and practices which create barriers to learning. (p. 1141).*

Her insights parallel those of other educational leadership researchers such as Theoharris (2010) and Mullen (2008). Theoharris found that the strategies used by school principals who challenged specific injustices also had more fundamental purposes in mind needed to reshape school experiences. Such fundamental purposes involved challenging practices in relation to “school structures which marginalize, segregate and impede achievement” (p. 341), developing and empowering staff in their role in promoting social justice and creating an ethos which was inclusive particularly for marginalized families. No one should underestimate the complexity of these tasks nor the risks involved with leadership for social justice.

Nevertheless, creating imaginative spaces for pedagogical work undergirds liberation critiques (Mullen et al., 2014). According to Karanxha, Agosto, and Bellara (2014), professors need to provide a more complex understanding of social justice theory at both the micro and macro levels. One cannot take a singular approach to education for social justice. What is needed is to pedagogically unpack theories, grapple with tensions, and inspire a more socially just/anti-oppressive relationship among educators, students and communities. In giving attention to the multiple theories related to social justice,

professors working in these spaces can add to theories-in-action (Feldman & Tyson, 2014).

Breakthroughs in transformative learning have occurred for students when professors make space for interrogative dialogue that questions current practices, creates spaces for alternative versions, and allows students to understand and re-interpret history. Within these newly created spaces, it is important, from a critical pedagogical point of view, to keep the space itself 'safe' for the learner. Capper, Theoharis, and Sebastian's (2006) framework cite Young and Laible (2000) for meeting this requirement, that is, educational leadership students engaged in a social justice-oriented program can only achieve the learning when they are able to take intellectual and emotional risks toward social justice. Conversely, Saleeby and Scanlon (2005) cite feminist, multiculturalist, and post-structuralist researchers who have questioned whether university classrooms can really be the site for democratic dialogue given the power structures of gender, race, and class inequalities in both society and the university. As Ellsworth (1989) recommends, there is a challenge of constructing classroom practices that engage with the discursive and material spaces that the critical pedagogue must necessarily enter, a space where the origin of what can be known and the origin of what should be done are left unanswered.

### ***2.3. From pedagogies to policies***

Oftentimes, it is policy, not pedagogies which rush to fill in spaces. Therefore, understanding the relationships between pedagogies and policies is important. The works of Christine Forde (2014) in Scotland explicitly makes the connections between policies and the pedagogies needed to align with democratic values. Scotland, like many other nations, views education and educational opportunities as a right. This position is correlated with the ambition to end child poverty in a generation as per the 1872 Education Act which introduced compulsory education. In Scotland, the right of education was re-affirmed in 2000 with the statement that: "It shall be the right of every child of school age to be provided with school education by, or by virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority [the local district]" (Section 1). The previous year, 1999, the Scottish Parliamentary Taskforce on Poverty and Inclusion, Social Justice (SE, 1999:18) defined its agenda as follows:

*We will promote equal opportunities and challenge discriminatory attitudes and practices. Some groups within our society suffer persistent injustice. This is often caused and exacerbated by discrimination and prejudice. Women form a significant proportion of groups vulnerable to poverty, especially lone mothers and elderly women. People from minority ethnic communities and people with disabilities also suffer injustice or discrimination, and continue to encounter barriers to their full participation in employment and in society more generally. Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation restricts opportunities and contributes to injustice. Age discrimination, too, means that society is failing to benefit from the skills and experiences of all its members. We are working to make sure equal opportunities for all is part and parcel of all our programmes. Gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, age - these should not be allowed to affect choice and opportunity in the new Scotland. (p. 1130).*

Explicitly in The Standard for Headship (SfH) under the essential element titled 'Strategic Aims, Vision and Values,' section 4.1.3, Democratic Values reads: "Headteachers work with children and young people, staff, parents and others to promote participative citizenship, inclusion, enterprise, democratic values and a culture of respect within the school community and beyond" (SE 2005a: 6).

Forde then contrasts these policy statements with the current drivers of educational policy in Scotland and elsewhere which turn on (1) the search for effective school practices and the improvement of student achievement, and (2) the purpose of education as a strategy for economic development grounded in economists' reports written for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Those familiar with the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA score) know how the use of PISA test have driven educational policies further away from the democratic values articulated for Scottish headteachers. Forde argues that these reports demonstrate how measures of success are decontextualized through the pervasive use of performance indicators or attainment targets to make comparisons between individual institutions or more recently between national educational systems. Citing Bogotch (2008), she points out that these crude measures of performance and the high stakes public accountability have had the effect of creating a strong sense that any new [read different] ideas are to be resisted – even those ideas around social justice and fairness which could pose a challenge to these technologies of performance management and accountability.

Paradoxically, to contextualize education, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (2002) explicitly identifies groups of pupils who may be particularly vulnerable:

*refugees, traveler children, looked after children, those for whom English is an additional language, pupils with disabilities, those with irregular attendance caused by illness, family circumstances or respite care and any other potentially vulnerable group within the school experiences of pupils.* (HMI, 2002:54).

It is precisely the paradox of educational reform drivers and educators' values regarding fairness, equity and democracy that tests the future of leadership for social justice as praxis and actions.

### **3. Praxis theories into actions**

According to Mullen et al. (2014), we have to see the analogy between our teaching faculty and their students correlating with school principals' practices. Theoharis (2007) described a sample of principals who were attuned to social justice by openly opposing deficit thinking about pupils from diverse backgrounds by intentionally creating heterogeneous and inclusive programs. They demonstrated their understanding as to why the "traditionally marginalized students' failure ... as an inherent result of an unjust system" (p. 235). Furthermore, Theoharis (2007) has challenged school leaders to transform their communities with school wide structural changes, which requires knowledge of legislation that affects human rights. Similarly, Bogotch (2011) issued the challenge to educational leaders to use "pedagogical power collectively" to develop "a learning-to-learn leadership context that extends outwards, inside and out of school settings" (p. 135).

Mullen et al. define themselves as both a teaching faculty and as cultural dialoguers. They use a compass metaphor for orienting discourse about social (in)justices as leadership constructs and actions.

We think that the educational leadership field could benefit from loosely construed, conceptual writing largely because it is in the early phases of social justice thinking and praxis.... beyond raising critical consciousness in the classroom and education

leadership field involve acting on cultural dialogue as social justice praxis.(p. 1165) ... [to] combat the managerial takeover of schools, eliminate test score obsessiveness, and foster healthy and humane educational environments that benefit all participants in the schooling enterprise (see also English et al., 2012).

The authors “contrast issues like poverty, sexism, and homophobia which appear to be fixed, focusing on students’ identities, beliefs as well as school structures, all of which are malleable” (p. 1166). Following English (2008), they argue that people have the power to change what only appears fixed—identities, structures, and beliefs. The goal is to move past educators’ sense of hopelessness, frustration and fears (Bogotch, 2012) to engage in actions in and beyond schools. Difficult cultural discourse helps citizens to understand the inner power they have to unmake and remake the world. A positive attitude about the future probably serves as the best catalyst for engaging in this challenging creative work.

Whereas Theoharris (2010) illustrates the significant resistance school leaders meet in pursuing the aims of social justice, Ryan (2010) focuses on leaders’ knowledge and skills in politics as central to leadership for social justice. Specifying this needed political acumen includes an understanding of the political environment, developing political strategies such as “developing and establishing relationships, persuading others, persisting, planning, experimenting, being up front, keeping others off balance, playing ignorant, working the system and quietly advocating” (p 366).

### ***3.1. The praxis of curriculum inquiry, design and development***

Whereas pedagogies are associated with individual professors and individual leaders, the concept of curriculum requires collaboration and collegiality among individuals and across subject areas/disciplines. Curriculum requires a more holistic view of experiences and actions than do classes and coursework. But the question again turns on the unit of analysis: are we delimiting curriculum to within-school variables, even to what Shields (2014) calls socially just leadership actions or what English calls schooling interiorities or what Bogotch (2014) calls harder truths or what Foster (1986) referred to as broader and beyond? What is the legitimate unit of analysis for school improvement?

For Mullen et al. (2014) curricular interventions legitimize the development of prospective leaders as intentionally minded humanitarians who create contexts that enable inclusiveness, power sharing, community building, and democratic learning. We need a framework of leadership in which curriculum, broadly defined, is central (Ylimacki, 2011) rather than coursework.

According to Bates (2006), “conflict over curriculum, pedagogy and assessment is endemic in public discussions of education” but has been “largely sidestepped in discussions of educational administration” (p. 146), as have been the voices of critical theorists (some exceptions are Brooks, 2008; Dantley & Tillman, 2010; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2008; Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010; Young & Lopez, 2005). That said, how can we conceptualize social justice across a curriculum that runs from policy to personnel, finance, law, and leadership theory and practice? Advocates of leadership for social justice have drawn on multiple social theories including social reconstructionism (Bogotch, 2002; Capper; 1995), critical theory (Foster, 1986), and postmodern perspectives (English, 1994; Foster, 1995; Grogan, 2004), multiculturalism (McCray & Beachum, 2014) and culturally responsive leadership (Gooden & Dantley, 2005) just to name a few theories. Nevertheless, only a small number of scholars have

provided models for programs preparing leadership for social justice in professional development, pre- and in-service leadership preparation programs (Karanxha et al., 2014). Often cited is the study conducted by McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley, González, Cambron-McCabe, & Scheurich (2008) who stated that programs should have three goals as a basis of their curriculum and instruction:

- 1) address the achievement levels for all students;
- 2) prepare all students to live as critical members of society; and
- 3) restructure schools to ensure academic success in heterogeneous environments.

Johnson and Campbell-Stephens (2014) report that six US universities are currently developing curricular on-line modules under a federal government grant to the University Council for Educational Administration entitled "Preparing Leaders to Support Diverse Learners." Among the modules are "Building a Community of Trust Through Racial Awareness of Self" (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2011). The module includes readings, discussions, and conscious-raising activities that explore students' definitions of race and the effects of race and White privilege on their lives. The intent is to foster a critical consciousness to help aspiring school leaders develop a more complex understanding of race and multicultural education and the ways that the school curriculum can be transformed to meet the needs of all students. Across the pond in the UK, Johnson and Campbell-Stephens also describe The Investing in Diversity Program which operated from 2004-2011 (Campbell-Stephens, 2009:322). The program was sponsored by the London Centre for Leadership in Learning, and taught by faculty within the Institute of Education at the University of London. Funding was provided through the London Challenge (now termed City Challenge) to improve educational outcomes for students with a particular emphasis on the "challenges" present in urban contexts. There were 10 modules throughout the school year on topics such as moral purpose, data analysis, finance, leading teams, leading innovation in learning, and school improvement. The focus in these modules was not just about learning the skills and abilities necessary to be an effective school leader, but to develop a critical consciousness amongst the participants by questioning how specific policies and practices might affect groups of students "who have traditionally been failed by the British education system" (Johnson & Campbell-Stephens, 2014: 1174).

#### **4. Conclusions: more than a call to action**

In this review of literature, we have emphasized the processes of building curricula for leadership for social justice moving from existing social and critical theories to creating tensions and spaces which all for the self-development of theories-in-action (i.e., praxis) to address the realities of social injustices in and beyond schools. There have been times in history that educators seemed to be moving in democratic ways towards new understandings of social justice through leadership. But when we observe that our curricula, pedagogies, and reforms have not made positive material and social differences in the lives of our most marginalized students and their families, then as school leaders, we should "become more political..., more active socially in ... communities and organizations, and more critical of existing educational theories and practices" (Bogotch, 2008: 80). In other words, we should continuously assess and revise our practices until we can see that we have indeed made a real difference in people's lives.

We believe that educational leadership has reached the point where empirical studies tell us that our curricula, pedagogies, and reform are not resulting in national or societal democratization or social justice. Political scientists, economists, and sociologists have posited models that they hoped would bring more equal power relations and thereby result in ‘functional democratization’, characterized by a well-informed citizenry, freedom to participate in the decision-making process, accountability to the citizens by those who govern, majority rule and minority rights, etc. (Mennell, 2014:21). But instead, for a host of political and economic reasons, buttressed by neo-liberal policies, the results have been more like a “functional de-democratization” (p. 31).

On the one hand, we see in the US and elsewhere political progress for issues like gay rights or the increased prohibition of discrimination and increased equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. On the other hand, if we look at the most problems related to social injustices in the US, we have seen little to no advances in those areas, such as income equality. If ‘material’ means wealth and income and ‘social’ means race, the US is the poster child for ‘de-democratization.’ In terms of wealth and income, it is increasingly concentrated at the top. The Pew Research Center (2013) finds that “when expressed as dollars, the black-white income gap widened, from about \$19,000 in the late 1960s to roughly \$27,000 today. The race gap on household wealth has increased from \$75,224 in 1984 to \$84,960 in 2011” (p. 3). As the University of California at Berkley’s Emmanuel Saez (2013) reports:

*A number of factors may help explain this increase in inequality, not only underlying technological changes but also the retreat of institutions developed during the New Deal and World War II – such as progressive tax policies, powerful unions, corporate provision of health and retirement benefits, and changing social norms regarding pay inequality. (p. 5).*

Therefore, leadership for social justice must go beyond schools and into communities across societies. Yet we are struck by the analyses of political scientists, economists and sociologists who fail to take education into account. Education for social scientists still occupies a peripheral space. One exception is the field of public management. Dahl and Soss’s (2014) article titled “Neoliberalism for the Common Good? Public Value Governance and the Downsizing of Democracy” critique performance-centered management versus public value management. The field of educational leadership lives a ‘public value’ philosophy. And yet, we are stuck, for a score of years or more, with an accountability system based on high stakes testing. Dahl and Soss perceive this same phenomenon throughout society citing what Feldman (2014) calls “the erosion of truly democratic self-government by an unhealthy partnership between public and corporate managers” (p.503). The exportation and outsourcing of work, the hiring of temporary, non-union labor, the decline in real wages all have had a chilling effect and has eroded the middle class in the US. The current reforms in educational leadership parallel this ‘de-democratization’ process which must be reversed by leadership for social justice.

The push back from neo-liberal government movements which cling to the beliefs that markets right themselves and that self-interested human action will result in the public good must be confronted and rejected by leadership for social justice. To pretend that school leadership can be apolitical has resulted in our not addressing “some of the issues that matter most to the lives of citizens and create a realm of professional action insulated from democracy” (Dahl & Soss, 2014:502).

#### ***4.1. Actions derived from pathways***

This article identifies certain imperatives that the field of educational leadership must act upon to realize leadership for social justice. Our preparation programs must engage in Action Imperatives as established by the University Council of Educational Administration Center for Educational Leadership (UCEA) and Social Justice (housed in Duquesne University's School of Education. They read as follows:

- identify and develop educational and community leaders who are committed to, and effective in eradicating conditions of social injustice that are experienced by any of our society's young people.
- pursue and promulgate research dedicated to testing and identifying best educational practices that will enable all young people to learn as much and as well as possible.
- develop new ways to assess the development and acquisition of democratic knowledge, skills, and socially just dispositions of young people, their educators, and the school's community
- establish and maintain a dialogue among educational practitioners, community leaders, and university scholars regarding advancing equity and excellence in our schools and communities for all young people.
- advocate for policy reform to ameliorate socially-unjust systems and processes in our communities, states and nation (Henderson, 2014: 1244).

This UCEA Social Justice Center is inextricably connected to leadership for social justice preparation programs at the masters and doctoral degree level. In other words, the preparation of aspiring leaders are housed inside a community action demonstration project, not unlike how Dewey conceptualized laboratory learning (Bogotch, 2002) ought to be. Thus, the degrees of separation between leadership preparation and schools practice are being addressed here in terms of pedagogies and curriculum inquiry.

Shields and Bogotch (2014) concluded their edited International Handbook by asserting that the way forward combines new theories and action to address social injustices. What exactly is the social injustice inside of our profession? What is the meaning of Marshall and Young's "bold assertion" (Marshall & Oliva, 2006) which reads:

*... individuals who are unable or unwilling to purposefully, knowledgeable and courageously work for social justice in education should not be given the privilege of working as a school or district leader. (p. 308).*

University professors of educational leadership have little-to-no say in school system personnel matters. Yet this bold assertion, if adopted by the profession, would put school systems on notice by the academy that we as educational leadership teachers/researchers will not ignore the knowledge and skills needed to address the harder truths (i.e., social injustices) beyond the school systems' buildings. More so, we intend to provide school systems with aspiring school leaders for social justice as a matter of policy and fact. We will no longer provide school systems with individuals who are not grounded in the history and purposes of education, individuals who will ignore issues of diversity, equity, human rights or democracy. And should that decision/action lead to the further marginalization of university educational leadership preparation by government policy makers, foundations, and school systems, then perhaps it is time for educational leadership for social justice to re-define its own

purposes and roles in society beyond meeting school standards and accountability for aspiring leaders.

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