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School Setting Behavior That Characterizes Social Justice: An Empirical Approach to Illustrate the Concept

Ross E. Mitchell
Rodney K. Goodyear
Janee Both Gragg
Philip S. Mirci
Ronald Morgan
University of Redlands

We used prototype theory to illustrate the concept of social justice in school settings, particularly as it might inform the education of school leaders. Using expert input, we developed descriptions of school setting actions predicted to be perceived as prototypical of social justice in education, as well as of actions that were predicted to be either peripheral or antithetical to the construct. Panels of (a) social justice education faculty and (b) students in social justice–oriented school leadership doctoral programs rated the extent to which each of these resulting 46 actions characterized social justice. Data were analyzed to map the concept.

Keywords: *descriptive analysis, leadership, policy, social justice*

Our particular concern in this study is with educational leaders' and scholars' understanding of social justice as it applies to school settings. That educators are very much concerned with social justice is evident in the emphasis it receives in the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) 2011 Standards for School Building and District Leadership (M. Young & Mawhinney, 2012), numerous education graduate programs, and the American Educational Research Association (see, e.g., American Educational Research Association, 2006), the most prestigious organization for education scholars. This concern is seen as well in a thriving scholarship (see, e.g., Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009), including that which has focused on theory (see, e.g., Bell, 2007; Christensen & Dorn, 1997; Gewirtz, 1998; Johnson, 2008; North, 2008) as well as on social justice implications for teaching (e.g., Cazden, 2012; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Gale, 2000), school leadership (e.g., Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; Ryan, 2010; Theoharis, 2007), and policy (e.g., Bull, 2008; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002; Terzi, 2008; Thrupp & Tomlinson, 2005).

Scholars have been concerned with the concept of justice for millennia (see, e.g., Sen, 2009) and then with its more specific variant of *social* justice during the past 170 years (Zajda, Majhanovich, & Rust, 2006). Since the 19th century, social justice has been addressed both classically and critically (also see Novack, 2000). Classically, political philosophers have pointed to civic virtue, right order (institutions), and specification of rights and entitlements as necessary for all persons to have what they deserve, be treated as they ought, and participate in their political communities (see, e.g., MacIntyre, 2007; Nussbaum, 2006; Rawls, 1999; Sen, 2009; Walzer, 1983). Critically, political philosophers have highlighted conditions of social injustice that must be corrected, if not transformed, because control systems of virtues, institutional orders, or entitlements have given rise to maldistribution, oppression, or domination (I. Young, 1990; also see, e.g., Best, Kahn, Nocella, & McLaren, 2011; Fraser, 2009). From these distinctive approaches, two characteristics of social justice theorizing that have emerged. First, argument construction prioritizes either specifying the conditions for justice or confronting conditions of injustice. And, second, justice demands remedy for and prevention of injustice. Each of these characteristics is sufficiently important to warrant elaboration.

Justice Versus Injustice

First, there is the distinction between justice and injustice. For example, I. Young (1990) takes a critical structural approach and distinguishes between whether societal institutions enable or constrain those who are subject to their influence, particularly in a social-group-directed manner. Social justice attends "not only to distribution, but also to the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise

of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation" (I. Young, 1990, p. 39). In addition to the injustice of material deprivation (maldistribution), I. Young identifies social injustice as present through cultural, organizational, and procedural enactment and maintenance of oppression (denial of self-development as seen through exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence) and domination (denial of self-determination as exercised through such forms as imperial sovereignty, bureaucratic administration, colonization, and commodification). That is, injustice is the inverse of justice and is recognized as a failure of institutions, conventions, traditions, or other cultural forms, social practices, or interactions to measure up to the standards of a justice norm or ideal (also see Pitkin, 1972, chap. 8).

This idea of justice and its inverse was operationalized very recently in a series of social psychological studies of employee-supervisor relationships (organizational justice; Colquitt, Long, Rodell, & Halvorsen-Ganepola, 2015). In this context, the justice–injustice distinction was scaled as a bipolar continuum along which employees' perceptions of their supervisor's justice norm or rule adherence were separated from their perceptions of strong violation. Colquitt et al. (2015) found that "reactions to justice and injustice differ in psychologically meaningful—and explainable—ways" (p. 292). That is, justice is not simply the degree to which rules are adhered, norms are preserved, or ideals are realized; it has an inverse, injustice, which can be understood as violation or transgression of rules, norms, or ideals.

Remedy and Prevention

Second, social justice demands one or both of two active processes, namely, remedy and prevention (Bies, 2005, p. 105; also see, e.g., Crawshaw, Cropanzano, Bell, & Nadisic, 2013; Fraser, 2009; Gale, 2000; Lebacqz, 1987; Nussbaum, 2006; Tillich, 1954; Wolterstorff, 2008; I. Young, 1990). Fraser (2009) identified three types of remedies—redistribution, recognition, and representation—to address, respectively, injustices along the economic, cultural, and political dimensions of social life. With respect to I. Young's (1990) social injustice categories, *redistribution* remedies deprivation by providing a more responsive distribution of goods among groups in society; *recognition* overcomes oppression by acknowledging (equalizing status with respect to) differences and promoting personal development that is meaningfully responsive to and respectful of those differences. Finally, *representation* counteracts domination by opening up political participation, thereby giving voice to the voiceless and authority to the subjugated. Remedies may go so far as to creatively revalue persons and groups (very possibly requiring an inversion of typical tributive schemes) and thereby transform systems of deprivation, privilege and oppression, and domination (for philosophical perspectives, see Fraser, 2009; I. Young, 1990; including nonhuman species, see Nussbaum, 2006; for perspectives combining theology and philosophy, see Tillich, 1954; also Lebacqz, 1987; Wolterstorff, 2008)

Prevention is about anticipation and aspires to create institutions and engage in practices and interactions that are just. A broadly pursued program of social psychological research in work organizations (organizational justice) has identified three justice dimensions along which prevention may be possible: procedural, interpersonal, and informational (see, e.g., Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2015; Crawshaw et al., 2013; a fourth dimension, distributive justice, is always adjudged as an outcome following the enactment of some procedure, so creating a distribution falls along the procedural dimension). Consistent with I. Young (1990, pp. 34, 39, 88, 91–93), the procedural dimension draws attention to the ability of formal procedures and decision-making processes to facilitate justice (typically with regard to those affecting an outcomes distribution or redistribution). They do so by embracing voice, accuracy, and openness (also see De Cremer, van Dijk, & Bos, 2007), though I. Young (1990, pp. 76–81) clearly differs as to whether consistent and unbiased procedures and decisions are necessarily desirable or even possible—instead, she identifies these last two facets as legitimating myths. Fraser (2009, pp. 17–29) shares I. Young's perspectives and identifies the procedural (accurate, open, voice-embracing) approach as providing representation.

The interpersonal dimension highlights how many social injustices can be prevented when interactions reflect dignity, respect, and propriety (also see Bies, 2005; Wolterstorff, 2008). This is recognition and has to do with standing in relation to others (Bies, 2005, pp. 87–88; Fraser, 2009, p. 16) and the intrinsic power of human beings (Tillich, 1954)—the fundamental stipulation upon which Walzer (1983, p. xii) built his "defense of pluralism and equality"—as persons capable of participating in and furthering their self-development (also see Nussbaum, 2006; I. Young, 1990). Thus, recognition, like representation above, serves as both a preventative and a remedy.

The informational dimension reveals that perceptions of injustice can be prevented when claims about and accounts for actions and implementation of decisions are adequate, truthful, and timely—justice requires justification (also see Pitkin, 1972, p. 183). Although much less than I. Young's (1990) total exposition on "democracy as a condition of social justice" (pp. 91–95), the informational dimension is certainly constituent thereof—establishment of a democratic polity (or workplace, organization, collectivity, etc.) includes embracing a communicative ethic as part of preventing injustices.

Social Justice in Schools

This study takes seriously the concern about the extent to which a particular context, such as school settings, moderates the understandings of social justice articulated above.

Scholars have begun to address Gewirtz's (1998) earlier concern that we need to focus on what social justice in education "means or ought to mean" (p. 469). However, pinning down what social justice "ought to mean" for education, in the singular, has not been a fruitful endeavor. North's (2008) observation that it is "a contested, value-laden expression … a dynamic concept that has been associated with different beliefs, practices, and policies over time" (p. 1183) is consistent with the view of a number of others as well (e.g., Christensen & Dorn, 1997; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Johnson, 2008; Sturman, 1997; Zajda et al., 2006). We believe this variability arises out of differing epistemologies (see Johnson, 2008; Zajda et al., 2006, pp. 1–12; with respect to philosophy in educational research more generally, see Mitchell, 2006; Pring, 2015, pp. 109–141).

For simplicity's sake, we employ the three gross epistemological distinctions offered by Johnson (2008). First, there are Johnson's "modernists," who embrace an inherently ordered and objective universe that can be known through the senses and represented through language. They are the intellectual cousins of Aristotelian essentialism (i.e., empiricists and "positivists"; see Mitchell, 2006). Social justice is principled, and those principles, whether of order or rights, apply broadly (also see Miller, 2013). Second, he identifies their critics as "postmodernists," who embrace a conflictually ordered and subjective multiverse that makes knowing the object of power relations (imposed conventions that privilege some while oppressing others) and who eschew epistemological commitments (however, these writers often resemble emotivists and existentialists, the cousins of Platonic idealism; see MacIntyre, 2007; Mitchell, 2006). In this second case, social justice is elusive, if not epiphenomenal, due to power differentials and arbitrary conventions—ruling orders—justifying the powerful and denying others (also see Miller, 2013; Resnik & Curtis, 2007). Finally, there are the "interpretivists," who do not share the postmodernist emphasis on the sociocultural forms and privileges that disempower/empower and silence/lift up selected interpretations and realities but who do recognize that knowing depends on the perceptions of and consequent sensemaking by individuals; further, collective knowing requires negotiation to make perspectives known, if not to form consensus as well (i.e., interpretivists may warrant their claims through dialecticalism, pragmatism, or phenomenology; see Mitchell, 2006). Social justice is contextual and may invoke different principles under different conditions (or differently interpreted conditions; see Miller, 2013) as people make subjective and, possibly, collective (intersubjective) sense of their culturally informed perceptions.

In an attempt to clarify what social justice means for practicing school leaders, Theoharis (2007) conducted a qualitative study of seven principals to identify how they were enacting social justice in public schools. Through this inductive approach, he identified some very specific attitudes (e.g., valuing diversity and the success of all students), beliefs (e.g., that great schools afford all students rich social and academic opportunities), and behaviors (e.g., ending programs that in one way or another segregate marginalized learners; facilitating professional development that is collaborative and helps better address issues of race, class, gender, and disability). This oft-cited study helped to fill an important gap in the literature about what social justice means to the practice of educational leadership, revealing that both well-orderedness and rights matter, with the greatest emphasis on restoring or realizing rights. Yet, this is but one study focused on a handful of principals. Still missing are related studies of social justice beliefs and behaviors of larger samples of educators (for a micropolitical study of social justice agenda enactment by 28 school principals, see Ryan, 2010), particularly those who are relatively sophisticated with respect to social justice. That is, although numerous efforts to declare the meaning of social justice for educational practice appear in the literature (see, e.g., Gewirtz, 1998; Lewis, Davis Lenski, Mukhopadhyay, & Cartwright, 2010; North, 2008; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012; M. Young & Mawhinney, 2012), there has been little effort to survey more broadly or otherwise discern the features of school social life and educational leadership practice that mark them as socially just.

Seeking Judgments About Justice

The purpose of this study was to develop a means by which acting for social justice in education could be illustrated for a wide range of faculty and educational leaders while also informing theoretical development. For this, we employed the cognitive science method of prototype analysis (e.g., Rosch, 1973; for reviews, see Hororwitz & Turan, 2008; Mervis & Rosch, 1981) to examine the implicit understandings that people who are knowledgeable about social justice in education have of that concept. Prototype theory rests on the assumption that most concepts have certain recognizable, characteristic features even when formal definitions are difficult to develop. Prototype analysis is a method prototype theorists developed to study difficult-to-define concepts. In this case, its use was predicated on the assumption that people who are relatively sophisticated with respect to social justice in education will "know it when they see it" (Gale, 2000; also see Justice Potter Stewart's reflections on definitional difficulty in *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 1964). That is, we asked justice-aware educators to make justice judgments in reaction to a variety of schooling-related scenarios across a range of contexts and situations (see Ambrose & Schminke, 2009).

At the same time, this is strictly a prototype analysis study. Our inquiry is about social justice (moral) judgments, not about moral decision making (selecting a course of action) or subsequent enactment (see Habermas, 1990). This is because decisions and their enactment further encompass the other cardinal virtues (also see Finnis, 2011; Miller, 2013), namely,

the exercise of prudence (especially in a contextually sensitive manner) as well as temperance and fortitude. In other words, we are seeking only judgments and not educators' social justice motivations or their sense of efficacy and willingness to intervene for a just cause (see Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). Further, we are not exploring the entire Wittgensteinian grammar of social justice (see Pitkin, 1972). As shown in the following sections, our prototype analysis asked educators to "label examples," some of which were adjudged to represent "phenomena people call just," but we did not include "looking at the occasions when [educators] *say* 'just'" (Pitkin, 1972, p. 180; emphasis added).

We emphasize that our inquiry is not an attempt to make hegemonic or otherwise dictate the meaning of social justice. This prototype analysis simply highlights similarities among the judgments of those who have endeavored to study and enact what social justice means to them (also see Pring, 2015). Further, we find justification for our method as appropriate to the study of a concept like social justice based on the following insight from Pitkin (1972): "Though we learn the meaning of terms like 'justice' and acquire some standards of what is just in connections with existing institutions and practices, we can and do use them to criticize and change those institutions and practices" (p. 189). In other words, the clarity we obtain here may very well serve as the foil against which future scholars and practitioners come to understand social justice. Prototype analysis provides a time- and place-bound illustration, not a definition.

Prototypes

There are two approaches to prototype analysis. Specifically, cognitive psychologists note that a concept can have two levels of prototypes: One is the level of *exemplars*, and the other is that of *features*. To illustrate, consider the concept of "dog." Exemplars (also known as examples, instances, cases, or members) might include specific breeds of dogs: Doberman, dachshund, cocker spaniel, and poodle, for example. In the classic study of exemplars as prototype, Rosch (1973) used apples, figs, pears, and oranges as exemplars of the category "fruit." She found that people rated apples as better examples of that category than figs; that is, apples were more prototypical of fruit.

The second level of prototype is that of features (also known as elements, indicators, and characteristics). Prototypic features of "dog" might be either physical or behavioral. Physical features would include being four legged and fur covered, and having a tail, prominent canines, and paws with extended claws. Behavioral features would include, for example, depending on a keen sense of smell, running in packs in which there are clearly defined social hierarchies, and behaving interdependently with humans.

Fehr (2004) provides an example of feature as prototype in her study of intimacy expectations in same-sex friendships. She, found, for example, that both men and women regarded as prototypic of that concept such behaviors as "If I need to talk, my friend will listen"; "If I am in trouble, my friend will help me"; and "If someone was insulting me or saying negative things behind my back, my friend would stick up for me." On the other hand, they regarded as much less prototypic such behaviors as "If I need money, my friend will lend it to me" and "If I am sad, my friend is sad too."

Prototypes, whether exemplars or features, will differ in their degree of centrality to the concept they represent. That is, they will range from those that are highly characteristic of the concept through those that are increasingly less so. Put more simply, any given exemplar or feature will exist at some point on one or more continua of representativeness for the particular category (see, e.g., Russell & Fehr, 1994).

Our first strategy was simply to examine the extent to which our participants rated the various school setting behaviors we presented to them as characterizing social justice. The complementary strategy was to examine the possible dimensionality with respect to educators' perceptions of social justice behavior in school setting by using a concept mapping approach. *Concept mapping* is "a broad term for a wide range of techniques, all of which are intended to delineate underlying cognitive structures" (Goodyear, Tracey, Claiborn, Lichtenberg, & Wampold, 2005, p. 236). Regardless of technique, though, those techniques usually are depicted spatially. In this case, we employed multidimensional scaling, following the processes that have been described by Bedi and Alexander (2009), Goodyear et al. (2005), and Trochim (1989).

In summary, our purpose was to obtain the perspectives of both education scholars who are experts in social justice as well as doctoral students in two social justice–informed educational leadership programs to illustrate the features of social justice in school settings. These illustrations could be important to all educators but perhaps especially those in school leadership positions—and those preparing for leadership—for it is they who are or will be in a position to oversee the enactment of social justice–informed actions and who are charged with addressing the effects of social injustice on schools and children (Bates, 2006). Similarly, newfound clarity about the concept of social justice in schools could be useful to those who prepare school leaders in the principles of social justice (see, e.g., Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Furman, 2012; McKenzie et al., 2008).

Method

Participants

There were 79 participants (i.e., provided information to at least one item on the survey): 50 university faculty members (27 female, 22 male, one unknown), 28 EdD students

(15 female, 12 male, one unknown), and one of completely unknown status. Faculty respondents had a mean age of 48.94 (SD = 10.31, n = 48), whereas that for students was 44.62 (SD = 9.18, n = 26). Faculty reported their race or ethnicity as White non-Hispanic (n = 37; 75.5%), African American (n = 4; 8.5%), Hispanic (n = 2; 4.3%), Asian American (n = 2; 4.3%), and Mixed (n = 1; 2.1%). Students reported their race or ethnicity as White non-Hispanic (n = 16; 37.0%), African American (n = 1; 3.7%), Hispanic (n = 4; 14.8%), Asian American (n = 2; 7.4%), Mixed (n = 2; 7.4%), and African (n = 1; 3.7%). Nearly all of the EdD students were currently practicing school teachers, counselors, or administrators at the time they responded, but we do not know the balance of these practitioner roles among our respondents—that information was not requested.

Measure

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which 46 actions taken in an educational context seemed representative of social justice in education. Each concerned a specific action that could be attributed to a person (e.g., a teacher, a principal, a superintendent), a role group (e.g., students, teachers), or an organization (e.g., a district, Parent-Teacher Association [PTA], Gay-Straight Alliance). For example, the first item (Item 1), "The Gay-Straight Alliance proposes to the school board a policy that would treat comments such as 'faggot' the same as racial slurs," is an action by an organization, whereas the last item (Item 46), "An African American teacher is known for being more strict with African American students than with students of other racial or cultural groups," is an action by an individual. These items, and the 44 between them, were rated on a 7-point scale, anchored by 1 = *not at all characteristic of a social justice perspective* and 7 = *extremely characteristic of a social justice perspective*. Table 1 lists the 46 actions (features) and identifies the numerical order in which they were presented in the first column; however, they are ordered by the scale values in the fifth column, which were assigned to them by our analysis (see multidimensional scaling [MDS] analysis, below).

Developing descriptions of actions. Our first step was to work in consultation with social justice experts—university faculty with known and ratified practical and theoretical understanding—to develop "clearest cases or best examples" (Russell & Fehr, 1994, p. 187) of social justice actions in education. To control for acquiescence (i.e., the tendency to respond affirmatively to items), we also generated a list of actions we predicted would be either peripheral or antithetical to our targeted concept. We were guided by Rosch's (1973, 1975) method in developing these lists of behaviors, which functioned as items to be rated.

We began by sampling the extant literature on social justice in education and then relying on our own brainstorming to develop very brief, action-focused scenarios. In so doing, we drew on our knowledge as faculty in a social justice–focused doctoral program, one that is epistemologically complex because although "interpretivist" and "postmodernist" views are prominent, as Glass (2001) observed, there are "modernist" elements in Freire's philosophy of praxis, and Freire's works are strongly featured in the curriculum as well as guiding influences among several of the faculty. We also asked doctoral students from that program to suggest items; some of which we retained and reworked for consistency in format.

Our next step was to ask nine well-known social justice scholars to (a) critique our initial scenarios and (b) suggest ones of their own. That is, we asked them to suggest "situations in which an educator is engaging in a behavior that would be acknowledged by knowledgeable onlookers as an act of social justice." That expert feedback was the basis for another round of brainstorming and rewriting among our team.

During this process we also brainstormed educator behaviors that we thought would be peripheral to social justice. In this case, they were behaviors in which an effective educator might engage, regardless of having a social justice focus or not. And, finally, we generated a set of scenarios that we believed would be unrelated or antithetical to a social justice stance. Our predictions concerning whether a particular scenario would fit one or another of these three categories (prototypic, peripheral, or antithetical) are stated in the far right column of Table 1.

Procedures

The faculty respondents were identified by two means: (a) personal contact with people whom the authors personally knew to be knowledgeable about social justice and (b) an electronic review of the literature to identify people who had published articles, book, or chapters that concerned social justice in education. E-mail addresses were obtained by searching university websites. Largely, the potential faculty respondents (responses were received anonymously) could be classified as identifying more strongly with "postmodernist" and "interpretivist" epistemologies, but Freire's works feature prominently in what informs the writings of several of those recruited.

Doctoral students were recruited at two universities, using listservs of educational leadership doctoral programs that had an explicit social justice emphasis. The curricula in these programs were complex and varied in their epistemological character (in part because Freire's writings feature prominently in programs with a social justice emphasis but also due to the specific and varied stances of the programs' faculty and the kinds of dissertations completed). As noted previously, this latter group of K–16 educational practitioners and leaders were included in the sample because they

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics for Ratings of Prototypicality of Features Predicted to Be Prototypic, Peripheral, or Antithetical to Social Justice Behavior in Education

Item No.	Item	Participant rating ($N = 76$)		Final coordinate	Initial prediction
		M	*SD*		
32	A teacher challenges colleagues when they use language that she perceives not to be inclusive.	5.99	1.47	−0.56	Prototypic
1	The Gay-Straight Alliance proposes to the School Board a policy that would treat comments such as "faggot" the same as racial slurs.	6.58	0.72	−0.54	Prototypic
26	A group of educators work together as a learning community to regularly revisit, examine, and as appropriate, challenge their personal beliefs, values, and assumptions.	6.53	0.84	−0.54	Prototypic
13	A principal works with lead teachers to create a professional development program that sensitizes teachers to issues of White and heterosexual privilege.	6.33	1.04	−0.53	Prototypic
38	A district both has and enforces written procedures concerning hate speech.	6.59	0.61	−0.53	Prototypic
39	A professional development workshop teaches staff members to recognize and address microaggressions against people of color, women, or those who are GLBT.	6.54	0.74	−0.53	Prototypic
36	A school board implements a policy whereby schools comprised of traditionally underserved students would become full-service schools with health and social services agencies on campus to help students and their families.	6.21	1.14	−0.52	Prototypic
14	A teacher witnesses a student being teased about being fat and intervenes to challenge this form of harassment.	6.42	0.93	−0.52	Prototypic
30	A principal sets as one of his teacher evaluation goals that of stopping bullying based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and physical features.	6.25	1.20	−0.52	Prototypic
25	A district works to ensure that its second-language learners are provided with comprehensible instruction and a manageable cognitive load rather than a "dumbed-down" curriculum.	6.29	0.98	−0.52	Prototypic
3	A school district enacts a policy to recruit a teaching faculty whose racial and ethnic composition mirrors that of the very diverse students the district serves.	6.22	1.07	−0.52	Prototypic
33	A group of educators engage in community organizing intended to empower poor parents to change what is taught in schools and how.	6.20	1.15	−0.50	Prototypic
37	A school conducts an equity analysis to assess which groups of students (cultural and otherwise) are receiving International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, and Honors courses.	6.24	1.04	−0.50	Prototypic
19	A school that serves students who are predominantly poor and minority implements a plan to increase academic rigor and add more advanced classes.	6.04	1.19	−0.48	Peripheral
17	A principal initiates a plan to "detrack" the math program in which students in the lower tracks had been predominantly lower-income students of color.	5.87	1.23	−0.47	Prototypic
23	A teacher uses role-plays in class to teach students tolerance of diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, SES, sexual orientation, and gender).	6.14	1.19	−0.47	Prototypic
34	A principal works with her staff to create a climate in which all families are greeted in a warm, welcoming manner.	5.72	1.43	−0.47	Peripheral
43	A school curriculum has students read novels that deal with social issues (e.g., *Seedfolks, A Day of Tears*) in order to expand students' awareness of others and their experiences.	6.01	0.99	−0.45	Prototypic
12	When a student is referred for disciplinary issues, the vice principal ensures that she understands all the possible contextual information before taking any action.	5.99	1.48	−0.45	Peripheral
31	Teachers at one high school provide students with skills in political advocacy.	5.89	1.21	−0.45	Prototypic
5	A district implements a curriculum module that has students share their family origins and traditions so that students' cultural traditions are affirmed and that they develop an appreciation for the various backgrounds of their classmates.	6.00	1.25	−0.45	Prototypic
24	A teacher decides he must become proficient in second-language acquisition in order to fulfill his responsibilities to teach English-language learners.	6.00	1.13	−0.45	Peripheral
40	Students are respectful of and encourage each other's classroom responses.	5.68	1.38	−0.42	Peripheral
35	A superintendent has the goal of being as transparent as possible with respect to decision making, spending, and hiring practices.	5.46	1.31	−0.39	Peripheral

(continued)

TABLE 1 (continued)

Item No.	Item	Participant rating ($N = 76$)		Final coordinate	Initial prediction
		M	*SD*		
20	A professor loaned her personal copy of a textbook to a student who was struggling financially.	5.37	1.48	−0.37	Peripheral
42	A teacher is conscious of making sure she does not herself engage in behaviors (e.g., eating in class) that her students are not allowed to do.	5.37	1.50	−0.36	Peripheral
41	An assistant principal sets up a clothes closet on her campus to help students unable to afford new clothes.	5.37	1.44	−0.36	Peripheral
22	In working with colleagues to ensure that non-White groups are represented in the teaching of history, a history teacher comes to the realization that he has not thought much about his own culture.	5.39	1.37	−0.35	Peripheral
28	A principal implements a plan to give staff greater say in the running of the school.	5.26	1.49	−0.32	Peripheral
7	A middle school implements an outreach program designed to get kids involved in helping others through acts of kindness.	5.15	1.58	−0.26	Peripheral
29	Rather than hosting an annual multicultural fair, the faculty decide they are going to work on a curriculum requiring students to research their own cultural groups throughout the year.	5.04	1.61	−0.21	Prototypic
4	A teacher provides students with constant encouragement while they are working during class.	4.78	1.82	−0.12	Peripheral
11	A district develops and implements special seminars and tutoring programs for students of color and their families on topics such as financial literacy and parenting.	4.84	1.68	−0.09	Prototypic
10	In observing the classroom interactions of a teacher who has reported that male students are more difficult to engage, an observer notes that this teacher is more attentive when a male student speaks.	3.71	1.94	0.68	Antithetical
9	In a large, financially strapped district, the PTA at one of the junior high schools with more affluent parents raises money to provide library resources.	3.24	1.66	0.84	Antithetical
15	A principal raises test scores by identifying "bubble students" (i.e., those most likely to improve test scores) and insisting that the teachers give them particular attention.	2.73	1.75	1.02	Antithetical
46	An African American teacher is known for being more strict with African American students than with students of other racial or cultural groups.	2.76	1.65	1.02	Antithetical
44	A principal doesn't allow Independent Study students to attend activities at the high school they had attended prior to going on to the Independent Study program.	2.61	1.58	1.05	Antithetical
6	A special educator's decision to place a student in a less restrictive environment is overridden by her principal on the grounds that doing so might prove too disruptive to classes.	2.18	1.41	1.14	Antithetical
45	A teacher refused to answer a student's question about religion because he said he doesn't believe in God.	2.09	1.39	1.17	Antithetical
2	A junior high school approves a ski club, consisting of students whose parents are able to pay the necessary costs for equipment, lift passes, and bus transportation.	2.12	1.66	1.19	Antithetical
16	A principal maintains to his staff that it is important to be "color-blind"—that considering race/ethnicity can lead to prejudice and should be avoided.	2.13	1.64	1.20	Antithetical
21	A student who is presenting a report in class makes a comment that reflects religious intolerance, prompting other students to challenge it; the teacher responds with, "Okay, let's move on."	1.96	1.37	1.20	Antithetical
18	Students identified for the gifted program leave the classroom to engage in hands-on activities while the other students remain in the classroom, completing worksheets reviewing content.	2.12	1.68	1.21	Antithetical
8	The superintendent of a local district has bragged for years that he "hires only the best administrators," most of whom have been White males.	1.89	1.54	1.23	Antithetical
27	A campus security officer confronts a group of noisy Latino students but ignores a group of equally noisy White students.	1.79	1.76	1.27	Antithetical

Note. GLBT = gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender; SES = socioeconomic status; PTA = Parent-Teacher Association.

are both explicitly students of social justice in education and persons actively involved in situations where the content of the action items would be meaningful.

All respondents were contacted by e-mail and were asked to click on a hyperlink for an online survey (using Google Drive) and complete a rating task. Specifically, they were instructed as follows:

> Following are 46 behaviors or situations that have occurred in an education context. Please rate each according to how characteristic you perceive it to be of social justice.

Neither faculty nor students were asked to report their institutional affiliation, and so it is not possible to report how many or what institutions they represented.

Data Preparation and Analyses

Data collected from the online survey were exported to Excel for initial processing. They were then imported into SPSS 22 for final processing and analysis.

Record deletion and missing value imputation prior to analysis. Four respondents were dropped from the analyses. Two rated none of the 46 items, and one rated only about half. A fourth's responses all were either a 6 (41 times) or 7 (five times), showing virtually no between-item discrimination. For the remaining 75 respondents, using the 46 action items, missing response values were imputed using expectation-maximization (EM) estimation within the missing value analysis procedure. The EM method was chosen because MDS (see below) is not a statistical inference technique (McKnight, McKnight, Sidani, & Figueredo, 2007)—otherwise, multiple imputation or some other variance preserving method would be called for—and we believe the scale continuity, missing-at-random (MAR), and multivariate normality assumptions are not violated severely enough to demand an alternative approach. More importantly, we assert that even if the "best guesses" obtained were no better than mean substitution (an approach completely indifferent to response patterns), only a total of 21 responses were imputed out of 3,450 total possible responses; moreover, these 21 missing responses were distributed across 13 of the 75 respondents (one per individual except for two with two and one with seven imputed) and 17 of the 46 items (one per item except for Items 5, 15, and 28, with two, two, and three imputed, respectively), so there is a substantial basis for meaningfulness in the result (see Velleman & Wilkinson, 1993). Once estimated, all imputed values were rounded to the nearest integer. If the imputed and rounded value exceeded 7, the value was recoded to 7.

Respondents' use of full response scale varied dramatically. One in five respondents seemed to respond to the items in a near-dichotomous manner rather than using more nuanced ratings. For example, five respondents rated 40 or more of the items as either 1 or 7; 10 respondents showed the same pattern for 30 or more responses. One individual gave either a 2 or a 6 rating to more than 40 items. Overall, less than 5% of the total number of responses was a 3 on the scale, meaning that the full 7-point scale was hardly used by any respondent (more than 66% of all responses were 1s, 6s, or 7s).

MDS analysis. One fundamental process of human cognition is categorization or classification, which depends on determining the (dis)similarity among objects, actions, or ideas (Takane, Jung, & Oshima-Takane, 2009). MDS is a set of data analysis techniques for representing (dis)similarity (or, more generally, proximity) data by spatial distance models. Specifically, the PROXSCAL procedure was used to find the lowest dimensional scaling of the 46 items using nonmetrical (ordinal, untie) simple MDS based upon Euclidean distances and initial starting values obtained by the simplex method, with the iterative solution stopping point determined by minimization of the normalized raw stress (see, e.g., Takane et al., 2009). The lowest dimension having a Kruskal Stress, Formula 1 (Stress-I), less than 0.1 was chosen (Jaworska & Chupetlovska-Anastasova, 2009, p. 4; also see Kruskal, 1964). Both the dispersion accounted for (DAF) and Tucker's coefficient of congruence were used to corroborate that the solution having Stress-I < 0.1 was, indeed, a good MDS solution. DAF and Tucker's coefficient both > 0.995 was the standard applied. Although only one dimension is required to array the items, namely, a justice–injustice scale, PROXSCAL was run specifying a minimum of one and a maximum of five dimensions to ensure that multidimensional solutions were considered fully.

Before presenting our results, we need to point out that between-group (doctoral students vs. faculty) comparisons were made for ratings of each of the 46 features. Significance level was set at $\alpha = .001$ (Bonferonni correction; $.05/46 \approx .001$) to address the risk of experimentwise Type I error. No between-group differences were found. As a result, data from the two groups were pooled for all subsequent analyses reported here. The median rating across the 46 items was 5.56 ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.64$).

Results

Participants were asked to rate how knowledgeable they perceived themselves to be "about social justice concepts, ideas, and literature" on a 7-point scale. The means for faculty and doctoral students were 5.35 ($SD = 1.33$) and 5.89 ($SD = 1.05$), respectively. That difference was not statistically significant (i.e., two-sided t value less than the critical value for $\alpha = .05$).

Table 1 reports the means and standard deviations of item ratings across all respondents but organized so that the rated behaviors are ordered by their one-dimensional scaling

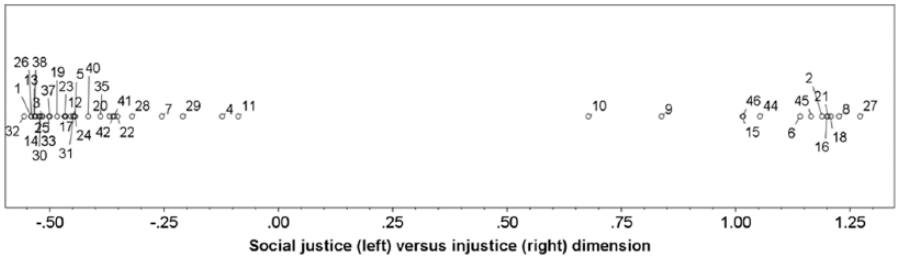

FIGURE 1. *One-dimensional nonmetric scale solution for social justice prototype item responses: justice–injustice scale.*

values (see MDS results, below). That is, there is general but imperfect agreement between the mean values and the scale values for ranking items from behaviors that are most to least prototypic of social justice in school settings. Neither ranking by means nor by scale values produces a clear distinction between expected-to-be-prototypical and expected-to-be-peripheral items, but the expected-to-be-antithetical items clearly stand apart from the rest. As elaborated upon in our Discussion section, whereas social justice is distinguished from injustice, what is prototypical versus what is peripheral is not a clean distinction. In other words, although initial expectations about actions in school settings that would be identified as social injustices (i.e., the antithetical) were clearly validated by our results, those actions expected to be most strongly identified with the construct of social justice (i.e., the prototypical) did not completely align with our results. Some actions initially expected to be identified as doing good in the schools but not necessarily actions for social justice (i.e., the peripheral) were rated highly and found interspersed among those expected to be prototypical.

MDS Analysis

We wondered whether there were discernable patterns in the data that would help to provide a more nuanced understanding of how respondents rated social justice behaviors in school settings. To accomplish this, we used PROXSCAL to provide a "concept map" of the relationships among the behaviors our respondents had rated.

The one-dimensional MDS solution provides the simplest good-fitting representation of the relationship among the social justice prototype items (Stress-I = 0.0543; DAF = 0.997; Tucker's coefficient = 0.999). The object points plot is shown in Figure 1. Although the position of the origin is arbitrary when fitting Euclidean distances, in this case, its position has meaningful interpretive value for presenting our results in two respects. First, it separates the justice (negatively signed) and injustice (positively signed) items. Second, it highlights how item respondents' understanding was much more straightforward for injustice items than for justice items.

In particular, a handful of items are definitely closer to the origin among both the justice and injustice items. Among the justice items, Items 11, "A district develops and implements special seminars and tutoring programs for students of color and their families on topics such as financial literacy and parenting," and 4, "A teacher provides students with constant encouragement while they are working during class," are nearest and close to the origin. (Items 29 and 7 are also close and clearly separate from the others farther away.) Among the injustice items, none of them are very close to the origin, but Items 10, "In observing the classroom interactions of a teacher who has reported that male students are more difficult to engage, an observer notes that this teacher is more attentive when a male student speaks," and 9, "In a large, financially strapped district, the PTA at one of the junior high schools with more affluent parents raises money to provide library resources," are clearly separate from the other injustice items and closest to the origin.

At the extremes on the justice–injustice dimension, Items 32, "A teacher challenges colleagues when they use language that she perceives not to be inclusive"; 1 (see Measures; also Table 1); and 26, "A group of educators work together as a learning community to regularly revisit, examine, and as appropriate, challenge their personal beliefs, values, and assumptions," are the most prototypical social justice items. Items 27, "A campus security officer confronts a group of noisy Latino students but ignores a group of equally noisy White students"; 8, "The superintendent of a local district has bragged for years that he 'hires only the best administrators,' most of whom have been White males"; and 18, "Students identified for the gifted program leave the classroom to engage in hands-on activities while the other students remain in the classroom, completing worksheets reviewing content," are the injustice items most antithetical to the social justice construct.

The ordering of items in terms of those predicted to be items prototypical of the social justice construct, items peripheral to the construct of social justice, and items antithetical to the construct of social justice are expected to be in the order listed (i.e., a block of prototypical items, followed by a block of peripheral items, followed by a block of antithetical items). As seen in Figure 1, the distinction between the antithetical (injustice) items and the combined prototypical-peripheral (justice) items is quite striking. However, it is not obvious by looking among the justice items where the

break between prototypical and peripheral items should be. One place might be at Item 40, "Students are respectful of and encourage each other's classroom responses," and another might be at Item 19, "A school that serves students who are predominantly poor and minority implements a plan to increase academic rigor and add more advanced classes," but there is no obvious reason to pick one low-density spot over another. In our Discussion section, we address this *overlap zone* (i.e., all items between and including 19 and 40, which have scale values between −0.50 and −0.40 on the left, or justice, side of the justice–injustice scale).

As shown in Table 1, the anticipated ordering did not work out exactly as expected. Most of the expected-to-be-peripheral items are together and closer to the origin than those that were expected to be prototypical, but there is some intermingling among them. The expected-to-be-prototypical items are not a continuous block. In particular, two expected-to-be-prototypical items are very close to the origin, with nearly all of the expected-to-be-peripheral items farther from the origin. These are Items 11 (cited above; see Table 1) and 29, "Rather than hosting an annual multicultural fair, the faculty decide they are going to work on a curriculum requiring students to research their own cultural groups throughout the year." Two expected-to-be-peripheral items are clearly farther from the origin than the others and mixed in among the expected-to-be-prototypical items. These are Items 19 (cited above; see Table 1) and 34, "A principal works with her staff to create a climate in which all families are greeted in a warm, welcoming manner." Items 5, 12, 24, 31, and 43 (see Table 1) are identical in value (to two decimal places) on the justice–injustice scale, so the imperfect ordering among them of prototypical and peripheral expectations makes clear the need to consider this overlap zone further.

Discussion

This was the first study to attempt to operationalize the construct of social justice behavior in education using a prototype perspective, and it offers evidence in favor of our initial presumption that educational practitioners and scholars would be able to identify actions that represent social justice in the school setting. The idea of prototypical, peripheral, and antithetical actions with respect to the construct of social justice in schooling was substantially affirmed. At the same time, not all initial presumptions were confirmed, and not all respondents were able to generally agree on more than a very few items as describing unequivocally social justice actions, or their antithesis for that matter.

Looking to Theory for Assistance

The finding that prototypical and peripheral items were distinct from antithetical items highlights the most basic distinction in discussions of social justice, namely, justice versus injustice. Survey respondents were asked to judge an action as to the degree to which it was socially just. The MDS analysis produced a solution that clearly and unequivocally separated injustices from the rest of the actions.

Further, we believe that part of the intermingling of what were expected to be distinctly prototypical versus peripheral actions related to social justice stems from the difference between remedy and prevention. Several items (action scenarios) predicted to be peripheral to social justice are, in fact, actions or processes aimed at preventing conditions of injustice. These processes reflect such considerations as establishing procedures for ensuring that just outcomes are obtained, norms for how people are treated, whether people in positions of authority are accountable for their behavior or bound to the same behavioral standards as others in the school, and whether people have a voice in or right to defining the content and conduct of the school as a community. Thus, it makes perfect sense that the peripheral and the prototypical were together and, to a modest degree, overlapping.

Preventing injustice. Given the constitutional and organizational significance of establishing justice, which serves to minimize the need to rectify or remedy injustices (i.e., preventing injustices in the first place), we believe the overlap zone represents how our respondents recognized that social justice requires anticipation as well as response. Item 12, "When a student is referred for disciplinary issues, the vice principal ensures that she understands all the possible contextual information before taking any action," is an expected-to-be-peripheral item that exemplifies procedural due process and is clearly among the items in the overlap zone. However, we should note that right procedures, by themselves, do not guarantee a favorable justice judgment. Item 8 (cited above; see Table 1), one at the extreme end of the injustice scale, includes a claim that merit-based hiring procedures are faithfully employed, which would indicate procedural due process, but the outcomes from these hiring procedures have a nearly consistent pattern of placing White males in administrative positions. This is an example where procedural but not substantive due process was obtained through the hiring procedures. The action scenario in Item 8 is precisely the kind of situation identified by I. Young (1990) as an issue of social (in)justice revealed by "the reproduction of a regular distributive pattern [of who gets hired] over time" (p. 29).

An example of interpersonal justice from the expected-to-be-peripheral items is Item 34 (cited above; see Table 1), which establishes the norm for respect due students' families and also occupies the overlap zone. (Also see Item 40, which is in the overlap zone, for an example of an established norm of respect.) Compared to Item 12, however, responses to Item 34 may not be intuitive responses because Theoharis and coworkers (Theoharis, 2010; Causton & Theoharis, 2014)

have repeatedly identified establishing a "warm, welcoming" climate as a key element of social justice leadership. That is, we cannot say whether our respondents are primarily informed by their knowledge of the literature or they are intuiting the means by which to prevent injustices.

Outside and to the right of the overlap zone, where most of the expected-to-be-peripheral items fall on the justice–injustice scale, are two additional items that represent efforts to prevent injustice. An imperfect example of informational justice is Item 42, "A teacher is conscious of making sure she does not herself engage in behaviors (e.g., eating in class) that her students are not allowed to do." This example is imperfect because, rather than needing to give an account for her behavior to her students, the teacher is exercising anticipation and holding herself accountable to standards for which she recognizes she would owe an account to her students if she violated them. Finally, an imperfect example of representational justice is Item 28, "A principal implements a plan to give staff greater say in the running of the school," which gives voice to staff, if not democratizes the governance of the school. However, this does not have the fully transformative character of representational justice called for by Fraser (2009) because there is no formal (constitution-like) protection for this arrangement, which may explain why this item was among the lower ranked of the justice items.

Remedying injustice. Largely, the character of the items predicted to be prototypical of social justice in the schools is remedial in nature, a corrective in response to injustice. All items to the left of the overlap zone (the 11 items farthest in the negative, or justice, direction) represent means by which injustices are to be remedied.

The highest ranking among the justice items, Item 32 (cited above; see Table 1) is clearly a corrective (rectifying) response to a perceived injustice on the part of the teacher. Similarly, the second highest ranked, Item 1 (cited above; see Table 1) is an example of how an advocacy group, the Gay-Straight Alliance, seeks the establishment of equal retributive justice by the school board. An example of redistributive social justice is Item 36, "A school board implements a policy whereby schools comprised of traditionally underserved students would become full-service schools with health and social services agencies on campus to help students and their families," because it seeks to make the schools partners in an effort to correct service distribution problems. An example of recognitive justice is Item 13, "A professional development workshop teaches staff members to recognize and address microaggressions against people of color, women, or those who are GLBT [gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender]," which highlights group-based status differentials and the means for overcoming the injustices associated with them. An example of representational justice is Item 33, "A group of educators engage in community organizing intended to empower poor parents to change what is taught in schools and how," because it offers to transform participation in the political process and its curriculum-shaping outcomes.

The overlap zone includes both expected-to-be-prototypical and expected-to-be-peripheral items that seek remedies as well as represent efforts to prevent injustice. The two left-most items in the overlap zone, Item 19 (cited above; see Table 1), which seeks advanced and more rigorous courses for poor and minority students, and Item 17, "A principal initiates a plan to 'detrack' the math program in which students in the lower tracks had been predominantly lower-income students of color," are both actions to redistribute access to the curriculum for students otherwise selected out or deprived of privileged (appropriate) educational opportunities. Upon reflection, we believe they represent almost identical curriculum initiatives and differ little from the clearly prototypical Item 25, "A district works to ensure that its second-language learners are provided with comprehensible instruction and a manageable cognitive load rather than a 'dumbed-down' curriculum." That is, how the items were worded was responsible for the differences in scale locations rather than true conceptual differences. Most importantly, we believe that Item 19 resides where it does because Theoharis and coworkers (Theoharis, 2010; Causton & Theoharis, 2014), who identified social justice leaders as being proponents of academic rigor, are right to emphasize rigor, but the expectation that this item would be perceived as peripheral rather than prototypical was due to *rigor* being seen as pejorative. That is, when the items were constructed, *rigor* was perceived as a code word for improving the sorting and selection function of the curriculum rather than a term signaling a need for excellent teaching and curricular integrity—that instruction should be "comprehensible" and content should not be "dumbed down" (see Item 25).

Another important item to reconsider, also found in the overlap zone, is Item 24, "A teacher decides he must become proficient in second-language acquisition in order to fulfill his responsibilities to teach English-language learners." This action scenario implicitly promises greater social justice through fulfillment of contractual duty. Here, there is a group-based claim against the teacher for being treated in a certain way (receiving competent and appropriate instruction), and the teacher has decided to meet that obligation, to rectify his self-perceived injustice in his own actions (his failure to heretofore deliver competent and appropriate instruction). Expressed as such, this is akin to informational justice, an adequate account in response to a justified claim. Moreover, it is precisely the kind of "critical reflection on practice" that is demanded of all Freirean pedagogues (Freire, 1998). In other words, respondents who think in terms of either social justice praxis or informational justice would not have encountered this item as we originally anticipated.

Justice and other virtues. To complete this discussion of how items appear to have been interpreted by respondents, we return to the expected-to-be-peripheral items. Not all of them are examples of a process that would prevent conditions of injustice. Instead, some of them are genuinely peripheral to the construct of justice; they reflect consideration for others (i.e., virtues or goods that are worthy but equivocal or clearly not about justice) or contractual and moral duties that, as stated, are individual rather than social in their justice character.

For example, Item 4 (cited above; see Table 1) certainly considers the well-being and morale of the students, but justice does not demand this (i.e., students have a freedom right from discouragement and the correlative duty on the part of the teacher to refrain from discouragement, but students do not have a claim against the teacher for constant encouragement, and therefore, the teacher has no correlative obligation to provide constant encouragement; see Wolterstorff, 2008). The near-zero value on the justice–injustice scale for this item comports well with respondents understanding the peripheral nature of this action scenario.

In the case of Item 22, "In working with colleagues to ensure that non-White groups are represented in the teaching of history, a history teacher comes to the realization that he has not thought much about his own culture," the history teacher is engaged in activity that is his contractual duty (working with colleagues to ensure a representative history) and further takes on his moral or professional duty to reflect on his cultural positionality. But the former engagement is to be expected (i.e., anything otherwise would be an injustice), whereas the latter is highly individualistic. This individual-emphasis action scenario is largely peripheral to social justice, and its relatively low ranking among justice items suggests that respondents interpreted this item in this way.

In sum, when looking at the rankings of the foregoing examples, particularly those that were predicted to be prototypical of social justice in the schools, it appears that respondents were inclined to rate most favorably those items that accomplished or strongly promised rectification of wrongs, both within the schools and the larger school community. Anticipatory or procedural means to prevent injustice, statements of basic contractual or moral obligation, and the fostering of virtue or identity development among students were not rated as favorably. Indeed, these were more peripheral to the construct of social justice in the schools, which resulted in their justice–injustice scale values being much closer to the origin. Finally, there was little disagreement about the degree to which antithetical items were examples of injustices.

Limitations of the Study and Further Research Needs

We suggest that three issues conspire to prevent a clear and elaborated understanding of how respondents understand social justice action in the school setting, thereby limiting the claims and generalizations of this study. Before elaborating on these issues, we acknowledge that not all possible behaviors across all levels of enactment were operationalized in this study. More distal or broadly encompassing societal institutions are not sites of actions reflected in our instrument, for example, lobbying at the state level to influence school financing or poverty programs or, perhaps, even organizing to boycott large retailers that do not provide health coverage for employees, given what we know about the effects of health and poverty on education (Berliner, 2006; Milner, 2013). However, what is *possible* behavior under the umbrella of social justice is not what is prototypical, which was the concern of this study.

Sample size and selection are an issue. This study was intended to obtain the perspective of people who were relatively sophisticated with respect to social justice in education by virtue of their familiarity with the literature and so on, that is, the people likely to have obtained reasonable insight with respect to the concept. Whereas the data illustrate substantial concurrence, the sample was limited to 79 individuals, 28 of whom were students from two graduate programs in education with a social justice emphasis. It is possible, therefore, that the results would be somewhat different if the data were disaggregated by certain types of individual differences.

For example, in a post hoc analysis of our results, examined by gender, we found that the ranking of the depicted situations by men and women correlated .91 (Spearman rho), which suggests virtually no differences. But it is reasonable to wonder whether race or ethnicity might affect the results. Because our sample was predominantly White (which is representative of students and faculties in graduate programs), it was not possible to examine that. But this would be a reasonable question to pursue in future research.

Assumptions about respondents' presumed knowledge of social justice and its literature were stipulated based upon their scholarship or graduate program curriculum. It would be useful to replicate this study as well with educators who do not have similar educational or occupational credentials (i.e., presumably less knowledgeable about the social justice literature but not necessarily any less engaged in social justice praxis) to see how closely their implicit understandings of social justice matched those of the participants in this study. Further, it would be useful to focus specifically on school leaders to understand their conception of the topic, particularly given its emphasis in the ELCC standards (see M. Young & Mawhinney, 2012).

In other words, on the first issue of sample size and selection, neither broad representativeness nor balanced input can be claimed for this study. Further investigations are needed to confirm the findings of this study, and more systematic sampling across the full range of scholars (faculty and graduate students) having or developing expertise pertaining to social justice in the schools is required.

Measurement questions need answers. The instrument employed in this study received sufficient attention by experts in the field to ensure the various items (action scenarios) tap into the primary construct of justice, whether prototypical (justice) or antithetical (injustice), and the secondary (peripheral) construct of non-justice-related considerations, such as well-being, morale, or esprit de corps. However, no cognitive laboratory or other method was employed to ensure that each item was construct invariant.

As well, extensions of this work might develop items that are linked to various principles, ideas, or metaethics that have been articulated and might serve as hypotheses for thematic structures, yet the current instrument was designed to elicit prototypical features (actions) and not with the intent to differentiate among the latent constructs. For example, items that might distinguish the relative importance of redistribution, recognition, and representation as remedies—or the procedural, interpersonal, or informational approaches to prevention—would tighten the connection between social justice theory and what it means to act justly. Beyond the theory articulated here, we may wish to develop items sensitive to the four principles of justice identified by Tillich (1954): adequacy, equality, personality (treating persons as persons, not things), and liberty (see pp. 57–62). We might pursue one or both of Rupp's (2011) insights, namely, explore how justice is seen to be an end in itself (deontic) as well as a means to instrumental and relational ends, and whether sources/originators of (in)justice events (e.g., students, teachers, principals, parents, peer groups, agencies, etc.) are more salient and a better way to understand the social justice judgments reported. Or we might explore how to construct items that would capture elements of anti-oppressive education (Kumashiro, 2000), for example, "the imperative to *repeat with a difference*" (p. 43), "learning involves multiple ways of reading" (p. 47), or being "open for what is really uncontrollable and unknowable" (p. 46).

Interpretive challenges due to contextual specifics. Justice judgments are often quite sensitive to context (see, e.g., Colquitt et al., 2015; pp. 281–282; Habermas, 1990, pp. 178–183; Wolterstorff, 2008, p. 300), but the items were not rich in contextual information. We speculate respondents had to imagine the context in order to generate a judgment—or imagine a range of contexts and attempt to settle on a single judgment across that range of contexts. Because respondents come from a variety of personal and professional contexts from which they may draw to inform their judgment, items responses may differ among respondents not because they tap fundamentally different constructs by themselves but because the context respondents must draw upon to evaluate action scenarios activates a different cognitive schema than would have been activated with a more highly specified scenario (see Crawshaw et al., 2013).

Conclusions

We conclude that the implicit understandings of social justice in school settings among educational leaders and scholars who are professedly knowledgeable about social justice in education divide into two major categories: social justice versus social injustice. Further, we assert that these relatively sophisticated judges see an important distinction among social justice actions; they divide the actions into two types. Most prototypically social justice actions are targeted at *remedying* injustices (although not all proposed remedies are seen as highly prototypical). Less clearly prototypical are actions for *preventing* injustices. Preventing injustices is action for social justice, but no preventative action is among the most highly rated. In other words, prototypical social justice action is unequivocally about righting wrongs, but we are equivocal about whether establishing the means for minimizing injustices in the first place should be considered prototypical of social justice action.

Our distinction between remedying and preventing injustice, and the disparate rankings between such types of actions, has implications for both school practice and the preparation of school practitioners. When it comes to practice, we highlight two concerns. First, putting remedy before prevention risks constantly operating in a reactive mode. Although there is no doubt that wrongs must be righted, due respect given, past injustices renounced, and reparations made, restoration requires revision (i.e., not just a change in today but a re-visioning of how schools ought to be)—social justice is not just reaction to injustice (see Lebacqz, 1987). Like Causton and Theoharis (2014), we see "setting a bold, clear vision" (p. 4), and organizing and prioritizing the work of everyone in the school coherently in pursuit of that vision, as a central prerequisite to achieving and sustaining social justice in school settings, which demands planning and designing for right practice in the first place. Both remedying and preventing injustices are important, and the more prototypical remedy should not overshadow the indispensability of prevention.

The other consideration we emphasize for school practice is to remember justice is not the only virtue. When it comes to school practices, social justice judgments effectively translate into moral actions for motivated autonomous practitioners capable of prudence and possessing temperance and fortitude. This means that teachers, counselors, principals, and other education professionals must not only be able to determine the morality of any norm of professional or local community practice. School practitioners must be able to enact a reasoned and responsive decision in the right manner and spirit. Knowing what is just is not enough. And, even when it is, finding the right way is equally important.

When it comes to preparing educational leaders, the teaching of concepts, whether social justice concepts or otherwise, typically relies on presenting students with examples

to illustrate both the concept and what is not consistent with the concept. Notably, in discussing this instructional strategy, Jonassen (2006) explicitly invokes prototype theory. So for the many academic programs in education that are grounded in social justice theory, this study provides important instructional material to help better understand the concept. Namely, among the education scholars and doctoral students focusing on social justice, what is most prototypical is taking action to set right what has been wrong in the conduct, content, and organization of schooling, with greatest emphasis on rectifying conditions and realizing opportunities for individuals and groups with marginalized identities. Actions intended to prevent injustices are more equivocally prototypical than actions to remedy injustices, and the concept of social justice action of any type is distinct from any action that represents social injustice.

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Authors

ROSS E. MITCHELL (ross_mitchell@redlands.edu) is associate professor of education at the University of Redlands; fellow at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Institute, The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, University of Texas, Austin; and chair of the American Educational Research Association Special Interest Group: Research on the Education of Deaf Persons. His research and scholarship span three areas: educational policy and administration, demography of deafness, and methods for quantitative research.

RODNEY K. GOODYEAR (rod_goodyear@redlands.edu) is professor of education at the University of Redlands, emeritus professor of education (Counseling Psychology), University of Southern California, and a fellow of both AERA and APA. His primary areas of scholarship have been processes and outcomes of counseling and of counseling supervision.

JANEE BOTH GRAGG, (janee_bothgragg@redlands.edu) is associate professor of education at the University of Redlands. Her research has focused on therapeutic engagement processes with diverse and often times underserved populations (i.e. Hispanic families, substance users, and adolescents), and student mental health. Janee is currently serving as president of the California Association of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors.

PHILIP S. MIRCI (philip_mirci@redlands.edu) is associate professor of education at the University of Redlands. His research interests focus on social justice, andragogy, and transformative learning.

RONALD MORGAN (Ronald_morgan@redlands.edu) is associate professor of education at the University of Redlands. His recent research has focused on outcomes of psychiatric treatment for adolescents and roles of California high school counselors.