Social Justice Leaders: Critical Moments in Headteachers'/Principals' Development

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Abstract	Article Info
Being a social justice leader makes significant demands on the individual headteacher/principal particularly where there may be conflict, competing demands and significant resistance both within the school and the wider community. There is a question then about what motivates some headteachers to commit to pursuing social justice and equity in their role and what part their own experiences play in their stance around social justice leadership. This article draws from the case studies conducted in Scotland as part of the Social Justice Leadership research strand of the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN). In the ISLDN framework the headteacher is characterized at the micro level. The leadership stories illustrate that this micro level is complex and includes not only the practices of these leaders but their stance, personal and professional experiences and continuing professional learning.	

Introduction

This article pays particular attention to the micro level of the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) framework (Angelle, 2017) where the headteacher characterised as working at the micro level, has a significant role in shaping the conditions for learning in a school. Bogotch and Reyes-Guerra (2014) argue that there has been a tendency to focus on in-school improvement processes in the development of social justice leadership and a failure to recognise issues of power and relationships within wider socio-political contexts. The ISLDN framework provides a means to track the power relationships between the macro, meso and micro. However, the significance also of professional identity in social justice leadership development is also often overlooked.

The article draws from four case studies conducted in Scotland to explore the micro using the concept of positionality of social justice leaders as a dimension of the micro level. Positionality is a concept used in social science research to denote the significance of the social position and lived experiences of the researcher in the research process (Maynard, 2013). In this article, we build on this understanding of the concept of positionality seeing it as the intersection of the personal position of the social justice leader with that of the professional and socio-political contexts. The leadership stories illustrate that this micro level is complex and includes not only the practices of these leaders but their personal and professional experiences, development and values with regard to social justice leadership. This intersection of the personal, professional and socio-political is central in the (re)forming of professional identity across a career (Mockler, 2011).

Critical Externalities: Macro and Micro Levels

English (2008) highlights the issues of power and relationships in his discussion of the societal contexts of education and the impact these have on principals seeking to tackle issues of exclusion and inequality. He terms these 'critical externalities' and these encompass aspects such as policy, socio-economic trends and culture which, though external to a school, influence its workings and the day-to-day lives of the school community. English contrasts 'critical externalities' with 'schooling internalities' which focus on the processes and practices within a school such as culture, school-level policies, leadership styles, curricular and pedagogic programmes and practices. In noting these as plural – externalities and internalities – English is pointing to the multidimensional nature of these spaces.

In the ISLDN research project the framework of macro, meso and micro affords a means of tracking external expectations and demands on the practice of social justice leadership within the school. The framework can bring a finer grained sense to the critical externalities through the idea of the macro and the meso. In tracking policy in the Scottish educational context the macro has been characterised as central government setting 'policy intentions' (Taylor, 1997) and the meso level as governmental bodies at national and local level using curricular guidelines, professional standards and quality assurance frameworks to translate these policy intentions into sets of 'policy processes', sets of discursive practices (Saarinen & Ursin, 2012), which then school leaders are expected to enact (Torrance & Forde, 2017). In the ISLDN, the role of headteacher has been characterised as the 'micro' level with attention paid to factors that hinder or facilitate their practice. Some of these factors relate to the external macro and meso levels but some are internal to the school. School leaders act as boundary spanners (Timperley, 2009) working across boundaries grappling with these 'critical externalities' and 'schooling internalities'. To see this process as simply a tension between competing external and internal demands seems to reduce the agency of school leaders in both determining and enacting social justice

practices. However, from the leadership stories in the Scottish case studies of social justice leaders it is clear that external expectations and understandings, though codified in policy, do not simply flow in a downward linear manner to the micro level. Instead we can see from these stories that this process is more contested and the micro level more complex. Into this process we need to place the position, stance and motivation of individual school leaders in their readiness to exercise social justice leadership in a deeply contested space. These social justice leaders work towards ensuring barriers to learning for all pupils are removed so that the conditions for effective learning are fostered in an inclusive culture.

Pushing the Concept of Positionality

Since the 1970s, the idea of objectivity in social science research has been subject to critique (Stanley & Wise, 2002) where, for example, feminist research highlighted the importance of the researcher acknowledging their own social position, for example in terms of gender, social class, race and other social factors (Maynard, 2013). Franks (2002) argues that positionality is not simply the attributes an individual might claim but is something that is attributed by others: "By 'positionality' I refer to the way in which the individual identity and affiliations we have are positioned by others" (p. 42). Therefore, it is not simply the autobiographical details of the researcher that are important but how these are viewed by others. Thus, the significance of positionality lies not just in the perspective a researcher derives from their own social position, but in the perceived and actual relationships of power. This is not a straightforward dyadic relationship of more powerful and less powerful between researcher and subject but one that will be shaped by the positionality of the researcher and the subject and what meaning each attributes to this. Moser (2008) argues that "The recognition that we belong to various social categories that position us differently within power structures has helped researchers move away from traditional views of impartiality and claims to neutrality in fieldwork" (p. 385). Merriam

et al. (2001) extend the question of positionality in relation to the insider/outsider status of the researcher where positionality of the researcher relates not only to "race, class, gender, culture and other factors" (p. 405) but where the researcher is positioned in particular regimes of power. For example, whether the researcher is a member of the dominant or a minority group and whether this is on an organisational or societal level.

Practice associated with the concept of positionality in research includes the researcher making explicit the stance, beliefs, motivations and experiences in order that those who are being researched as well as those who might use the research can have some insight into the researcher. The issue of positionality has been recognised in the ISLDN where there is the requirement for all researchers to write a personal position paper on their beliefs on social justice to share with their fellow researchers on the project. Slater (2017), in his analysis of these statements, noted that researchers:

described social justice in personal terms. Many examined childhood and family experiences as they changed over time. In adolescence and young adulthood, they began to become more aware of injustice and its many manifestations. Then they pursued academic careers in which they studied these issues and advocated change (p. 17).

These 'personal terms' related to both "early experiences as well as experiences in their academic careers" (Slater, 2017). Each of the researchers made an explicit statement about their stance in order to surface the understandings and values underpinning their stance and to elucidate their motivation in adopting their stance towards social justice.

While positionality is an important concept in research helping to surface issues of power, status and influence in a wider socio-political context, we can also consider its significance in a professional context. Taylor, Tisdell and Stone Hanley (2000) as three adult educators occupying different positions regarding gender and race, explored their own positionality by taping and analysing their extensive discussions. In their reflections, these three adult educators identified

the way in which they drew from the same framing of adult education as a liberatory process. However, they also noted that each engaged with this idea differently in practice and so concluded that these differences arose in part from their different positionality:

> *we found in a very tangible way, how positionality influences our ways of knowing and doing. We found that despite our similar theoretical grounding, our positionality also shaped the way we interacted and HOW we even talked about these issues (n.p., emphasis in original).*

Therefore, this concept of positionality can be applied to a professional context particularly in considering what has shaped the stance of school leaders in relation to questions of social justice in education. Here we must be aware of the danger that 'positionality', if simply a listing of factors related to the individual's social position, can risk becoming stereotypical. Therefore, we need to push this idea of positionality further and look at the intersection of personal/individual experiences and factors related to the position of an individual school leader and seek to understand the way in which social factors that might be ascribed to an individual intersect with their stance, their experiences and their motivations.

Muzvidziwa (2014, p. 799), looking at the role of educational leaders in "creating enabling socially just educational environments", provides a brief but powerful account of the barriers she experienced in her own education which were deeply influential in shaping her interests in social justice, leadership and education. As a girl, her education was not valued by the family and was abruptly halted after only two years in secondary school because of prevailing social attitudes towards gender: "My parents, like most African parents, did not consider educating girls as an investment and hence would not let their daughters be more educated than their sons" (p. 801). Jean-Marie (2010) also highlights the importance of her own experiences as an African American woman in shaping her stance as a leadership educator in relation to social justice.

Another example is provided by Szeto (2014) who records the work of a principal who exercises social justice leadership in Hong

Kong. Crucial to this principal's development as a social justice leader were his own educational experiences. He began his own education in the colonial era in a 'roof top' primary school, where there was very limited resourcing and low aspiration, the assumption being that the pupils were destined for factory work. The move to a school where there were better resources and high aspirations for the success of the pupils was formative for this principal in shaping his views on social justice and education in his professional life. This belief in social justice came partly from being taught by highly skilled and committed teachers: "He was deeply impressed by the teachers' ideology and had a desire to become a teacher" (Szeto, 2014 p. 117) but also from his professional experiences through his career where he actively promoted the idea of education as the means of social mobility.

These personal experiences recorded by Muzvidziwa (2014), Jean-Marie (2010) and Szeto (2014) are significant in developing a clear stance towards social justice and fairness as professional practitioners. The wider socio-political context intersecting with their formative experiences can also be significant in shaping leaders. In an earlier study, Jean-Marie (2006) examines the formative experiences of three African-American leaders in higher education that shaped their stance and practice as educators and leaders. These experiences include their own exclusion and their engagement in political activism. The stories reveal how they are "committed to social justice and racial uplift [and they] connect their professional work with social and political activism in the quest for equality and justice for African Americans and all people" (Jean-Marie, 2006, p. 86). The educational experiences of exclusion alongside their political activism as African-American women were crucial in shaping the stance of these educators. However, while these studies highlight the importance of the intersection of the wider socio-political context and the personal educational experiences of these leaders, there is possibly an additional dimension we need to bring to the fore when we look at the development of educators, whether teachers or

leaders, that of the professional experiences of leaders as they progress through their career.

The Scottish Case Studies

The Scottish case studies have been gathered as part of the ISLDN research project which is supported by two learned societies related to educational leadership - UCEA and BELMAS - and involves researchers working in over 20 different educational systems. This research project has two strands (1) High Needs Schools (2) Social Justice Leadership. This article now draws from the Scottish contribution to the social justice leadership strand to explore the question of what has shaped this determination on the part of the case study school leaders to work towards social justice. In doing so, we can better understand how to foster this stance in the development and practice of other school leaders. We begin with a brief outline of the research study and the case studies conducted in Scotland. We then move on to explore the leadership stories of these case study headteachers to identify some of the key influencing factors in shaping their stance towards social justice in education. From this we consider the implications of these findings for the development and ongoing support of social justice leadership.

Four overarching research questions were generated by the ISLDN group to be used to frame the interviews:

• How do social justice leaders make sense of 'social justice'?

• What do social justice leaders do?

• What factors help and hinder the work of social justice leaders?

• How did social justice leaders learn to become social justice leaders?

In this article we draw from the responses of the four Scottish case study headteachers (Table 1) to all four questions in order to explore the intersection of political, personal and professional experiences, set

within a wider socio-political frame. Each interview was recorded and taped, then analysed to identify key themes. Reports of the interviews, framed by these themes, were then written up and formed part of the case study along with the school profile. To investigate the issue of 'positionality' the written case studies, particularly the interview reports were reviewed to identify emerging themes.

Table 1

The Scottish Case Studies

Case Study	Name	Sector	Location
1	Morag	Primary/Infant	Small town, local authority - mixed rural and urban
2	Hamish	Secondary	City, local authority - urban
3	Sarah	Primary	Small town, local authority - mixed rural and urban
4	Ellen	Secondary	City, local authority - urban

Critical Moments in the Development of Social Justice Leaders

We can begin with the brief biographical details of the four case study headteachers. The four headteachers worked in different settings, two working in the early years and primary sector (ages 3-12) and two in the secondary sector (ages 12-18) and they had varying degrees of experience in the role of headteacher. The two primary headteachers (Morag and Sarah) lead schools situated in small towns

in the central belt of Scotland while the two secondary headteachers (Hamish and Ellen) work in comprehensive secondary schools located in city authorities, one in an area of disadvantage and one in a more demographically and economically mixed area. All headteachers are white Scottish and three of the four headteachers are female. Sarah and Morag had held headships in other schools, for Morag this was her fourth headship. For Hamish this was his first headship, having been in post for two and a half years. Ellen has held her headship post for more than ten years.

Looking at the personal factors such as gender and race can be significant but to take these factors alone when we consider issues of positionality in relation to social justice leadership does not bring to the fore the intersection of the political, personal and professional. We explore this intersection by using the following emerging themes from the case study interviews to frame the discussion:

- Personal background and experiences
- Early career aspirations
- Career roles and people
- Professional learning
- Career long interest and stance.

Each of these themes is discussed with reference to the specific case study and quotations drawn from the interviews used as illustration. Pseudonyms have been used in the reporting of the case studies.

Personal Background and Experiences

There were three areas dealt with when the headteachers reflected on their personal experiences that included, religious belief, family circumstances which also linked with political attitudes. Hamish reflecting on his background highlighted the importance of the family's religious background in shaping an ethical stance but this was also linked to political activism. It was this background that

shaped his beliefs: *"learning that comes from arguments. I learn from arguing with people or disagreeing or debating or changing my mind several times."* This combination of religion and politics was also to be found in Morag's experiences who cited an interest in liberation theology as the starting point for her work on social justice which is now combined with a left wing political perspective and so her social justice leadership is underpinned by personal values and a broad political perspective on society, *"it's in my core."*

Family background and economic hardship combined with lack of access to education experienced by her parents were deeply important influences in the case of Sarah who grew up with the understanding of the value of education and a determination to progress by means of education: *"I suppose it must have come from family that if I wanted to do something I had to do it through education … education for me was a way out of, not quite poverty but not much above it."* While not from a disadvantaged background, it was significant for Ellen that she was the first person in her family to be able to access university: *"Absolutely […] I was the first person in my family to go to university so I didn't come from an impoverished background but had the opportunities."*

Early Career Aspirations

One interesting theme emerging from the data was the limited aspirations of the headteachers at the beginning of their career. Indeed, Hamish indicated that he had been unsure of whether to enter teaching in the first place: *"I wasn't even sure I was going to be a teacher."* The other three headteachers indicated that at the outset of their careers they had no aspiration to become a headteacher. Instead, as Sarah noted her motivation in early career was about making a difference, a stance that continued to inform her role and aspirations: *"I started as a teacher because I wanted to make a difference and I don't think that has ever left me."*

The motivation to become a headteacher evolved over the course of their careers and was stimulated by different circumstances. For Morag, this was partly an economic decision, the need to support the family. For Ellen, the aspiration to be a headteacher built gradually through her career and this shaped the style of leadership she adopted: *"I didn't want to be the heroic leader, yes I was the headteacher but I wanted to build a team around me who would all be contributing to school particularly using Principal Teachers as well as Deputy Headteachers."* All four identified that a realisation of the impact that they could have as a headteacher was an important driver to move into headship. In addition, Morag who had worked in impoverished communities before teaching, realised the influence she could exercise on developing wider school communities through headship.

Career Experiences

One aspect worth noting is the readiness with which the four headteachers could each recall critical professional experiences, both positive and negative, which helped shape their career aspirations in relation to social justice and which remain influential in their current role as headteachers. An example recalled by Hamish concerned witnessing the attitudes and actions of colleagues dealing with pupil behaviour. He related how these experiences shaped his thinking:

> *…youngster in trouble, at risk of exclusion and I'm looking at the situation thinking, this is the teacher's fault. Now clearly it wasn't the teacher's fault but what I meant by that was that a teacher with a different skill set and a different set of attitudes would have dealt with that situation in such a way where the young person would not be out the class and would still be engaged in education. Yet the focus of the system in school was always on the behaviour of the young person and never on the practice issues of the teacher, because the teacher was always right. And this has always been something I've been really, really interested in.*

Another example is the description of a punitive leadership culture in the school, which further disadvantaged pupils who have already experienced marginalisation and disadvantage: Sarah recalls that *"my headteacher at the time was awful … I could never understand what they were doing in a school."* This resulted in Sarah seeking an

alternative career path in education working in additional support needs. Early career experiences were also crucial to Ellen and these helped her better understand the lives of young people in disadvantaged areas. From these experiences, she felt she understood how to balance an aspiration for them to improve their life chances through education while respecting their culture:

> *I think if you start teaching in [an area of disadvantage] you are right in it. So, to survive as a teacher and as a young teacher at that point I think you learn to engage in and interact with young people within their context and culture showing them that you respect them as people but you also want them to extend their horizons.*

Working in the public education system in Scotland inevitably meant that all four headteachers had worked in a variety of different settings: the location of the particular school in communities who experienced greater or lesser degrees of disadvantage or advantage; the culture of the particular school. For Ellen, the experience of working in an area of significant disadvantage led to an understanding that part of the role of teachers was to create the conditions for learning for all learners: *"in everything I think how you lead is about who you are as a person and the values you hold as an individual and those for me must have been shaped by five years starting in [XXX] - can't not have, and seeing some really difficult times for young people."* It was important not only to make a difference but to ensure that she as a teacher supported and reduced barriers to help ameliorate the difficult circumstances experienced by groups of learners. For Morag, the context and culture of the school was significant in her motivation as a social justice leader. Here, she expressed dissatisfaction with her headship and experiences in an 'ordinary' school, a school set in an economically advantaged community, and she subsequently moved to a school in an area of disadvantage where it *"felt like coming home."*

Career roles

There was no one typical route to headship described in these case studies. The two secondary headteachers had incrementally moved

through a series of management roles gaining increasing responsibility. Of these however, Hamish had changed career path from subject teaching to pastoral care which was *"very much focused on social justice."* Experiences out of school were significant in building leadership for social justice for the two primary headteachers. The interest in liberation theology had previously led Morag to take on different posts including community based posts funded by the church but this was underpinned by the same motivation: *"My entire career has been about addressing inequalities and it has driven all the jobs that I've taken and it's been the driver for all the roles I've adopted in the education field."* Sarah worked in special education before becoming a local authority development officer - in the area of support for learning - leading a team of support teachers working with teachers in schools to meet the needs of diverse groups of pupils.

People

The context and culture of the different schools have been important in shaping the identity and practice of these four case study headteachers with regard social justice. Some of the people with whom two of these headteachers had worked were highlighted as being important in shaping their vision for education and their professional values. Hamish reflected on this: *"I think probably, key people in your career development you know from schools you work in, people you listen to, people who made sense, people whose views chimed with the things that you thought from your own experience in every school I've been at."* Role models who were inspirational were cited by Sarah: two headteachers in special education provision who were deeply committed to addressing the needs of the pupils to enable them to integrate into the wider society when they left school.

> *Absolutely [XX] in [XX] she was absolutely committed to ensuring that deaf children had the skills to be people in the world through their language and actually she let nothing stand in the way of that. [XX] in [XX] was the same. I disagreed with [XX] because she thought it had to be completely oral but she was all about deaf children learning to be people in a hearing world but she absolutely committed and they were both inspirational*

women…. I have worked with a lot of really inspirational women and people who are really committed at their core to what they are doing and I think that is really important. It's about knowing what's right, not getting it right because we don't always, we get things wrong but knowing what's right and doing what's right and I don't mean that in any classist way.

Hamish also referred to mentors and tutors who had been influential *"picked up things from lots of different people … I couldn't say that this one person had a more significant influence in my career than others"* and to headteachers he had worked with who had helped to shape his understandings of his role as a leader, tackling disadvantage. He used words such as *"political', "passionate", "thoughtful", "intellectual", and "reflective"* to describe these headteachers.

Professional Learning

While early career experiences were formative, importantly all the case study headteachers actively sought opportunities to continue to develop professionally. Thus, another set of experiences in their development as social justice leaders referred to by all four case study headteachers was professional learning. Professional learning opportunities included formal programmes particularly university based postgraduate programmes in areas of specialism or headship preparation. These headteachers also displayed a readiness to seek out expertise to support their own practice. For example, having experienced resistance in the local community towards racial equality, Morag reported that she had looked to work with a centre for racial equality. She highlighted the importance of this wider network for both developing practice and understandings but also in sustaining herself on a personal level. Morag developed and maintained a range of networks that broadened her own horizons and those of the school community. Indeed, Morag highlighted networking as key, paraphrasing a quote from a book from the 1990s, *Women Who Run With Wolves* (Pinkola Estés, 1992):

it's says something like 'the bridges we choose to grace with our favour are the ones that nourish us' and… it's about a really key way of sustaining yourself is recognising where

you will not get that nourishment and not expecting to get it there because that is a massive drain when you expect to get it from a place and you don't get it but actually knowing where you really do get it from and going to those pools to nourish yourself. And I think that is a really key message for life because you know, where am I getting support from? … so know where it comes from and it will come from people…and it will probably not come from the place you expect. And I think that's a really key way of keeping yourself energized and being wise, it's wise. … And I think that has really sustained me because it's quite easy to go under.

For Hamish and Ellen, the completion of the headship preparation programme, *the Scottish Qualification for Headship*, particularly the critically reflective approach enabled them to reflect on their own experiences and professional values: *"you're constantly reflecting on your behaviours, your dispositions, your attitudes about issues to do with social justice"* (Hamish). This is a programme for aspirant headteachers but equally important had been a yearlong professional learning programme for experienced headteachers completed recently by two of the case study headteachers, Sarah and Ellen. They reported that this programme partly validated their stance about social justice and whether this was fostering an inclusive approach to learning for all and ensuring all pupils were enabled to take opportunities and to succeed and realise their potential.

This programme also provided them with access to new ideas and different networks. Ellen reported that *"when I started teaching the emphasis was beginning to be on inclusion. Whereas now it's inclusion but it's also about equity and equity means that everyone doesn't need the same because some people need a bigger step up to get them to the starting blocks."* For Sarah, this programme enabled her to travel which both validated and extended her thinking: *"when I went to Australia and saw it there [the pedagogic philosophy and practices], it was just mind bending but the nice thing for me it's not just about me and [the school] anymore. It's about the staff team we all basically think like that now and it's going to be really interesting."* Less formal professional learning was also important in fostering their ongoing development. Morag had some years ago undertaken a Myers Briggs analysis that she now reflected on in a more informed way:

As you grow, you become a holistic developed person so you embrace your shadow and so I would say… I now do in my downtime I do far more of the 'I' the introvert bit… that's where the reflection comes and the thinking so, not needing the people, the buzz from the people… I'm not driven by principle really, the principles come from the heart …but I can do the thinking… I've got the balance.

Career Long Interest and Stance

These four headteachers had different starting points. For some their family context and their early experiences were formative in shaping a career long stance towards social justice, inclusion and equality. For Morag, social justice was clearly articulated in the early stages of her career. She had dedicated her adult life to contesting injustice at individual, school, community and societal levels and perceived of the role of headteachers as *"giving voice to those who find themselves in marginalised positions."*For the headteachers, although their understandings and practice had evolved throughout their career, this sense of working with disadvantaged pupils had continued, growing in significance. Thus, Ellen indicated that:

social justice for me is something that has recently come into educational jargon, if you like. Having started teaching in [XXX] for me education was always about 'making a difference' and ensuring that every young person had the best possible opportunity to achieve and that for many of them qualifications became a passport if they chose to go onto other aspects of life.

These career-long experiences and the focus on the individual were also central to Hamish. Throughout his career, he had focused mainly but not exclusively, on issues related to pupils' behaviour. This headteacher very much believed that notions of 'good kids' and 'bad kids' were very unhelpful. Rather, he focused his efforts on building relationships with every child:

In terms of relationships with young people I've got to say as well, in terms of understanding where they're coming from, recognising the challenges they face has been, it's probably the biggest factor actually. A sense of empathy for young people and their situation, a real sense of unfairness.

Similarly, for Sarah, a commitment to ensuring the learning of every learner represents the core of inclusive education and so of

social justice leadership: *"it's all about the learning, good learning, better learning."*

Conclusion

English (2008) identifies 'critical externalities' and 'schooling internalities' as significant sets of factors that influence the practice of social justice leadership at the micro level. There is a tendency to see the flow of influences and power in an educational system as a downward trajectory from the critical externalities to the schooling internalities and this might suggest that headteachers have limited scope for shaping their practice as social justice leadership. Torrance and Forde (2017) tracked the factors at each level - macro, meso and micro - that the headteacher identified as either facilitating and hindering their practice as a social justice leader. That analysis of the hindering or facilitating factors underlined the way in which the case study headteachers had a clear understanding of the context of the school and its community from which they made judgements about the way in which they would go about meeting those external expectations in ways that support the particular needs and context of the school, balancing the critical externalities and schooling internalities. Therefore, the stance of the headteacher is important and so we propose that in exploring the micro level we need also to consider factors related to the personal and professional experiences of the individual headteachers who engage in social justice leadership.

There are powerful testimonies of serving educational leaders (Jean-Marie 2010, Muzvidziwa, 2014, Szeto 2014,) where, having come from a minority position or from an economically disadvantaged background, their stance has been shaped partly by their personal experiences. There is no doubt that such experiences can be profoundly influential in shaping the vision and values of school leaders. There are powerful testimonies from educational leaders coming from minority positions whose stance with regard to social justice is, in part, shaped by the personal experiences of

marginalisation and disadvantage. However, it is not only those who have come from marginal or minority positions that seek to act as social justice leaders and indeed, there are examples of social justice leaders who come from advantaged backgrounds. In the case studies from Scottish education it is not simply the influence of individual positionality, in terms of headteachers' own social status, their gender, social class and ethnicity, for example.

What has been more influential in developing a social justice leadership stance, is their personal experiences combined with their professional experiences throughout their career. While one headteacher began teaching very clear on her own stance in relation to social justice, for the other headteachers this evolved over their careers. These experiences were not always positive, and indeed, there were examples of negative role models. Therefore, it was not simply the positionality of individual headteachers that was influential but their increasing awareness of their positionality alongside the power and authority they derived from their role as a teacher and then especially as a headteacher.

Reflection on personal position and experiences are important if we are to enable researchers and professional practitioners alike to understand the impact they might have within a particular social setting. However, these must be imbued with a sense of the wider power relationships through which headteachers are positioned, as are others such as teachers, support staff, pupils and parents within the context of schools, which remain hierarchically organised. Part of the task to build social justice leadership then is to enable headteachers and those aspiring to this role to reflect on these relationships of power. Maher and Tetreault (1994) suggest the use of 'positional pedagogies' in increasingly more diverse classrooms which offer the means of moving beyond the binary of victim/perpetrator or oppressor/oppressed that only serve to perpetuate existing unequal power relationships. Instead, they argue that it is essential to enable learners and educators and in this case, school leaders, to explore the operation and consequences of a range

of power relationships related to gender, class, race, ability. To this we would add professional status particularly the role of headteacher. It was the opportunity to exercise power and authority to bring about change to further the opportunities of diverse groups of learners that attracted these case study headteachers to the role.

A central issue from the findings of this study is the importance of these headteachers being ready to express and act upon values related to social justice in education and having the confidence and skill to work towards equity and social justice. We need to recognise in leadership development the importance of using experiences to explore these values and the way in which power can be exercised to exclude or limit opportunities for members of a school community. Forde (2014) identified the importance of explicitly exploring values as part of a headship preparation programme where participants recorded that this had been pivotal in shaping or confirming their stance in relation to social justice. This examination of professional values helped crystallize values and provided them with the confidence to act on these.

Building on this, Forde and Torrance (2017) propose a curriculum framework for the development of social justice leadership in career-long professional learning to foster professional values grounded in social justice and fairness in education. Developing the key concepts, drawing from research related to social justice in education and exploring the practice of social justice leadership are important components in leadership development. From the findings of this article on the leadership stories in the four case studies, we believe that important elements of a leadership development programme include exploration of the headteacher's own social position and personal experiences as well as professional experiences. Therefore, there is an important additional process in enabling participants to reflect on and theorise about their own position and experiences, both personal and professional from a social justice standpoint. From this, headteachers understand the possible influence of their own positionality – which includes professional status as well as

managerial power - on the perceptions of others and how this may or may not foster agency for change in diverse groups within the school community.

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