Leadership for Social Justice: Preparing 21st Century School Leaders for a New Social Order

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At the dawn of the 21st century, there has been an increased focus on social justice and educational leadership (Bogotch, Beachum, Blount, Brooks & English, 2008; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Shoho, Merchang & Lugg, 2005). This paper explores and extends themes in contemporary educational research on leadership preparation in terms of social justice and its importance for both research and practice on a national and international level. In particular, we examine various considerations in the literature regarding whether or not leadership preparation programs are committed to, and capable of, preparing school leaders to think globally and act courageously about social justice for a new social order.

The primary purpose of this paper is to explore and extend themes in contemporary educational research on leadership preparation and training in terms of social justice and its importance for both research and practice on a national and international level. In particular, we focus on leadership preparation programs that help schools and their leaders grapple with social justice issues.

At the dawn of the 21st century, there has been an increased focus on social justice and educational leadership (Bogotch, Beachum, Blount, Brooks & English, 2008; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Shoho, Merchang & Lugg, 2005). Research indicates that social justice issues are often marginalized within educational leadership degree and certification programs, as such an orientation is considered "soft" in comparison to more traditional topics such as organizational theory, principalship, school law, and finance (Shoho, 2006). Other research contends that social justice as an educational intervention is a continuously relevant topic that should be infused into every aspect of leadership preparation,

including the aforementioned subjects (Bogotch, 2005). In this era, schools are thrust into a position in which they must prepare children and communities for participation in a multicultural, multiethnic, multi-religious, and a multinational society (Capper, 1993). As a result, school leaders are under fierce accountability and fiscal pressures, while coping with a larger political environment that is polarized and fearful about the growing complexities of this new social order (Lugg & Shoho, 2006; McMahon, 2007; Walker & Dimmock, 2005).

A growing concern among educators is whether emerging school leaders are prepared to face these pressures and create schools that advocate for education that advances the rights and education for all children (Spring, 2001). Furthermore, studies suggest that leadership preparation programs need to better prepare school leaders to promote a broader and deeper understanding of social justice, democracy, and equity (Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Young & Mountford, 2006). This paper examines various considerations as suggested in the literature regarding whether or not leadership preparation programs are committed to, and capable of, preparing school leaders to think globally and act courageously about social justice. Yet, while we ultimately advocate for a glocal (meaningful integration of local and global issues, imperatives, and concepts) approach to leadership preparation, it is important to note that the central context for this work is the United States. We understand that while we likely identify some issues and

trends that may be relevant to scholars and educators in other national contexts, we do not pretend that this work is universally applicable. Instead, we offer a context-bound analysis from the perspective of three US-based educational leadership scholars and issue an invitation to a multi-national dialogue rather than propose a definitive statement about leadership preparation, writ large.

This article is conceptual in nature. We used the findings from a review of extant literature on the issues under investigation and conducted a content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004). Data were collected from books, professional journals, relevant websites, papers delivered at conferences, and Boolean searches through WilsonWeb and Lexis-Nexis databases, and article abstracts. These searches generated articles published within the last three decades. Identifiers and organizers such as "leadership preparation," "equity," "diversity," "social justice," "liberatory education," "race," "gender," ethics," "urban school," "global education," "critical pedagogy," "oppression," "curricula," "social change," "constructivism," "social development," "social context," and "social order" yielded myriad results. The abstracts from the articles were reviewed to narrow the focus on issues that dealt specifically with leadership preparation, social justice, culturally relevant curriculum, critical pedagogy, and strategies for connecting social justice practice and the study of educational leadership in local, national, and global spheres.

Once data were collected, a coding scheme was implemented to facilitate the identification of emerging themes and patterns. Using inductive codes, themes were sorted into the appropriate categories. Through the use of content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004; Thomas, 1994; Weber, 1990) we quantified and analyzed the presence, meanings and relationships of words and concepts within chosen texts or sets of texts. (Krippendorf, 2004; Roberts, 1997). Inferences were subsequently made about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of which these are a part. The text was then coded into manageable categories on a variety of levels—word, word sense, phrase, sentence, or theme (Carley, 1992)—and then examined using the basic methods of content analysis: conceptual and relational analysis (Thomas, 1994). Specifically, the steps for conducting a content analysis as suggested in the literature (See Carley, 1992; Krippendorff, 2004; Thomas, 1994) were followed. These include: (a) a decision on the level of analysis, (b) the number of concepts to code for, (c) whether to code for existence or frequency of a concept, (d) how to distinguish among concepts, (e) development of rules for coding the texts, (f) what to do with irrelevant information, (g) code the texts, and (h) analyze the results.

Our analysis revealed four dominant issues between educational leadership and social justice literatures that are essential for creating a new social order. These are: (a) conceptualizing social justice and a new social order in leadership preparation, (b) beyond traditional leadership preparation to leadership for social justice, (c) moving toward critical pedagogy: leadership for liberation and commitment to social justice, and (d) making connections between local and global research to extend leadership for social justice. The balance of this paper is devoted to a discussion of each of these themes.

Conceptualizing Social Justice and a New Social Order in Leadership Preparation

The term *social justice* is an elusive construct, politically loaded, and subject to numerous interpretations (Shoho, Merchant & Lugg, 2005). Its foundation is rooted in theology (Ahlstrom, 1972; Hudson, 1981), social work (Koerin, 2003), and it has deep roots in educational disciplines like curriculum and pedagogy (Apple, 1996; Freire, 1998b, 1996). Social justice has also been studied in law, philosophy, economics, political studies, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and public policy (Brooks, 2008a). However, it is a relatively new term to the field of educational administration (Shoho, Merchant & Lugg, 2005). Researchers (e.g. Furman & Gruenewald, 2004; Shields, 2003) contend that social justice has become a major concern for educational scholars and practitioners at the beginning of the 21st century and is driven by many factors (e.g. cultural transformation and demographic shift of Western society, increased achievement and economic gaps of underserved populations, and accountability pressures and high stakes testing).

Bogotch (2002) asserts that social justice has "no fixed or predictable meanings (p. 153). However, other scholars in educational leadership (e.g. Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Marshall & Oliva, 2006) identify common threads and shared understanding of social justice to include creating equitable schooling and education (Bredeson, 2004; Jean-Marie, 2008; Larson & Murtadha, 2002); examining issues of race, diversity, marginalization, gender, spirituality, age, ability, sexual orientation and identity (Dantley & Tillman, 2006); anti-oppressive education (Kumashiro, 2000); and conceptualizing the preparation of leaders for social justice (Capper, Theoharis & Sebastian, 2006; Marshall & Oliva, 2006). Synthesizing the social justice discourse in educational leadership, Furman and Gruenewald (2004) offer three shared meanings of social justice embedded in various ways throughout contemporary literature: critical-humanist perspective, focus on school achievement and economic well-being, and the narratives and values of the Western Enlightenment (see also Brooks, 2008b). The increased attention given to social justice brings to fore a focus on the moral purposes of leadership in schools and how to achieve these purposes (Furman, 2003). As Evans (2007) observed, the scholarship of social justice supports the notion that educational leaders have a social and moral obligation to foster equitable school practices, processes, and outcomes for learners of different racial, socioeconomic, gender, cultural, disability, and sexual orientations backgrounds (p. 250).

Recognition that the role of school leaders is at least in part to advocate on behalf of traditionally marginalized and poorly-served students carries a corollary contention that traditional hierarchies and power structures must be deconstructed and reconfigured, thereby creating a new social order that subverts a longstanding system that has privileged certain students while oppressing or neglecting others (Allen, 2006; Lugg & Shoho, 2006; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). This means that school leaders must increase their awareness of various explicit and implicit forms of oppression, develop an intent to subvert the dominant paradigm, and finally act as a committed advocate for educational change that makes a meaningful and positive change in the education and lives of traditionally marginalized and oppressed students (Allen, 2006; Brooks & Tooms, in press; Freire, 1998b). If educational leaders with this perspective on their practice "can sufficiently increase their stock of courage, intelligence, and vision, [they] might become a social force of some magnitude" (Counts, 1978, p. 29) and extend their scope of influence well beyond the school's walls. Given this perspective, school leaders are potentially the architects and builders of a new social order wherein traditionally disadvantaged peoples have the same educational opportunities, and by extension social opportunities, as traditionally advantaged people.

Beyond Traditional Leadership Preparation to Leadership for Social Justice

In considering the emergence of social justice in educational administration, two strands categorize the paradigmatic shift from indifference or ignorance toward issues of social justice by practitioners and scholars to an embracement of said issues. For the purpose of this paper, these strands are categorized as the *historic administrative practice in public schools* and *a social justice approach to leadership preparation.* Karpinski and Lugg (2006) drew from the historical work of other researchers (e.g., Arnez, 1978; Blount, 1998; Cubberley, 1919; Nassaw, 1979;) to examine the shift of traditional leadership preparation to the emergence of social justice in the field. Similarly, Capper, Theoharis and Sebastian (2006) examined the scholarship—to name a few (e.g., Bredeson, 1995; Littrell & Foster, 1995, Murphy, 1999, 2001; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2004) who have debated what makes up the knowledge base of educational administration. They further examined other scholarship (e.g., Dantley, 2002; Gerwitz, 1998; Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Marshall, 2004) to provide an analysis of the growing interest and body of scholarship on leadership for social justice. We likewise conducted further review of the literature which included Brooks and Miles' (2008) retrospective on intellectual zeitgeist in educational leadership, English's (2005) edited handbook of educational leadership, Murphy's (2006) and Murphy and Vriesenga's (2006) examination of the

education of school leaders through an historical context, Marshall and Oliva's (2006) edited work on leadership for social justice, Normore's (2008) edited work on leadership, social justice, equity and excellence, and special issues of journals devoted to leadership for social justice (i.e., *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 2004; *Journal of Educational Administration, 2007; International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 2006; and *Journal of School Leadership*, 2007).

In the first categorization, *historic administrative practice in public schools,* the knowledge base of educational administration was premised on the traditional model of scholars such as Cubberly, Strayer and Mort (Brooks & Miles, 2008; Karpinski & Lugg, 2006; Murphy, 2006). Karpinski and Lugg (2006) argue that the early history of educational administration as a profession and mode of inquiry drew heavily from hierarchical and simplistic business models that obscured the rich diversity of public schools in the early twentieth century. The promotion of standardization and regimentation of grade levels, teaching materials and curricula, and curricula tracking were the bases of preparing generations of administrators committed to a "one size fits all" (Callahan, 1962) approach to their work that Brooks and Miles (2008) characterized as a "first wave of scientific management" (p. 101-102). According to Grogan and Andrews (2002), traditionally, university-based leadership preparation programs are best characterized as preparing aspiring administrators for the role of a top-down manager and are overloaded with

courses on management and administration (i.e., planning, organizing, financing, supervising, budgeting, scheduling, etc.) rather than on the development of relationships and caring environments within schools to promote student learning (p. 238).

Murphy's (2006) and Murphy and Vriesenga's (2006) historical overview of the preparation of school leaders reveal the impact each era of the period—i.e., ideological (1820-1900), prescriptive (1900-1915), scientific (1947-1985) and dialectic (1986-present)—had on the field. The first three eras, in particular the ideological and prescriptive, were greatly influenced by the homogeneous scholars in educational administration (i.e., white male professors). A similar homogeneity characterized students of these periods in that nearly all were white males holding full-time positions as school administrators (Murphy, 2006, p. 5) whose training and professional socialization were grounded in technical and efficiency approaches and largely removed from the social and philosophical foundations of education (Karpinski & Lugg, 2006). Concerns with the social order of schools dominated in the 1930s and 1950s (Evans, 2007). As Karpinksi and Lugg (2006) conclude:

> Efficient administrators saw human differences in terms of deficiencies and frequently labeled these differences as genetic and moral failings. As a result, generations of mainstream educational administrators were simply not interested in broadly

defined discussions of individualism, democracy, and community (p. 281).

Conclusively, inclusiveness and diversity were overshadowed by the norms of dominant voices in American society (Karpinski & Lugg, 2006; Pounder, Reitzug & Young, 2002) during these periods and permeated the preparation of school leaders.

A post-scientific management shift in the preparation of school leaders occurred during the dialectic era. It was fueled by an onslaught of criticism on the state of leadership preparation programs. As some have argued (e.g., Evans, 2007; Murphy; 2006), cultural and political shifts during the eras of educational administration greatly influenced the ideologies in educational leadership preparation (Brooks & Miles, 2008). However, as the field evolved in response to broader social movements, preparation of school leaders prompted new frameworks that included standards of performance guided by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's (ISLLC). The standards address

> the school leader's role in developing a shared vision of learning; sustaining a school culture conducive to learning; ensuring appropriate management of school operations and resources; facilitating collaboration with families to respond to diverse needs; acting with integrity and fairness; and responding to the school's political, social,

economic, legal, and cultural context (Cambron-McCabe, 2006, 112).

As Evans (2007) cogently asserts, prescriptive performance standards have weakened school leaders' responsibility and ability to respond to the social needs of children and families' the public schools serve. Additionally, some (e.g., Achilles & Price, 2001; Anderson, 2001; English, 2000; Cambron-McCabe, 2006) have criticized the ISLLC standards for its inadequacy in addressing social justice concerns despite the vast improvement of underlying assumptions that impacted earlier approaches to leadership preparation. Brooks and Miles (2008) went as far as to characterize the current standards movement, including the 2002 No Child Left Behind legislation and ISLLC as a "second wave of scientific management in educational administration" (p. 109).

Embedded in the ISLLC standards is a culminating requirement, an internship that is viewed as the ultimate performance test or final rite of passage before gaining an initial license to practice. Principal interns have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills in authentic settings as they work on problems with real-world consequences (Southern Regional Education Board, 2007). However, the internship in preparation programs is suffering from a number of blind spots on addressing social justice concerns schools and communities confront, and have failed to provide a robust, dynamic, and multi-faceted description of leadership for 21st century schools.

Research by SREB (2007) reveals serious flaws in administrative internships, hindering candidates' development in the competencies they will need to be effective principals. For example, among SREB's findings, they discovered that activities like shadowing a veteran principal, handling routine chores, attending school board meetings, or taking up tickets at a school event were the extent of internship experiences. Quality internships require significant investments by university leadership preparation programs in order to fully prepare new principals to face the challenges of leadership (SREB, 2007). Furthermore, licensure standards must move beyond vague statements to specific actions to embody social justice (Cambron-McCabe, 2006; Marshall & Ward, 2004) in educational leadership.

The second categorization which depicts a shift in leadership preparation programs is a *social justice approach* that focuses on how to best educate school administrators and achieve "just" schools (Quantz, Cambron-McCabe & Dantley, 1991). Scholars have paid considerable attention to practices and policies that marginalize students and pose challenging questions to school leaders, educational scholars, and the broader community to engage in discussions about leadership for social justice (Capper, Theoharis & Sebastian, 2006; Fua, 2007; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Normore, 2008; Moos, Moller & Johanson, 2004). Hoff, Yoder and Hoff (2006) conducted a study of pre-service administrators in three master's level certification programs at a state university in New England. Findings from this study support Shoho's (2006)

assertion that educational leaders are not adequately prepared to lead public schools toward a greater understanding of diversity or help change the social order. These aspiring leaders claimed little responsibility for promoting social justice, especially when social change challenged local norms. According to Hoff et al., (2006), in order to prepare leaders to meet these responsibilities with skill and forethought (i.e. habits of hands and habits of mind), university leadership preparation programs must recognize they are in a key position to impact the practices and behaviors of future school leaders. As such, educators who prepare school leaders must question how well they are cultivating revolutionary educational leaders (Kezar & Carducci, 2007) to embrace the social responsibility for creating better schools and better educated students, while simultaneously serving the public good.

Schools today face shifting demands such as growing pressures for accountability, achieving higher levels of learning for all children, and an increase in public scrutiny (Jean-Marie, 2008). Expectations are escalating, and leadership preparation programs face fundamental questions in regard to their purposes, visions of excellence, and measures of programmatic quality. With the launching of a series of conversations in 1994 about the impact of leadership preparation programs and the numerous approaches used in universities around the country, the executive committee of the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) raised important questions about how well prepared were school

leaders to respond to the demanding policy and cultural challenges schools have to contend with (Black & Murtadha, 2007). Leadership preparation programs are now challenged to provide curricula that shed light on and interrogate notions of social justice, democracy, equity, and diversity (Hafner, 2005; Young & Brooks, 2008). Among the challenges identified in the leadership preparation literature for meeting the new demands are: a need for district financial commitment for leadership development programs that will likely draw more candidates to fill the diminishing pipeline for school leadership positions (Kelley & Petersen, 2000; Jackson & Kelly, 2000; SREB, 2007); a need to select texts and articles in educational leadership curricula that adequately address issues of how race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other characteristics create a climate which places some students at an educational disadvantage (Beyer & Apple, 1988; Furman & Starratt, 2002); a need to adequately prepare educational leaders who will have experiences which affect their ability and desire to promote and practice social justice (Furman & Shields, 2005; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003); a prevalent misconception that pre-service training or even out-of-district in-service programs will provide aspiring school leaders with all they need to know about how to be an effective leader in a particular school district (Daresh, 2000), and a need for school districts and universities to forge partnerships for planning leadership development to ensure that similar goals and objectives are met with a non-

redundant curriculum (Muth & Barnett, 2001; SREB, 2007).

Despite these challenges, Young and Mountford (2006) assert that there will be an influx of leadership preparation programs seeking to infuse these issues in their program of study within the next decade that will "emphasize issues of diversity, ethics, and equity, and utilize transformational learning to train leaders who will be better able to advance social justice in their schools and districts as well as in their communities and society at large" (p. 265). In considering curricular revisions to orient aspiring leaders, consideration must be given to student resistance to transformational learning around issues of diversity and social justice (Young & Mountford, 2006; Hoff et al., 2006). Preparation programs must also consider the issue that promoting diversity can be more daunting when the population of potential leaders and their own experiences are themselves homogeneous (Capper et al., 2006; Hoff et al., 2006). Many aspiring leaders have too few opportunities to cross school boundaries and form close linkages with surrounding communities in "porous" relationships (Furman, 2002). Yet, preparation programs must seek to infuse curricula with multiple perspectives to broaden aspiring leaders' experiences beyond their familiarity or limited to their current school setting (Hafner, 2005).

Dimmock and Walker (2005) argue that given the phenomenal and rapid spread of multiculturalism and globalization, there is a need for better understanding school leadership in multiple contexts. Their work in infusing culture and diversity in educational leadership seeks to inform how practitioner-leaders come to understand their immediate contexts better, while appreciating the contextual differences with their counterparts elsewhere. Challenging university educators in educational leadership, Allen (2006) asserts that professors need to reexamine how aspiring leaders are prepared to address the complexity of culture and schooling. They can be guided to reframe the issues surrounding education and develop the skills that will assist in exploring how they think about schools, as well as cultivate in them a more insightful understanding of social justice and equity. Theoretically, this will result in developing mindful leaders (Langer, 1989), an important educational task for leadership preparation programs if schools leaders are to build a new social order (Allen, 2006; Hoff et al., 2006).

A 2004 special issue of Educational Administration Quarterly (EAQ) examined the issue of a broader curriculum in educational leadership, focusing specifically on the ways that social justice concepts could be integrated into existing curricula. The community of scholars and scholarship in educational leadership is increasingly global, as evident by the nationality of authors published in journals such as the *Journal of Educational Administration, Journal of School Leadership, Planning and Changing, Educational Administration Quarterly, International Journal for Leadership in Education, Journal of Research on Leadership Education, Educational Management, Administration and Leadership,* and *Values and Ethics in*

Educational Administration. Social justice leadership is likewise receiving attention at conferences such as the annual New Democratic Ethical Educational Leadership (New DEEL), University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA), American Educational Research Association (AERA), Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM), and UCEA Values, Ethics and Leadership conferences promulgating national and international perspectives about educational administration. Present in these professional publications and conferences are elusive themes that aim to include an increasingly broader range of perspectives. Through research and inquiry, leadership preparation programs can take a comparative perspective in regards to the influence of culture of leadership styles as well as the different world-views, values, and belief systems of our complex nation and world.

Young and Lopez (2005) maintain that the nature of inquiry in educational leadership scholarship is constrained by both its theoretical and methodological tools. They believe that broader frameworks for understanding leadership, organizational life, and the role and purpose of leaders in a changing social context are needed. They also propose that these frameworks are attainable by expanding our theoretical and methodological lenses through three theoretical approaches—critical race, queer, and feminist post-structural—that expose the field to different understandings of leadership and organizational

phenomena. Critical race theory, queer theory, and feminist post-structural theory approaches have much to offer the educational leadership scholarship. *Critical race theory*, a mid-1970s movement that began in law but has spread broadly to other disciplines, examines the relationship among race, racism and power, and challenges the overt and hidden manifestation of racism in the political, legal and organizational, and social arenas that maintain beliefs about neutrality, equal opportunity, and democracy in popular U.S. ideology (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). *Queer theory* as a cultural study field emerged in the 1990s. It examines sexual identities such as sex, sexuality and gender and seeks to understand discourse, structures, behaviors and actions that normalize the interlocking systems of power and sexuality (Foucault, 1980; Tierney, 1997; Tierney & Dilley, 1998). Canonical texts of queer studies by scholars like Foucault (1981, 1987) heavily influenced the modern discourse on the social construction of sexual identities. *Feminist post-structural* theory combines both feminist and post structural perspectives and draws from post structural conceptions of discourse, subjectivity, power and knowledge, and resistance in relation to issues of gender roles, inequity and oppression (Grogan, 2003; Ortiz & Marshall, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1989; Skrla, 2003; Young & Lopez, 2005).

Embedding critical theory, queer theory and feminist post-structural theory in the curriculum of educational leadership preparation programs provides deeper knowledge for

exploring the historically neglected issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability and class and their impact on public school and the education of children. However, they cannot remain on the margins of mainstream educational leadership (Young & Lopez, 2005). The application of these theoretical roots of inquiry in conceptualizing leadership for social justice makes possible an agenda that strengthens research and practice and enhances the possibility for constructing new thinking, methods, and tools for teaching and doing social justice (Marshall & Oliva, 2006). As Karpinski and Lugg (2006) contend, exploring these issues in educational administration has the potential to ensure better academic and social outcomes for all students. According to Young and Lopez (2005), these theories can disrupt our taken-for-granted assumptions of what leadership is, what it can be, and what purposes it ultimately serves (p. 351). Whether critical race theory, queer theory or feminist post-structural theory, all of them, when applied to scholarship and research in educational leadership, have important contributions to make to the field. Also, when used in educational leadership, they can disrupt our taken-for-granted assumptions about the centrality of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in schools and raise the social consciousness of school leaders (Brunner, Opsal & Oliva, 2006). Researchers (e.g. Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, Lind, 2004; Sandoval, 2000; Shohat, 2001) have suggested that while disruption is necessary and good we also need to know how to

reformulate assumptions that are more healthy and empowering to those oppressed by misguided educators and school leaders. Resistance to preparing leaders for social justice might be overcome when we are able to effectively move from the deconstruction phase to the reconstruction phase and beyond.

Grounded in feminist and critical theory, Allen (2006) and her colleagues revamped their leadership preparation program and on its fifth anniversary evaluated the program documenting their efforts on how aspiring principal interns learned to practice critical inquiry/theory in university classrooms. Course syllabi were reconstructed to reflect "looking at the big picture by investigating and gaining a sense of understanding about the social, economic, and political context of issues" (p. 5). Aspiring leaders were asked to examine their beliefs through the lens of critical pedagogy which explored how social justice sought to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations (Allen, 2006). The renewed call for a new social order suggests that it is incumbent upon leadership preparation programs to teach, model, and cultivate the necessary behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge to help shape the social justice value stances and skills of practicing and future administrators (Marshall, 2004) and for shaping their organizations in ways that are inclusive. Additionally, our analysis of the literature suggests that we may need to focus on ways for leadership preparation programs to move in the direction of a social constructivist

approach to teaching and learning involving critical dialogue and pedagogy, and a concentrated effort to understand knowledge construction and social development.

Moving Toward Critical Pedagogy: Leadership for Liberation and Commitment to Social Justice

At a time when educators continue to deploy new strategies to confront the transformative and changing social and historical contexts, they struggle with a common definition for the term critical pedagogy. From a traditional standpoint, researchers have defined critical pedagogy as educational theory and teaching and learning practices that are designed to raise learners' critical consciousness concerning oppressive social conditions (Freire, 1998a, 1998b; Ladson-Billings, 1997; McLaren, 1998, 1993; McLauren & Torres, 1999). Freire (1998a, 1998b) argues that critical pedagogy focuses on personal liberatory education through the development of critical consciousness. He further argues that liberatory education "raises students' consciousness and prepares them to engage in larger social struggles for liberation" (1998b, p. 28). Serving as a catalyst to the commitment of social justice and to the development of a new social order, liberatory education attempts to empower learners to engage in critical dialogue that critiques and challenges oppressive social conditions nationally and globally and to envision and work towards a more just society (Shields, 2002). The use of such a dialogical approach in leadership development programs is one strategy

that can help current and future leaders to confront transformative and changing social conditions and historical contexts.

We propose that the dialogical approach to learning abandons the lecture format and the "banking approach" to education (Freire, 1998, p. 58) in favor of dialogue and open communication among students and instructor where everybody teaches and everybody learns. In preparation for social justice leadership, critical pedagogy is particularly concerned with:

> reconfiguring the traditional student/teacher relationship, where the teacher is the active agent, the one who knows - and the students receive, memorize and repeat information as the passive recipients of the instructor's knowledge. As we move toward a critical pedagogy and a commitment to social justice we envision the classroom as a site where new knowledge, grounded in the experiences of students and teachers alike, is produced through meaningful dialogue and experiences (Freire, 1998a, p. 58).

In support of critical pedagogy and a more social constructivist approach to teaching for social justice, important concepts about knowledge and learning emerged from our analysis of the literature (Gredler & Shields, 2004; Hacking, 1999). Understanding how knowledge is constructed is critical. As Galloway (2007) asserts, knowledge

is not something that exists outside of language and the social subjects who use it. In support of earlier research (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978; Willard, 1992), Galloway suggests that knowledge is a process socially constructed and one that cannot be divorced from learners' social context. Knowledge is constructed by "doing" and from social development experience (2007). Students bring prior knowledge into a learning situation, which in turn forms the basis for their construction of new knowledge (Searle, 1995). Upon encountering something new, learners must first reconcile it in some way with their previous ideas and experiences. This may mean changing what they believe, expanding their understanding, or disregarding the new information as irrelevant (Gredler & Shields, 2004; Sernak, 2006; Shields, 2002). In a constructivist framework, learning is not a process of information transmission from instructor to student, but is instead a process that positions students to be actively involved in constructing meaning from a multiple stimuli (i.e., real-world examples, problem solving activities, dialogues). As Searle (1995) indicates, the instructor makes sure she understands the students' preexisting conceptions and guides activities to address and build on them. Constructivism also often utilizes collaboration and peer criticism as a way of facilitating students' abilities to reach a new level of understanding (Searle, 1995) and "coming to consciousness" (Freire, 1998b). Sernak (2006) adds that leadership preparation programs ought to prepare educational leaders who seek to liberate students to

make social changes, create space and spaces for trust, and nurture participatory, equitable, and just relationships rather than simply managing programs, services, and facilities. Leadership preparation programs should also provide the opportunity for empowerment rather than 'delivering it.'

Educators of social justice leadership would be wise to seek the constructivist approach to training, preparing and developing the new 21st school leaders as the necessary first step of "praxis" configured as an ongoing, reflective approach to taking action. According to Freire (1998b), praxis involves "engaging in a cycle of theory, application, evaluation, reflection, and then back to theory. Social transformation is the product of praxis at the collective level" (p. 75). Researchers argue that critical pedagogy also has a more collective political component in that critical consciousness is positioned as the necessary first step of a larger collective political struggle to challenge and transform oppressive social conditions and to create a more egalitarian society (Apple, 1995; Apple & King, 1977; Broderick, 1997; Carlson & Apple, 1998; Giroux, 1998; 1996). Although leadership preparation and development programs (as well as teacher education programs) have included curriculum topics focused on social justice as part of the prescribed curriculum, another important strategy for increased effective leadership development is to focus on the hidden curriculum (Eisner, 1994).

Hidden curriculum. Recognizing and acting on the "hidden curriculum"

(Apple, 1990; Eisner, 1994) or the "unintentional ways of teaching" (Kumashiro, 2004) can be a powerful and influential tool for effective teaching and learning. According to Lea and Griggs (2005), this "implicit curriculum" in schools is often conducted in the hallways, locker rooms, and at the back of classrooms. Ironically, in the hidden school curriculum, students often build a replica of the very power structures from which they are excluded in the larger social order. Within the culture of social and cultural oppression, students learn about competition, unequal self-worth, and psychological warfare. They also learn that covert relational aggression is a viable and useful strategy to take with them into the adult world. For example, bullying is a curriculum of dominance and oppression in which some students (both perpetrators and witnesses) have learned that bullying is an acceptable form of dehumanization, while other students (both victims and witnesses) have learned docility and silence (see SooHoo, 2004). SooHoo further asserts that an obvious issue perpetuated by educators at many levels in dealing with social issues such as racism, homophobia, and bullying is to simply ignore the issues. The age-old panacea doled out by adults to bully victims is "just ignore it." (p. 200). The act of ignoring leads to indifference and "bystanderism."

Bystanderism and indifference. According to SooHoo (2004), bystanderism is the "response of people who observe something that demands intervention on their part, but they choose not to get involved" (p. 200).

Indifference is heavily influenced by teachers' duty schedules and classroom geographic boundaries. A common code of conduct often expressed in the teacher's lounge is, "If it is not on my watch or in my classroom, I am not responsible." Responsibility for students' behavior in transit during passing periods, nutrition or lunch breaks or in areas such as hallways, locker rooms, and lunch quads are relegated to other adult supervisors, leaving classroom teachers and school leaders not only duty-free but also absolved of any responsibility for incidences of oppressive behaviors and practices.

Given current research that indicates the critical need for a new thinking and a new social order, many educators and/or theorists refuse to rethink the role academics might play in defending teaching and learning institutions of higher education as a crucial democratic public sphere (Giroux, 1998). These institutions are in a position to serve as catalysts of opportunities that address what it means to make teaching and learning more socially conscious and politically responsive in a time of growing conservatism, racism, and social injustices locally, nationally, and internationally. In the following section we discuss strategies for connecting social justice practice and the study of educational leadership in both national and global spheres by delving into other important arenas of study.

Making Connections between Local and Global Research to Extend Leadership for Social Justice

In this final section, we explore three separate strategies for connecting the local practice (again, in the case of our overarching context for this article, we mean the United States) and study of educational leadership to these activities at a global level and consider the reciprocal nature of these relationships. These strategies include: (a) Broadening our conception of the knowledge base that under-girds educational leadership for social justice in order to deepen it; (b) Reconsidering research designs and outcomes, and (c) Realizing that local and global are parts of one interrelated whole.

Strategy One: Broadening our conception of the knowledge base that under-girds educational leadership for social justice in order to deepen it. Literature related to educational leadership for social justice has suffered by not connecting to extant lines of related inquiry in the social sciences and in other related disciplines. More specifically, fields such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, peace studies, and comparative and international education have much to offer research in leadership for social justice. As Brooks (2008a) contends,

> a more deliberate and meaningful connection to the social sciences could ultimately help provide a foundation for radical innovation in both the research and practice of educational leadership—it could also be the intellectual scaffold on which a theory of

social justice is ultimately built (p. 1).

However, too often educational leadership scholars confine their perspectives on social justice to either: (a) a single powerful inspiration such as the works of Paulo Freire, John Rawls, or Hannah Arendt, or (b) works published in the past two decades in the field of educational leadership, which have appeared as part of a relatively recent interest in social justice. To be fair, perspectives developed and collected in edited volumes (e.g. Marshall & Oliva, 2006), in special issues and individual articles published of respected scholarly journals[1], and scholarly books (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003) constitute important contributions to our understanding of the relationship between justice and educational leadership. It is important to recognize that the rising number of works grounded in recent educational leadership for social justice perspectives suggests a rise of the field's collective consciousness on issues of inequity. That being said, the field of educational leadership should consider taking a step back to consider what philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, legal scholars, political scientists (Cohen, 1986) and others have done that might inform our contemporary work. This is especially relevant when considering that many of these fields have been investigating different forms of justice, equity and equality for decades, and in the cases of legal thought and

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[1] For example, see *Journal of Educational Administration, 45*(6); *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning* (10)

philosophy, much longer. Further, in addition to being aware of historical and disciplinary discourses related to social justice in other academic fields, it is important to be aware of classic and cutting-edge conversations happening with regard to equity-related constructs such as race, gender, ethics, and many other sources from which leaders might learn lessons to guide their inquiry and practice (Grogan, 1999).

In addition to expanding our perspective on social justice to include and extend lines of inquiry born in other disciplines, it likewise is important to take into account research conducted in the fields of international education, comparative education, and work on teaching for social justice. Connecting with and contributing to these disparate yet interrelated domains of inquiry will allow us much greater insight into leadership for social justice, and help scholars and practitioners contextualize their work in a global context and in the context of multiple lines of theoretical and empirical inquiry.

Strategy Two: Reconsidering research designs and outcomes. Educational researchers have relied on a relatively limited number of research designs and methodologies to inform our understanding of justice-related phenomena. While educational leadership scholars have contributed a plethora of outstanding conceptual works (e.g. Marshall & Oliva, 2006), case studies (e.g. Gooden, 2005), and a few large-scale analyses of quantitative data (Gay, 1997), we have yet to expand our approaches into other designs. In particular, the dearth of quantitative, historical, cross-cultural comparative,

international, and mixed-method studies of social justice are disappointing and limit our ability to understand leadership for social justice in its many forms. However, it is important to note that in suggesting that we explore these approaches more fully and using quantitative measures, we are emphatically not calling for a single-minded emphasis on aggregate standardized and/or norm-referenced tests. It is troubling that discussions of mixed-method approaches in education tend to over-emphasize correlating outcomes and trends in student achievement data with other factors and phenomena when there are so many potentially fruitful avenues for inquiry. For example, looking at various quantitative measures such as census data, researcher-generated measures of equitable and equal distribution of goods and services, school and district finance data, state-level educational and social service appropriations, and even biometric data all hold tremendous potential for explaining and helping us explore social justice issues as phenomena related directly to communities, both local and global.
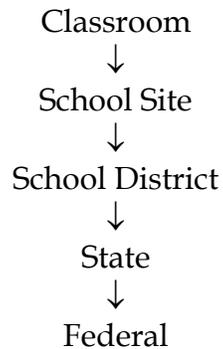
In addition to reconsidering the design of educational leadership for social justice studies, it is also important to reassess the intended beneficiaries and audiences who might use the work. That is, considering that leadership for social justice suggests an active and possibly *activist* orientation toward issues of inequity, it seems obvious that the scholar of leadership for social justice cannot be content to write to a small and exclusive audience of fellow academics. If leadership for social justice

scholars are to take their charge seriously, we must reconsider the manner in which we communicate, the people with whom we communicate, and the deliverables produced by our inquiry. This may mean, for example

1. writing policy/leadership briefs about salient local issues, OP-ED for mass print media, in international journals and/or or brief articles in local and national practitioner newsletters,
2. creating free-access web sites and multi-media materials that communicate important ideas in an accessible manner,
3. seeking out politicians and policymakers who will collaborate on various initiatives,
4. giving presentations to school boards, Parent Teacher Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and other stakeholders,
5. producing findings in multiple languages,
6. working with established foundations/think tanks who support leadership for social justice-related initiatives OR establishing new think tanks and initiatives.

Strategy Three: Realizing that local and global are parts of one interrelated whole. In the United States, where the three of us work, the federal political organization of education makes certain levels of education more important, in a policy-making sense, than others. This tends to urge educators to focus their attention on certain levels and de-emphasize others. In particular, the state is the most important level of educational policy implementation and interpretation in the United States. This is because states are legally empowered to interpret, and to a large part to implement, federal educational policy and legislation (Cambron-McCabe, McCarthy & Thomas, 2004). After the state, educators in the United States must then look to their district to see how these decisions will be implemented before finally discovering and shaping how they will influence the daily practices of education in a school or classroom. As a result of this organizational structure, educators often develop a kind of educational myopia, wherein they focus most intently on their most immediate organizational level. Given this perspective, the scope of their vision ends at the national/federal level and they tend to think of the entire system as a hierarchical-linear system, meaning that they feel they cannot influence parts of the system much "higher" or "lower" than their level (see Figure 1).
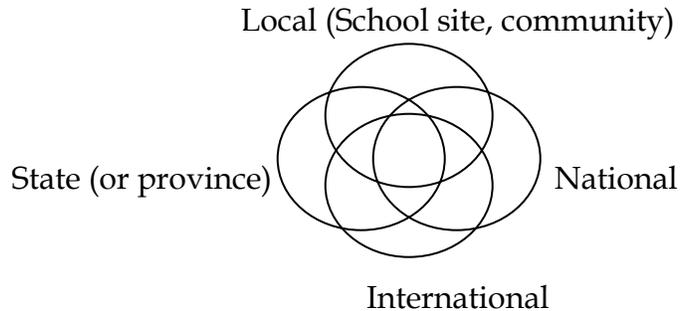
Figure 1. Linear perspective on educational leadership practice and research

Classroom
↓
School Site
↓
School District
↓
State
↓
Federal

However, rather than continue this "leveled" vision of the system and of their work, educational leaders (and educational leadership researchers) might instead seek to understand that given technological, economic, and indeed educational trends over the last half-century, the local *is* the global; all *domains* of practice—not *levels*—are interrelated (Weber, 2007). We argue that rather than accepting the extant organizational vision of schooling often suggested by scholars in the United States (see figure 1), educational leadership practitioners and scholars should instead adopt a vision of schooling that conceives educational leadership research and practice as interrelated domains rather than levels of schooling (figure 2). This will allow and urge leaders to consider, for example, how their local labor markets, the prices of goods and services, and student achievement influence, and are influenced by, international events and trends in an ecological rather than isolated manner. This may allow leaders of nations to move beyond competing with other leaders over international and comparative measures of student performance such as the datasets from The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and instead adopt the perspective that such tests can help us learn from one another at a global level. Imagine a world in which school leaders look not only to their peers in a neighboring school district or even another US city for ideas and solutions that might help their students, but to a global community of leaders who understand that the success of the local should be informed by and contribute to the success of students around the globe.

Figure 2. An interrelated perspective on the relationship between local and global practice

Local (School site, community)

State (or province)   National

International

Conclusions and Implications

Based on our review of literature and subsequent analysis, a growing concern among educators is whether emerging school leaders are prepared to face political, economic, cultural, and social pressures and create schools that advocate for education that advances all children. Research suggests that leadership preparation programs ought to engage in new ways that promote a broader and deeper understanding of issues such as social justice, democracy, and equity (Marshall & Oliva, 2005; Normore, 2008; Young & Mountford, 2006). In an effort to dialogue across local, national, and international boundaries, this paper examined various propositions and considerations if leadership preparation programs are committed to preparing school leaders to think globally and act courageously about social justice.

As Bogotch (2005) reminds us, more discussions of educational leadership are in order to deliberately and continuously refocus our educational work (in theory and practice) on understanding and becoming more socially just. Leadership development and preparation programs have become the object of intensive scrutiny in the past few years, and again more recently with the Levine (2005) report that questioned the efficacy of educational leadership preparation programs. Local school districts, state departments of education, as well as local and national foundations have provided funds for programs that are focused on retraining current leaders and preparing future leaders for our schools. While there is much activity, less is known about the impact of this investment. As scholars and practitioners of educational leadership, we have an obligation to move beyond high-sounding abstractions and turn to research and action. In order to help school leaders become more successful in educational leadership roles, research topics, and other activities should be developed and implemented at the postsecondary level of preparation that help school district personnel examine

how various policies, procedures, rules, and norms may limit the success of their leaders. This implies that leadership preparation programs should promote opportunities for critical reflection, leadership praxis, critical discourse, and develop critical pedagogy related to issues of ethics, inclusion, democratic schooling, and social justice. Coordinated efforts that provide opportunities for critical dialogue and liberatory education through strategies identified in this paper (e.g., appropriate field based curricula, national and global collaborative research, alternative research designs, etc.) may lead to more effective leadership development. It seems appropriate that efforts to increase the capacity of schools by broadening educators' work beyond conventional notions of teaching and administration would be improved by paying attention to how issues of social justice (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) shape and influence possibilities and desires for a more harmonious society that transcends national and international boundaries.

An implication from this research focuses on the need to conduct further comparative studies of educational leadership and social justice in diverse countries outside the United States. While the knowledge base in educational leadership, leadership preparation, and social justice in North America continues to grow, we know much less about these issues in other countries and the importance of transcending cultural norms, national and international boundaries. In order to fully capture the impact of gender,

sexuality, race and culture on leadership, research must involve a greater number of organizations at extreme ends of the value dimensions for measuring leadership effectiveness. We need more comparative research studies that investigate the contexts, processes, leadership and work experiences, and attitudes of school leaders with particular reference to similarities and differences between countries that experience modernization and industrialization and poor countries. Such comparative studies may generate cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences that will provide insight into the social justice leadership-orientation that, thus far, have not been illuminated in what Oplatka (2006) refers to as "current Anglo-American literature."

As noted earlier, schools are thrust into the realistic notion that they must prepare children and communities for participation in a multicultural, multiethnic, multi-religious, multi-ability, and a multinational society. In support of previous research (e.g., Jean-Marie, 2008; Lugg & Shoho, 2006; Walker & Dimmock, 2006), school leaders are held under fierce accountability and fiscal pressures, while coping with a larger political environment that is polarized and fearful about the growing complexities of this new social order.

Given current conversations about increasing the diversity among leadership ranks, we need to provide authentic and relevant experiences pertaining to leadership and social justice. As indicated earlier, the literature related to educational

leadership for social justice has suffered by not connecting to extant lines of related inquiry in the social sciences and in other related disciplines. Much can be shared and learned from other fields such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, law and business that may well catapult into a whole new theory of social justice. It is time to join the conversation on effective leadership preparation and to take seriously the call to work in support of leadership success and to combat leadership failure for all educational leaders and other leaders in leadership preparation programs across the continents.

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