Examining Leadership as Public Pedagogy for Social Justice*

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Abstract

The authors' purpose in this study was to report on research that examined the meaning of leadership as a public pedagogy of socially just practice. Drawing on practitioners' voices, the authors' focused on what social justice means in the world of schools, what socially just practice is from a practitioner's perspective, and the role that educational leaders play in connecting social justice and democracy in the educational setting. The authors engaged in an analysis of the narrative discourse related to social justice practices of practicing school leaders. As example, political issues that work to de-democratize social practice affect socially just practices in schools; narrowing equity for some and generating marginalizing spaces within the school culture. The authors posit that advancing "leadership as public pedagogy" presents students of educational leadership with an opportunity to examine the social text of their experience, drawing on them to ask not only what the social text means but also how it means, what its epistemological and theoretical grounds are as enacted in practice. The authors present a set of considerations for leadership preparation and practice that argue the importance of a public pedagogy orientation and the relevance of socially just practice for school leaders.

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2 Sumario en español

El propósito de los autores en este estudio fue de informar en investigación que revisó el significado de liderazgo como un pedagogía público de socialmente sólo la práctica. Utilizando las voces de facultativos, los autores se centraron en lo que medios sociales de justicia en el mundo de escuelas, lo que socialmente practica sólo es de la perspectiva de un facultativo, y del papel que líderes educativos juegan en la justicia y la democracia sociales conjuntivas en la colocación educativa. Los autores entraron en un análisis del discurso narrativo relacionado a prácticas sociales de justicia de líderes practicantes de escuela. Como ejemplo, las cuestiones políticas que trabajan a la de-democratiza la práctica que social afecta socialmente sólo las prácticas en escuelas; angostando equidad para algunos y engendrando espacios que margina dentro de la cultura de la escuela. Los autores postulan que avanzando "liderazgo como el pedagogía público" presenta a estudiantes de liderazgo educativo con una oportunidad de revisar el texto social de su experiencia, los utilizando para preguntar no sólo lo que el texto social significa pero también cómo significa, lo que su motivo epistemológico y teórico es como decretado en la práctica. Los autores presentan un conjunto de consideraciones para preparación de liderazgo y práctica que discuten la importancia de una orientación pública del pedagogía y la aplicabilidad de socialmente sólo la práctica para líderes de escuela.

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3 Introduction

Leadership as a public pedagogy for social justice translates as leadership concerned with social injustices in educational settings. It is a public pedagogy of practice concerned with social issues like diversity, equity, and inclusion; leadership for social justice that keeps students traditionally underserved in schools at the forefront of its efforts to eliminate injustices (e.g., Capper, Frattura, & Keyes, 2000; Jorgensen, 1998; Riehl, 2000; Riester, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003; Touchton & Acker-Hocevar, 2001). A fundamental concern for social justice and democracy is at the heart of educational leaders' work in schools today; a concern animated by the question of whether schools are to serve and reproduce the existing society or to adopt a more critical role of challenging the dominant social order so as to develop and advance society's democratic imperatives (Giroux, 1992, 1994). Importantly, a stance for social justice recognizes that passive leadership practices lend to reproduction of the existing society with its inequities; historical and structural inequities in society, and through its educational systems, that disadvantage many while benefiting a few. Equally important, a social justice stance warrants the need for a critical, active role that challenges dominant social orders, and the need for a public pedagogy that works to effect the transformation and the realization of a just, democratic society.

Within education, and more specifically within schools, all too often there are hierarchies of participation ingrained; ideologically dominated forms of social control that dictate to individuals how and whether or not they are to participate in what constitutes learning and other activities in the educational setting. The educational leader's work, in part, is to illuminate and interrogate injustices. Taking a social justice stance requires that the educational leader interrogate social structures and cultural practices that contribute to injustice, bringing democratic practices to bear so as to mediate cultural dominance, political ideologies and asymmetries of power that work to reproduce cultures and social structures that foster injustices and inequities in educational settings. In this sense, the educational leader's work is a form of public pedagogy

guided by an agenda of social justice; a pedagogy that works to transform inequities and injustices, forming a more just and democratic school.

The educational leader necessarily understands that when social justice and democracy are central to the purpose of education, then schools enable the widest diffusion of teaching and learning as "a model of cultural renewal, in effect, to support something peculiarly consonant with the democratization of culture" (Scheffler, 1960, p. 57); democratization that mediates social inequities and injustices reflective of deeply entrenched social issues in society. Educational leadership as social justice stance recognizes, as did Dewey (1916, 1927), the importance of making political and moral considerations an integral element of the leader's practice, distinguishing between education as a function of society and society as a function of education.

The authors' purpose in this paper was to examine meaning of leadership as a public pedagogy of socially just practice. Drawing into specific relief leader practitioners' voices, the authors' focused on what social justice means in the world of schools, what socially just practice is from a practitioner's perspective, and the role that educational leaders play in connecting social justice and democracy in the educational setting. The authors engaged in an analysis of the narrative discourse related to social justice practices of practicing school leaders. As example, political issues that work to de-democratize social practice affect socially just practices in schools; narrowing equity for some and generating marginalizing spaces within the school culture.

The authors, in their examination, posit that advancing "leadership as public pedagogy" presents students of educational leadership with an opportunity to examine the social text of their experience, drawing on them to ask not only *what* the social text means but also *how* it means, what its epistemological and theoretical grounds are as enacted in practice. The authors present a set of considerations for leadership preparation and practice that argue the importance of a public pedagogy orientation and the relevance of socially just practice for school leaders.

4 Public Pedagogy—Social Justice

Leadership as public pedagogy is, in part, an exercise of power and authority that begins with questions of justice, democracy, and the dialectic between individual accountability and social responsibility (Weiner, 2003). As an intellectual in the public sphere of education, the educational leader must be aware of and direct his or her authority and power productively, self-reflexively, and critically by opening up a space of "continuous reenactment" (Mouffe, 1992, pp. 30-31) that offers a "provisional" place to deploy pedagogical strategies of social engagement and transformation, while remaining critical of the function of leadership as intellectual work and its effects. The educational leader must necessarily take a stance on social justice in creating a space of "continuous reenactment" while recognizing that his or her practice has pedagogical implications for the public's learning its relationship and responsibility to the education of all students.

Broadly, a social justice stance is situated within the perspective derived from critical theory (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000) and is informed by theories of justice (Gewirtz, 1998; Rawls, 1972; Young, 1990), specifically concerned with distributive, retributive, and recognitive justice. Classical theories lend well to identifying oppression, marginalization, and other forms of inequity. The study reported in this chapter seeks to understand struggles and challenges facing leaders who work to create more socially just schools, and therefore is concerned with advancing a theorization of leadership as public pedagogy for social justice. As public pedagogy for social justice, leadership practice is centered on the individual and institutional struggles defined, in part, by issues of equity, identity politics, and asymmetrical power relations within schools and educational communities. Importantly, as a public pedagogy, leadership must be sensitive to the historical and structural injustices define in part the struggles of society and its educational system and schools.

4.1 Leadership as Public Pedagogy

Where social justice is concerned with power relationships, marginalization and oppression, educational leadership as a public pedagogy for social justice practice focuses, intentionally, on discourses and practices that work within society and schools in a disciplinary fashion – to normalize individuals in society. This

disciplining function of normative discourse and practice fosters forms of structural injustice in schools. A public pedagogy of social justice is concerned with addressing hegemonic forces in the school that oppress individuals: teachers or students or others placed in asymmetrical relationships of power. Therein, leadership that takes a social justice stance takes the form of a public pedagogy to counter the historical and structural injustices in educational settings.

Leadership practice for social justice seeks to create a space of "continuous reenactment" to address injustices. In part, as Kincheloe (2001) explains, the educational leader, through his or her public pedagogy, works to "develop a power literacy to facilitate his or her understanding of the nature and effects of the web of power relations underlying" (p. 684) the discourses and discursive practices that shape the "social." In the following sections "leadership as public pedagogy" and "social justice as leadership stance" are further examined.

Public pedagogy as socially engaged citizenship provides a civic space and form of public outreach to those cultural groups marginalized, oppressed, or otherwise made subaltern to the dominating culture and class. The educational leader as public intellectual understands that implicit in the notion of public pedagogy is the imaginative nature of art as a form of "cultural politics and the importance of culture and public pedagogy as a struggle over meaning, identity, and relations of power" (Giroux, 2001, p. 8). As well, the educational leader necessarily understands that public pedagogy is concerned with pedagogical struggles that link knowing, imagination, and resistance that, as bell hooks (1991) explains, disrupts "conventional ways of thinking about the imagination and imaginative work, offering fictions that demand careful scrutiny, that resists passive readership" (p. 56).

In this sense, public pedagogy is a form of engaged, social citizenship – performative practice – that is marked by its attentiveness to "the interconnections and struggles that take place over knowledge, language, spatial relations, and history" (Giroux, 2001, p. 9). As a form of socially engaged citizenship, public pedagogy "articulates knowledge to effects and learning to social change to create the conditions that encourage" (p. 9) democratic participation in society. Translated into the classroom, teachers, as public intellectuals, understand the viable role that education plays in preparing an active, critical democratic citizenry.

Schools, when envisioned as democratizing agencies of an educational system in a democratic society, necessarily serve a role of social responsibility concerned with the imperatives of fostering and sustaining a substantive, vibrant democracy. That is, schools as public spaces in which public pedagogy is enacted are responsible for linking learning and social transformation, providing conditions for students to learn the dispositions and capacities necessary to become democratic citizens. Leading, as Giroux (2003) notes of such educational practice "in this sense becomes performative and highlights considerations of power, politics and ethics fundamental to any form of teacher-student interaction" (p. 11). This means rethinking leading and teaching as a form of intellectual work and "proposes that education is a form of political intervention in the world and is capable of creating opportunities for social transformation" (p. 11).

4.2 Social Justice as a Leadership Stance

A social justice stance is, in part, an ethical leadership disposition that serves to guide a leaders actions and decisions, and at the same time a social justice stance serves as moral lens through which the educational leader reflects upon his or her own actions and those presented by others. Rather than passively accepting information or embracing a false consciousness instructed by dominant ideologies, the leader takes a much more active role in leading, learning, and reflecting upon his or her relationship with practice and the social context in which the practice is situated.

A stance on social justice is an ethical, moral, and political position-taking (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) within a larger complexity of social, political and cultural contexts; local, national, and global. Such position taking on the part of the educational leader is concerned with Dewey's (1916) argument that "the conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind" (1916, p. 97). If what we want is a socially just, democratic society, we must work to define that society, in part through our education systems and schools; through the social practices that animate the educational system and schools on a daily basis.

An educational leader, in taking a social justice stance observes, as Maxine Greene (1986) explains, that the type of community, society, and world that

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. . . we cherish is not an endowment, . . . it must be achieved through dialectical engagements with the social and economic obstacles we find standing in our way. . . . we cannot neglect the fact of power. But we can undertake a resistance, a reaching out toward becoming persons among persons. (p. 440)

In this sense, educational leaders must be *public intellectuals* , working within the cultural-historical contexts in which schools are situated; intellectual and cultural workers seen through the "ideological and political interests that structure the nature of discourses, classroom social relations, and values that they legitimate in their teaching" (Giroux, 1988, p. 127). This requires that the educational leader take a critical stance that works pedagogically to transform the public; the public as originally defined by Dewey (1916, 1927) and more recently as examined by Giroux (2001, 2003).

A critical stance for the educational leader is undergirded by a perception of reality that considers the world and our place within it as incomplete, becoming, and subject to our own projections. It is a critical encounter in which such issues as what counts as knowledge or practice becomes subject to individuals' own histories, ideals, practices, and perceptions (Freire, 1998, pp. 73-80). The critical stance does not simply acquiesce in or absorb new knowledge or practice but rather encounters it as a claim that exists alongside many alternative possibilities and therefore must struggle to retain its legitimacy (Curzon-Hobson, 2003). An educational leader who embraces a critical stance subjects his/her knowledge and practice to a variety of frameworks that s/he has encountered and reflects upon this practice or knowledge in social contexts characterized by tensions and conflicts.

The notion of social justice stance is underpinned by a sense of fragility and openness in the social context, the positions one has in contrast to the position-taking one engages in gives way to the fragility and openness. Importantly, the educational leader who takes a social justice stance recognizes the value that is gained within a social context that is exploited by all in order to reflect upon and imagine anew what is presented and the perceptions of our interrelationships (Freire, 1985, p. 44). The social justice stance often brings to question and introduces conflict to bear on the object of inquiry through his or her practice. Freire (1972) explains this process as "epistemological encircling" in which new ideas—through dialogical inquiry—conflict with and challenge what is considered absolute and show the learner that things can be different" (p. 53). Thus, in mediating injustices and inequities within the educational setting, the educational leader works to create a more democratic culture while fostering a sense of becoming, both in himself or herself as well as in others with whom s/he interacts. This creates a symmetry in the relationships and practices, participation and power, wherein the educational leader is working alongside others toward defining a socially just and democratic society. Defining a socially just society requires that the educational leader know what stance to take on social justice.

5 Research Method

As an extension of the theoretical framework of leadership practice – leadership as public pedagogy for social justice – the authors engage in poststructural theorizing to position theories of leadership and social justice in relation to social practices, in particular in relation to the nature of social justice stance taken in which social practices are concerned with addressing injustice and inequity. Theorizing social justice necessarily considers the political nature of the public space in which the practitioners live and work; the political issues that reflect symbolic power relationships and which influence social practices, thus defining the nature of the public as just or unjust, as the case may be.

A poststructural positioning involves the researchers differently within the research practice; adopting a poststructural stance means recognizing that research practices themselves are both part of and controlled by the discourses (Foucault, 1980; Rhedding-Jones, 1996). Examining discursive practice—the talk of educational leaders—enables the researcher to understand the power of language in shaping the spatial practices

that define the place of school. As Bogotch and Roy (1997) explain, through "the power of talk, leadership emerges, in an ongoing sense, as it both reinforces existing institutional patterns and reconstructs new patterns of interacting" (p. 234). Important in the poststructural inquiry is an understanding that the researcher is situated in the discourses he/she is researching. Segall (2001) explains, as researchers we are "inherently embedded in the text we read before, throughout, and after our field-research has ended" (p. 583).

5.1 Context

This study was situated in a doctoral program and the school districts represented by doctoral students across three doctoral cohorts. The doctoral program is one of three terminal degrees offered at a southwest regional comprehensive university. The doctoral program is a non-certificate program and offers the Ed.D. Degree.

5.2 Participants

The participants in the study were practicing school and district leaders, including principals, superintendents, other central office administrators, and teacher leaders. With respect to demographic profile, the participants included 6 male and 19 female, with a racial distribution of 3 African American (all female), and 22 White (16 female and 6 male). The participants represented schools and districts in range from small rural, (East Texas) suburban (Houston area), and urban (Houston and Dallas area). The participants were purposefully selected from three doctoral cohorts, representing 3 different years of entry into the doctoral program and spanning approximately 4 years of doctoral studies, from year one to year three in the program. All doctoral students (total of 46 across 3 cohorts) were invited to participate, with 27 accepting the invitation, and 25 completing the data collection process.

5.3 Data Collection and Analysis

A narrative inquiry method was used to collect data. The intent of the inquiry method was to generate discourse text that was representative of the type of social justice stance (or the lack thereof) practiced in each practitioner's school, with a concern for further developing the notion of a socially just practice as a public pedagogy. Narratives were also examined for social justice stance patterns that were democratic, thus further theorizing social justice. Interview questions were presented to the participants, individually, and responses recorded. All recorded responses were prepared as data files and participants were asked to read the prepared files as part of a member check to ensure that responses were accurately recorded and transcribed.

The practitioners were asked to complete a set of constructed-response questions concerning issues of social justice, democracy, and the work of transforming the public through the school as agency for a democratic society. Specifically, the inquiry was focused on the pragmatics of social justice, which shaped the identity of the school leader as a socially just leader, as well as the nature of the public pedagogy of the practitioners.

The narratives, as "social justice practice" and "public pedagogy" text, were analyzed specifically for language and action within and across discourse, illuminating patterns and relationships. In particular, patterns within and across responses were analyzed for "political" and "ideological" language, with a focus on valences in the language that give way to socially just practices as a form of public pedagogy. The leadership practices, as social just stance, formed patterns of spatial practice that shape the nature of social justice within and through social texts. The narrative texts also reflected pedagogical patterns concerned with the "public" and the work of creating a more democratic society.

6 Voices of Leaders—Speaking on Social Justice

The *social justice question*, that is, what is an educational leader's stance and how does such a stance work as public pedagogy, has to do with ideals, values, and assumptions informed by experience and embedded in social contexts in which experience is takes place. This question is one of ideology: What is the purpose of schooling, what is the role of public education in a democratic society, and what historically has been the role of schooling in maintaining or changing the economic and social structure of society? In particular, this set of questions has to do with what images of American society as well as what notions of social justice do we want to define us as a society (Dewey, 1916). These questions have to do with what images are assumed in our practices; images of justice, equity, caring, community, democracy.

In consideration of the social justice question and educational leader practice, the participants were asked: What is social justice, what is socially just practice, what do you see as the role/relationship of your work in defining what society is as a democracy, what perspective best fits who you are as an educational leader, and what perspective is better aligned to fostering a more democratic educational setting? The first three questions frame the sections that follow, respectively.

6.1 Social Justice

The answer to the question of social justice that underlies leadership practice, that is, what is the social justice stance of leaders, often remains unstated in the day-to-day work of educational leaders. The ideological underpinnings one holds concerning social justice are never consciously examined or made public. An analysis of the responses to the question, "what is social justice?" renders a common set of terms that educational leaders use to define this concept. Common terms include equal or equality, equity, fair or fairness, and relatedly how each of these terms works to mediate issues associated with race, ethnicity, language, age, gender, class, sexual orientation, or faith. The discourse patterns reflect a commonality in stated beliefs, but they also reflect underlying values and assumptions concerning social justice that extends the answer to the social justice question in important ways.

John, a White assistant superintendent, states "In my practice, social justice seems to manifest itself in issues of fairness." He offers an example, "many of our students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Yet they seem to have an exaggerated sense of fairness. If they feel that your actions discriminate against them because they are poor, they are quick to aggressively respond." Sally, White a central office administrator, extends an important consideration, noting that to "enact social justice requires more than a definition. One must possess a deep understanding of the concept in order to incorporate this practice into day-to-day interactions." She also expresses her belief that social justice can be defined as the right thing to do for everyone regardless of ethnicity, gender, academic or socio-economic level." Cordell, a White building principal, shares that for him, "social justice means taking on critical issues such as race, gender, and economic status and allowing these to drive the decision-making process at the work-place. Social justice emphasizes moral values and respect for equity. Social justice is concerned about how race gender, sexual orientation and disabilities affect learning."

Juxtaposing her thoughts to those of Cordell, Iris, a central office administrator, shares that for her, "social justice is a system of equity for and acceptance of all races and creeds, which promotes the welfare of other members of the society. This is not the same as unilateral freedom from constraint, rather is tempered with protection of human rights." Mary, a White high school principal, notes, ". . . all people have a birthright to be treated fairly and are therefore, entitled to equal rights and responsibilities regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, sex, age, class, sexual orientation or other identifiable trait, characteristic, or position of birth." The ideals of freedom and birthright shared by Iris and Mary reflect basic ideals and beliefs integral to a democratic society.

Jason, a White superintendent in a rural district, explains social justice, as "Society's perception of what is moral/ethical especially as it relates to socio-economic condition, race, gender, age and other human differentiation." Grace, an African American principal in an urban high school, who has been in her current position 8 years, explains that social justice is the "act of re-addressing institutionalized inequality and systemic racism." Toni, a White director of educational renewal, furthers this discussion by noting that

"social justice involves the equal treatment of all members of society, all people being regarded as individuals, all members having a fair chance, and all members enjoying social and economic benefits, even those considered to be disadvantaged." Whereas Grace focuses more on issues commensurate with a recognitive perspective of justice, Toni incorporates notions of distributive and recognitive justice. Wyatt, a White rural superintendent, shares that social justice may mean "having a voice", "providing affirmative action policies for historically marginalized groups", or "equality of outcomes." For Wyatt, there are different perspectives on social justice, and yet he focuses on the nature of injustices that often define the educational setting. For Wanda, a White middle school principal, social justice "is an intervention against power over and the mistreatment of others because of race, gender, poverty, or because of anything that makes that individual different from others."

Deidra, an African American high school principal, reflects that in her school, populated with Hispanic and African American students, she believes social justice means "being fair and equal to all ethnic groups, promoting democracy, so that all races have a fair and equal opportunity to succeed." She explicitly states her belief that social justice is connected to democracy. Clark, a White assistant principal working in an urban population center, takes the position that social justice is "equality of access to both distributional and relational justice. In other words, social justice is the ability for all members of society to have fair and equal access to the material possessions of society as well as the non-material items such as respect, dignity, and value." The tenets of social justice introduced by Clark reflect a concern for distribution of opportunities, but also extend his belief that the process of acquiring social goods is important as a defining element of social justice.

In reflection the common threads of equity and fairness run through the educational leader's understanding of social justice. Embedded in the voices of educational leaders is recognition that social justice is concerned with addressing the injustices that define, in part, the educational experiences of students. Defining elements of the ideological statements reflect implicit and explicit concern for democracy, and the distribution of material goods as well as social goods against a backdrop of difference. What appears to surface through the voices of the participants is a gravitation of the discourse towards the issues of asymmetrical power relationships and the need for leadership practices that are concerned with mediating the distribution of goods as well as a concern for recognition of how practices work to construct cultural identity of students and others, with the latter more pronounced in answer to the ideology question and in relation to defining a social justice stance for the educational leaders.

6.2 Socially Just Practice

Extending the examination of ideological underpinnings and understandings of social justice into examining the nature of socially just practice brings into specific relief how educational leaders understand social justice as stance interpreted through or by their practice. Reading across the responses in consideration of "what is socially just practice," common terms emerge that define the nature of or characterize the doing of socially just practice. Included is equity in treatment, interaction with others, ethnic groups, concern for well-being, being sensitive to culture, recognizing and eliminating prejudice, increasing awareness, facilitating change, and to building inclusive communities.

Cordell reflects on the question of "what is socially just practice," sharing that for him socially just practice requires "understanding how social injustices breaks the human spirit. Many times these injustices will predicate whether or not a human being is successful and can live a productive life." For Cordell, it is important to understand the nature of social injustices as a precursor to understanding socially just practice. He shares, "One is socially unjust when factors of race, gender (etc) are not considered as an important part of dealing on a day-to-day basis with humans." Cordell states, "I am socially just when I understand that humans act in a certain manner in accordance with their social standing or their race or gender."

Carrie, a White high school principal, who states that a socially just practice "involves all individuals in the education of students, staff and community", exemplifies what distinguishes the educational leaders perspectives on socially just practice. She then deconstructs the "doing of" socially just practice by explaining that you "first step in, providing a socially just environment to parents and students is to recognize the

culture they bring to your school." Her explanation that "failure to recognize this fact means" that parents and students "are not important."

Importantly, Carrie notes that the "language used in this process is an integral step in the formation of a just practice." She then explains that the "second step is what you do with specific programs to meet the needs of the learning community. Identifying the needs of specific students and providing instruction to meet those needs is providing a positive environment to learn." Following, Carrie shares that the "third step is to empower the individuals within the learning community." Explaining that "empowerment comes with the acquisition of knowledge and then using that knowledge to educate self or others and have a voice in the processes of schools True learning occurs in socially just environments." Carrie's discussion of socially just practice reflects a pragmatic perspective, one concerned with recognition of others. Here it is important to note that Carrie is speaking to the need for leadership that is also a public pedagogy focused on creating just learning communities.

John posits a more pragmatic perspective, sharing that socially justice practice is a "practice that works to fairness, equity, or adequacy depending on the situation. Only after participation in informed study of societal perceptions of morality/ethicality can one know if they are being just." Sophie, a White central office administrator in a 5A district responds that, "Socially just practice occurs when each person has an equitable opportunity to develop to his/her fullest potential in all areas (emotionally, socially, intellectually, academically, creatively, and physically)."

Joanna, an African American principal in a large urban high school, explains, from her experience, that socially just practice requires "looking at all situations through an adjustable lens." There is no one best perspective. She explains, "one is socially just when prejudices are put aside so that the most appropriate solution is derived based upon individual differences and needs." In contrast, Joanna explains that one "is not socially just when he/she has not taken the time nor made an effort to deal with people and the situations they face any differently than mainstream problems."

Wanda, a White principal in an urban elementary school, explains that for her, socially just practice means, "ensuring that all individuals and groups voices are heard. It is being a democratic leader. When practicing social justice, you will not always be the most popular individual." For Wanda, as a educational leaders, she believes one knows when one is engaged in socially just practice "when you begin to question why we allow injustices to take place and then begin to do something about it." As she further explains, "you do not just stand by watching injustices take place, but look to see how to inform others and end the injustices taking place." Both Joanna and Wanda bring relief the importance of seeing the world and questioning actions in relation to socially just practices. Focusing on the work of democratic leader, Wanda acknowledges the difficult nature of leading a school through socially just practice. The language used by both principals acknowledges an understanding of the importance to an active stance on social issues; the educational leader as public intellectual recognizes the need for social action and the need to mediate tensions in "the social".

Donna, a White high school principal in suburban setting, notes that in educational settings, "socially just practice implies that the policies of the school and the actions of educational leaders promote and foster a climate of justice and ethicality. Socially just practice promotes equal opportunity, democratic governance in a forum where all participants have a voice." Toni, in her role as director of renewal, contributes to this discussion of the leaders actions by noting, "socially just practice is an on-going action that involves the general safeguarding of all individual rights, as well as the personal examination of each action and any self-correction needed in light of inequitable deeds." As she explains, actions "should not be left to a select group of individuals elected to serve in some political office; but is a personal responsibility of all citizens."

Kelley, a White principal in an urban high school, adds a new dimension to the discussion by noting that practice is socially "in which respect is given to each individual, every voice is heard and advocacy for a democratic society is evident represents a socially just practice." As she further explains, "one knows that they are socially just when change begins to take place, people become aware of their biases through their own reflection and acknowledgement in attitudes of superiority and the prejudices towards others are eliminated." In contrast, Kelley notes that "one is not socially just when they continue to accept the status quo, silence the voices of minorities and disadvantaged and do not speak up when others exhibit socially unjust attitudes."

Here we find Donna, Toni and Kelley sharing beliefs and values of democracy and leadership, accentuated by the importance of "voice" and the need for all participants to be involved. Concern for asymmetrical power and disadvantaging of others surface as a critical concern for the educational leaders, directing attention to the need for the leader as public intellectual to examine hegemony of ideologies and cultural politics that often define conditions for those who are victim to silencing of voices.

Extending the discussion, Iris explains that socially just practice requires "putting action with philosophy: acting on a philosophy of equity and democracy. Speaking out about inequity, instituting policies of social justice," then taking action. Iris notes the importance of continuing "to utilize a lens of criticality in all thoughts and actions, continually overturning layer upon layer of judgment and bias." Sharing a similar belief concerning criticality, Sally explains that to "know one is being socially just requires evaluating situations and one's placement in the situation; as well as knowledge and understanding of the core precepts of social justice." The educational leaders, Sally adds, who has the ability "to peruse a situation, synthesize the setting and the implication of action will be able to act/react in a socially just manner." Iris and Sally both denote the importance of a critical lens, and implicitly recognize the need for inquiry to examine the nature of injustices and inequities.

In reflection, the analysis of leader voices suggests that common threads of equity, fairness, self-reflection and self-criticality, and difference and diversity connect the discussions of socially just practice. The perspectives shared by the educational leaders suggest a strong affiliation with a social justice concerned with recognition of cultural and identity politics, tempered by a sense of social justice that is concerned with democratic practices that work to rearticulate conditions and relationships within the school setting. Social action that is concerned with justice as a precursor of social change is juxtaposed with concern for the asymmetrical nature of power as experienced the educational leaders. The educational leader as public intellectual and the value of bringing a critical lens to the examination of what problematizes the school surface as defining features of leadership as a public pedagogy.

6.3 Connecting Socially Just Practices and Democracy

When the ideological question is extended to the larger project of democracy, the educational leaders' perspectives reflect values, beliefs and assumptions about the function of education in a democratic society. The question "What Do You See as the Role/Relationship of Your Work in Defining What Society is as a Democracy?" concerns the stance on social justice one takes in relation to moving the democratic project forward in society.

As well, the voices of participants reflect the practitioners' beliefs about the positionality in the process of making schools socially just, and therein, democratic practices play an important part. Positionality interpreted as leader identity, and dispositional aims of socially just leadership, are defined by the educational leader's work and social responsibilities. Notable, however, is that democracy and social justice are not necessarily treated synonymously, that is, social justice is an aspect of democracy yet not a requirement.

Analyzing the discourses of participants identified what emerges as common elements of language, including democracy, diversity of individuals, working together, dialogue, tools of democracy, politics of difference, caring, equity, learning as a educational leaders, educate students, teachers, parents about democracy, self-criticality, and research practices. What seems, from both the participants' and researchers' perspectives, to extend the theorizing of an educational leader stance on social justice is the importance of realizing that democracy is an unfinished project, and therein the educational leaders must be continuously at work to understand her/himself in relation to fostering change, guided by practice that is socially just.

Jason, from his perspective as district superintendent, offers a pragmatic response to the question: "I see two roles. One as student of democracy where I continue to enhance my understanding in order to carry out the second role as an advocate for democracy." Sophie, from the central office, states that for her "it is my moral responsibility to facilitate the creation of conditions under which all persons can learn well in a socially just and democratic context, resulting in the attainment of their fullest potentials as well as the functioning of responsible citizens whose actions will serve to further a democratic way of life. The moral purposes of schooling are social justice and democratic community."

Kelly, from her experience as building principal, explains that her "first responsibility as a leader is to critically reflect" on her own practice as a leader, "especially in relation to social justice, equity and democracy. It is important that I am critically aware of my own biases. As a leader one of the most important ways to have an impact with others is to lead by example." She goes on to note that another responsibility in relation to democracy and social justice, as a leader, "is to create an environment that respects each person as an individual and advocates moving beyond the status quo toward change and renewal.

Communicating to staff, as Clark explains, "that injustices will not be tolerated and that it is vital that we strive toward a social justice school environment and society and the benefits that it will provide to students is another responsibility as a leader." Clark further explores the responsibility of reflection, explaining that for him, "constant reflection of my own practices as well as critical inquiry into the policies of the school, district, state, and nation" are important. He explains that with a "heightened sense of 'critical consciousness,' I will act once I perceive social oppression." He also believes that "formal educational leaders should create policies/practices that eliminate social injustices and hone teachers' abilities to incorporate socially just practices within their classrooms" as part of fostering democratic citizenship.

Grace, sees her role as that of "an advocate for change and growth." She explains further, noting that "Education shapes America. How America looks in the future will depend on how educators advocate for social justice and democracy.' For Grace, her work responsibility is focused on "impact of education in her community and school, contributing to the larger project of a democratic society. Carrie, in concert with Grace, sees her role as being "more along the lines of the educational system in a democratic society." She explains, "I am still not sure we are living in a democratic society. I think that democracy is a construct that we are continually striving to achieve. At this point and time I see some tremendous power structures that are not working toward democracy and equity." Carrie has deconstructed the nature of America's democratic society, recognizing that democracy is never complete. She further shares, "the idea that students can walk into our campus and see and feel the democracy in action is always a goal." However, she knows that she will have to help students understand "that when they walk out of school they will not always" experience "equity, justice and ethics of care. The key is teaching them that they can make a difference in that society."

Nancy, a White building principal, explains: "my role is to model the characteristics of equity, justice, the ethic of caring, democracy, and community bonding. I must speak out against inequities and seek to change those things that diminish social justice and the ethic of care. I must promote an educational system that bond with the community and cultures of all within the community." Offering a perspective similar in nature, Janet, a White middle school principal, explains that as educational leader, she "must be aware of social inequities, and must remain educated about these issues." Importantly, Janet notes that with respect to the project of democracy, "we know the shortcomings of a democratic society where injustices exist, and we know the opportunities democracy can provide for people." In this sense, Janet sees the educational system as a tool, "it is perhaps the most profound and important tool for students to use. It is the catalyst that can propel them to success, but it can also doom them to failure if not utilized correctly." Janet understands education's function in society, explaining that for her, education "is powerful, and the educational leaders must educate others to maintain the importance of education in our society."

Wanda, from her perspective as principal in an urban school, also understands that democracy is an ongoing project, sharing "I believe that although we say that we live in a democratic society, this is not always true in education. Educators, often times, silence students and do not listen to their individual voices." This requires, as Wanda explains, that as " educational leaders, we must educate others and ensure that voices are heard. We must encourage others to also become educational leaders by our example. If we become more democratic in our own leadership, this will extend down to others." In concert with Janet and Wanda, Mary furthers the discussion by stating that the "educational leaders has the obligation to formulate their own understanding of democracy and to be true to their belief and convictions that guide their decisions and personal actions." Concerning responsibility, Mary notes that it "is important that the educational leaders continue to grow as a scholar and to refine their beliefs and conviction and to have the courage to challenge injustice and undemocratic societal conditions when they are encountered."

Toni carries the discussion forward, explaining the challenges aligned with connecting the work of an educational leader and that of defining the educational system in a democratic society. She further explains,

"I believe that successful schooling is impossible without social justice; and without an adequate educational experience, our country hinges on extinction." She sees as necessary the work ahead as a educational leaders, "to develop and grow young minds . . . encourage them to question and entertain ideas, to seek out new knowledge and to look at existing problems with a fresh lens." Toni brings the focus direct on the challenge of the educational leader, "If our country is to strengthen its conceptualization of democracy, the foundation must be strong and solid, and be representative of all races and cultures that comprise it." The discourse provided by the leaders in this study directs us to the importance of continuing to grow with respect to understanding one's work as a public intellectual, and in particular with respect to engaging in forms of inquiry that shape social discourse and practice that in turn serve as public pedagogy, and equally important, that shapes the work of creating a more democratic society through education.

7 Findings and Conclusions

The notion of educational leadership as taking a social justice stance affords a positioning of leadership practice that illuminates the importance of public pedagogy juxtaposed to the politically and culturally bound nature of leadership. The poststructural theorizing resulted in the notion of more democratically oriented recognitive justice, which is concerned with rethinking social arrangements thought to be just, valuing a positive regard of group differences and acknowledging democratic processes based on group representation. That is, the educational leaders noted that they find that to offset the de-democratizing affects of the cultural reproduction and the ideological controls of standards and accountability movement, they must engage in a public pedagogy that is works to meditate cultural politics and ideological constraints that have historically produced marginalization, oppression, and limit opportunities for groups self-formation.

Educational leaders at the building level focused on the importance of all participants understanding what social justice means and how it is enacted through discourse and practice within the social contexts of the school and classroom. What is particularly problematic, as noted by principals, is the disparate meaning of social justice, or a socially just action or decision, that each individual holds and that is based on that individual's personal and professional experience. As well, enacting social justice is made more problematic when considering the external forces that press ideological and political agendas on schools and educators and set the expectations for performance based on a false consciousness of what constitutes a successful school or quality teaching (the direct implications of NCLB and related federal and state policies).

Making transparent to the public issues of power and control is at the foundation of a working democracy. Leadership that takes a social justice stance is a form of public pedagogy that works to transform existing conditions defined historically and structurally by inequities and injustices, reshaping society as just and democratic. Importantly, as the participants acknowledged in this study, we necessarily need new positionings of educational leadership; needed is a public pedagogy that enables us as leaders to take a stance on social justice based on democratic beliefs that mediate racial, ethnic, cultural, and social boundaries, thus lending to a more democratic society.

8 Considerations for Leadership Preparation and Practice

Preparing leaders for social justice requires a deep-seated commitment on the part of faculty in leadership preparation programs. Where leadership is framed through the lens of "public pedagogy" and "social justice stance", courses must be fashioned and infused with critically oriented curricula and methodologies that stimulate students to think beyond current behavioral and conceptual boundaries. Brown (2004) explains that by "exposing candidates to information and ideas that they may resist and by assisting them to stretch beyond their comfort zones, a critique and transformation of hegemonic structures and ideologies can occur" (p. 78). Such pedagogical considerations in leadership preparation are particularly important in order to shape learning experiences and activities that focus on the study, research, and implementation of "leadership practices that will fundamentally and holistically change schools in ways and in manners which are consistent with an equitable, inclusive vision" (Brown, 2004, p. 88).

Leadership as public pedagogy concerned with social justice rearticulates a conception of leadership beyond dominant perspectives of "oppression, domination, repression, and suppression; beyond rigid hierarchical models of power and management; and with more complexity than a recipe of characteristics" (Weiner, 2003, p. 96). This rearticulation of leadership begins with preparation programs centered on the ideals of social justice and democracy that translate, through learning and experience, into educational leaders that understand the values and beliefs necessary for a public pedagogy of social justice (see, for example Begley & Leonard, 1996; Brown, 2004; Larson & Ovando, 2001; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Pounder, Reitzug, & Young, 2002; van der Bogert & Williams, 1998).

In rearticulating leadership preparation, it is critical that faculty in preparation programs understand not only what "public pedagogy" and "social justice stance" are in relation to pedagogical considerations, but they must also understand how these considerations shape the person and the practice of the future educational leader. If, as Miron (1996) argues, "leadership is the enactment of values," then it is imperative that preparation programs include epistemological and pedagogical considerations that "enable participants to challenge their own assumptions, clarify and strengthen their own values, and work on aligning their own behaviors and practice with these beliefs, attitudes, and philosophies" (Brown, 2004, p. 81).

Leadership preparation is, in and of itself, a complex array of social practice governed by ideological and political as well as epistemological and pedagogical considerations. In rearticulating preparation programs we – leadership preparation faculty – must delve deeply into our own values, beliefs, and assumptions, realizing that the change we seek to cultivate in our programs must begin within ourselves. Importantly, As Pounder, Reitzug, and Young (2002) have argued, "We must understand that leaders cannot fix the problems of society by leading better, nor can leaders alone transform the lives of the children in their schools, particularly if larger societal and institutional issues of oppression and inequity are not addressed" (p. 271). That said, the authors explain: "However, their work does have the potential to contribute to the improvement of schools, society, and the education of all of our children" (p. 271). This means realizing that rearticulating preparation programs is not an assurance that future educational leaders will substantively change the world of education or live in schools, but rather that our work in rearticulating preparation programs is part of larger work of rearticulating society through a public pedagogy of social justice practice.

Central to leadership preparation concerned with social justice is a logic that in order to commit themselves to work for social justice, future leaders must develop a clear understanding of how schools and schooling can either support or undermine social justice. Preparing leaders requires that leadership faculty and students of leadership understand that schools are contested political sites. Therefore, preparation programs must ensure that future leaders grasp the complexity of the school, they must understand, as Cochran-Smith (1999) explained, that "structural inequities embedded in the social, organizational, and financial arrangements of schools and schooling help to perpetuate dominance for dominant groups and oppression for oppressed groups" (p. 117). This also means that future leaders understand that "Power, privilege, and economic advantage and/or disadvantage play major roles in the school and home lives of students, whether they are part of language, cultural, or gender majority groups or minority groups in our society" (p. 117). What is demonstrated here is that social justice is not limited in its concern to issues of diversity, inequality, or inequity; rather, it addresses a broad array of factors that either work to advantage all or disadvantage some while advantaging others along lines of difference; race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation.

The implication of social justice in relation to preparing future leaders is that each individual who commits to leadership for social justice must recognize the schooling process as ideologically embedded, political, and value-laden. This recognition calls forth on an understanding of the need for a "public pedagogy" guided by "social justice" and focused on creating more just, democratic schools for all children.

Leadership preparation and practice that is centered on public pedagogy as social justice practice must link the notions of personal accountability and social responsibility by making more than a gesture to democratic ideals. Rather, leadership preparation must place social justice at the center of its epistemological and pedagogical considerations. By doing so, social responsibility—and democratic responsibility—gets pulled through a notion of personal accountability, making the latter a condition of the former. Professors of leadership preparation can begin this process in the classroom by taking a stance and enacting a curriculum

and pedagogy relevant to preparing leaders for social justice. This may be further delineated as the professor taking a pedagogical position or stance on a social issue relevant to leadership preparation.

Pedagogically, taking a stance offers both the students and professor a way to 'performatively' enact and experience the dialectic between personal accountability and social responsibility by offering up a topic that will be private for some, and public for others. This pedagogical approach recognizes the classroom as a site of struggle in which the professor helps organize and connect personal opinions, experiences, and concerns to wider contexts on one hand, while rearticulating the larger contexts back into private concerns on the other. In essence, the professor enacts his or her public pedagogy of social justice as rearticulation of leadership preparation, and simultaneously enacts with students the heart of leadership for social justice as a public pedagogy of practice.

9 Final Reflections

Dewey (1916), in his discussion of education that is concerned with democracy, argued the need for an "intellectual thoroughness" (p. 179) in work of education as a function of a democratic society. The notion of educational leadership as public pedagogy for social justice is instructive in a number of ways. First, it provides a theoretical basis for understanding educational leaders' work as "a form of intellectual labor, as opposed to defining it in purely instrumental or technical terms" (Giroux, 1988, p. 125).

Second, as Brown (2004) argues, "If current and future educational leaders are expected to foster successful, equitable and socially responsible learning and accountability practices for ALL students, then substantive changes in educational leadership preparation and professional development programs are required" (p. 80).

Third, educational leadership as public pedagogy moves to the foreground the role leaders "play in producing and legitimating various political, economic, and social interests through the pedagogies they endorse and utilize" (Giroux, 1988, p. 125). Fourth, taking a social justice stance, educational leaders bring into specific relief the perspective that leaders have to be "seen in terms of the ideological and political interests that structure the nature of the discourse, classroom social relations, and values that they legitimate in their teaching" (Giroux, 1988, p. 127). In this sense, it is important to view educational leadership as public pedagogy for social justice practice and at the same time contextualize in political and normative terms the concrete social functions that leaders perform.

Preparing educational leaders along the path of leadership as public pedagogy for social justice will require commitment on the part of preparation program faculty and students alike to the work of enacting social justice as an ideal for rearticulating preparation programs and schools alike. Toward the goal of rearticulating schools, such work will require much of the educational leader, and demand the he or she be a person whose pedagogy and practice is guided by dispositions sensitive to the needs of the students a diverse society.

ENDNOTES

[1] The notion of pedagogy being argued for here is part of a political project that takes as its beginning point issues of liberation and empowerment. And it rejects the notion of culture as an artifact immobilized in the image of a storehouse. Instead, the pedagogical principles at work here analyze culture as a set of lived experiences and social practices developed within asymmetrical relations of power. In this sense, pedagogy is concerned with rewriting the relationships between theory and practice, which for the teacher reflects a responsibility for understanding the intellectual work of pedagogy as a form of cultural politics. This requires respecting complexity of the relationship between pedagogical theory and the specificity of the sites in which they might be developed, and at the same time understanding the role of teacher in public pedagogy that is concerned with the work of translating democratic ideals into practical reality through teaching and learning (see Giroux, 1992, pp. 3-4, 99).

[2] "Social" as used here refers to the concept as defined by Smart (1980, p. 159): The concept of 'the social' refers not to that global abstraction 'society' but to a series of methods, techniques, and practices which have effected a particular form of social cohesion. It is in the analysis of such methods, techniques, and practices through which power has been exercised in modern Western societies that the complex constitution

of hegemony has begun to be effectively addressed.

[3] Pseudonyms are used for all participants and educational settings.

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