

Introduction to Special Issue

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Introduction

In 2009, an idea grew from a conversation between a British scholar and his American counterpart regarding a research collaboration exploring educational leadership across countries. This dialogue initiated the creation of the International School Leaders Development Network (ISLDN), which would receive support from the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS) as well as the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA). By 2011, the project planning commenced and two distinct research strands identified, leadership in high needs schools and leadership for social justice.

For the leadership for social justice strand membership, a number of challenges arose as the group attempted to solidify protocols even before beginning the research process.

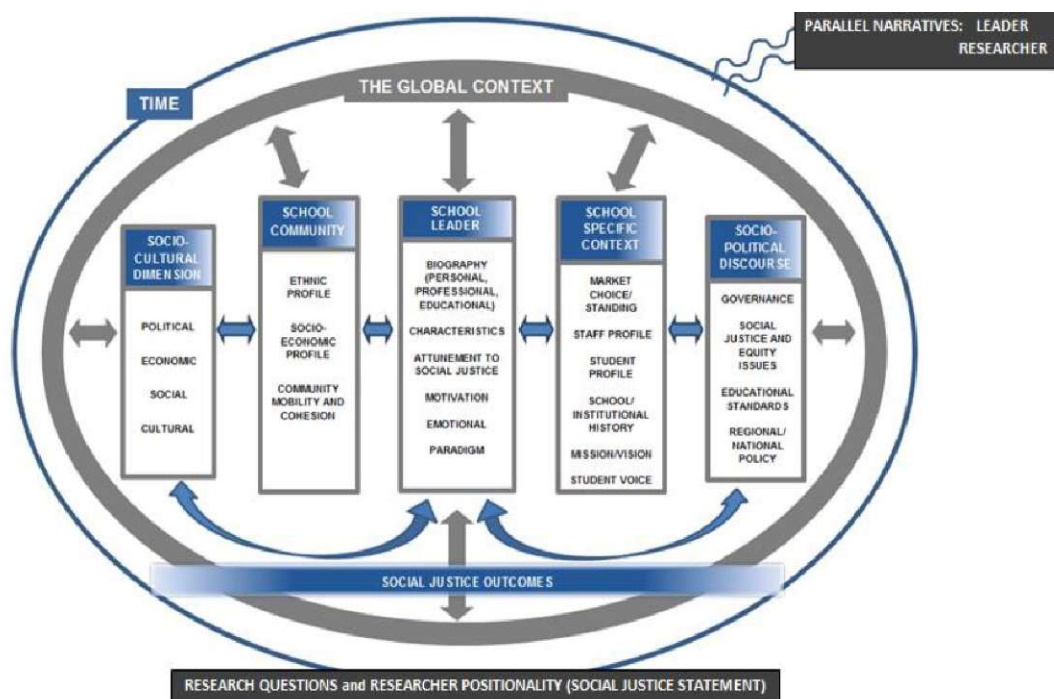
Acronyms, language, structures, and operations, as well as ways of being and ways of doing had to be understood by each researcher across 40 countries involved in the project. Definitions, most importantly the definition of social justice, and the myriad enactments of social justice were discussed, dissected, and negotiated as we sought common terms and understandings of the work we were about to pursue (Angelle, 2017, p. xvi).

While there were many issues the group needed to address, paramount was identifying a common definition of a socially just leader for the purpose of the research. Collectively, the group chose to represent the term in this manner: “a principal who is committed to reducing inequalities and makes this aim a high priority in leadership practice” (Angelle, 2017, p. 308).

Upon establishing a shared definition, the research group’s guiding questions were generated through group consensus.

- What is social justice leadership and what does it look like in myriad international macro, meso, and micro contexts?
- How can our international and comparative methodology enhance our understanding of what social justice leadership means in different international contexts? (Angelle, 2017, p. xvi).

In order to best examine how a social justice leader is able to lead in a school, community, and in national contexts, the ISLDN-SJ researchers developed a conceptual framework over numerous iterations (see Morrison, 2017) to identify the interplay between the micro, meso, and macro levels of social justice leadership.





From the initial meetings held at annual UCEA and BELMAS conferences, it was determined that more opportunities to meet collaboratively were necessary. Additional ISLDN meetings were held in 2014 (Atlanta, Georgia, USA), 2015 (Gosport, England, UK) and 2016 (Hamilton, NZ) to allow for continued dialogue and collaboration between network members. These meetings proved fruitful for the network as additional projects were undertaken. A special issue in *Management in Education* (MiE), published in July 2014, highlighted the research being done by members of both the social justice strand and the high-needs strand (Barnett, 2014; Bryant, Cheng, & Notman, 2014; Duke, 2014; Gurr, Drysdale, Clarke, & Wildy, 2014; Medina, Martinez, Murakami, Rodriguez, & Hernandez, 2014; Norberg, Arlestig, & Angelle, 2014; Richardson & Sauer, 2014; Sharvashidze & Bryant, 2014; Slater, Potter, Torres, & Briceno, 2014; Szeto, 2014) and the importance of “effective cross-national partnerships” (Barnett, 2014, p. 77). These collaborations continued for social justice strand members through journal articles (Angelle, Arlestig, & Norberg, 2016; Arar, Beycioglu, & Oplatka, 2017; Arar & Oplatka, 2016; Morrison, Branson, & McNae, 2015; Torrance & Forde, 2015), book chapters (Angelle, Morrison, & Stevenson, 2015; Branson, Morrison, & McNae, 2015), an edited book (Angelle, 2017), and numerous research presentations across continents.

The idea for a special issue of the *Research in Educational Administration & Leadership* (REAL) journal came from ideas that were shared during the BELMAS symposium *Unlocking the Path to Social Justice Leadership: Leadership Stories from Head Teachers/Principals* in (2016) as well as during the convening of the International School Leaders Development Network (ISLDN) in New Zealand in 2016. Numerous members of the Social Justice strand of ISLDN had recently contributed to an edited book, *A Global Perspective of Social Justice Leadership for School Principals* (Angelle, 2017), which allowed the authors to explore the actions of school leaders from around the world as they worked to promote social justice leadership in their schools. The idea behind this journal special issue then was to explore

the leadership stories of the principals/headteachers as they attempted to make sense of the genesis of their leading for social justice. The resulting five articles cover leadership spanning several countries: Costa Rica, Mexico, Scotland, Spain and the United States.

The exploration begins with the article *Leading Authentically: A New Principal in Challenging Circumstances* by Pamela Angelle. Her article highlights the importance of values, the leader's awareness of these values, and the behaviors and relationships that emanate from these values, which are formed from the life stories of the leader. While leaders may have shared values, how the leader arrived at these values is built through their stories and the experiences in their stories. Angelle recognizes that authentic leaders will draw from their experiences and will find opportunities to demonstrate their personal values in action, inspiring others in the school and community at large as they work together for all students.

The importance of values continues with the article *Social Justice Leaders: Critical Moments in Headteachers'/Principals' Development* by Christine Forde and Deirdre Torrance who focus on positionality and the relationship of critical externalities and schooling internalities. From the interviews with four headteachers, Forde and Torrance talk about the importance of leadership development and how this interrelates with headteachers' own social position, personal experiences as well as professional experiences, especially in regard to their own professional status as well as managerial power. A central issue highlighted by Forde and Torrance was headteachers being ready to articulate and act upon their values related to social justice.

Stephanie Ogden's article *Becoming an Educational Leader for Social Justice: A Micro/Meso/Macro Examination of a Southern U.S. Principal* shares the story of a principal named Mary whose personal values solidified through her leadership preparation. By exploring the complex system of micro, meso, and macro contexts within her setting, Mary now has developed tools intentionally influencing her teachers as they develop the multi-cultural skills they need to



transition from their middle class personal lives in suburbia to their professional lives serving a school of diverse students in the economically disadvantaged urban center.

In a comparative article that looks across three countries, Charles Slater, Patricia Silva, Serafín Antúnez, Gema Lopez Gorosave, Nancy Torres, and Adriana Romero present *Women Becoming Social Justice Leaders with an Inclusive View in Costa Rica, Mexico, and Spain*. This article identifies both comparisons as well as commonalities. One example is the importance of formative experiences within their own contexts. Two of the three leaders had personal familiarity with injustice and the third was ashamed of injustice. All three saw the importance of community and relationships with parents. One was also active politically and fought injustice in this manner as well. What resonated throughout this article were the stories shared by these women highlighting the early family experiences that gave them strength and core values. These values were a driving force with an intensity that they brought to their work each day. They had a keen sense of economic, cultural, and social justice (Cribb and Gewirtz, 2003).

The last leadership story *Becoming a Social Justice Leader: A Fictionalized Narrative Approach* by Lee Flood drew a parallel with the other stories presented in this journey, that of the emergence of an accidental leader. While Flood's teacher had initially only viewed leadership as a way to increase his pension, it was only through the prompting of others that caused John Kelly to examine the ways in which he chose to lead. By utilizing a fictional narrative approach to highlight the findings, this leader explained that relationships had the most influence on his development as a social justice leader. Flood also draws attention to the conceptual model utilized by the social justice strand of the ISLDN and suggests future studies might consider adding depth and complexity at the very center of the model, the social justice leader themselves.

The final article, *Making sense of it all: Values, relationships and a way forward*, written by the guest editors, provides connections across articles, critical commentary as well as recommendation for further research exploration, for not only members of the research network, but for those doing any research on social justice leadership. We hope that this collection of articles provides insight into the importance of leadership stories in the development of a social justice leader as these principals/headteachers work to provide opportunities for all of the students in their care.

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Leading Authentically: A New Principal in Challenging Circumstances

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Abstract

This qualitative study was undertaken as part of the ISLDN global study of social justice leaders, focused on the leadership stories of the respondent. This study is framed in authentic leadership and examined the leader's self-awareness, authentic behaviors, and relationships, which both communicated and solidified the authenticity of the leader. Data were collected, then analyzed through the lens of the leader's story which formed her way of leading. Findings showed that leaders who possess self-understanding grounded in core values, make decisions and behave in ways that demonstrate their self-understandings, and form relationships with followers that build trust through their authenticity promote positive cultures in their organizations and lead with greater conviction.

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Introduction

Leadership models and theories have focused on who leaders are (traits, style, skills), what leaders do (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) and how leaders interact with followers (path-goal, leader member exchange, situational). Yet, these well-researched concepts do little to explain how leaders became leaders and where they learned to lead as they do. Moreover, does knowing how leaders learned to lead help in understanding the outcomes of the leadership, both personally and within the organization? The International School Leader Development Network (ISLDN), an international research project jointly sponsored by the British Educational Leadership, Management, and Administration Society (BELMAS) and the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) has investigated this broader question of how leaders learned to lead.

In his discussion of leadership development, Avolio (2010) offers the idea of trigger moments, that is, the “start of ‘genuine’ leadership development...[that] motivated the individual to reflect and learn from the event, which ultimately could result in enhanced leadership potential” (p. 739). The story of Ingrid, the subject of this article, likewise began with a moment when, as a new assistant principal, she was informed that she would lead a school that had just experienced an episode of violence, resulting in the transfer of the school’s entire leadership team.¹ Moreover, as the new principal, she would lead the faculty, staff, and children, many of whom witnessed the violence.

According to Schwartz (1999, 2005, 2006), when we encounter situations, we look at them in light of the values we hold. We decide what action is most desirable to take, based on the priority we assign to the values pertinent to the situation at hand. The higher priority we give to the value, the more likely we will take action and behave to express those values. When values are activated by a situation,

¹To ensure anonymity for the school and its community, the act of violence will not be detailed here.

alternative actions and consequences of these actions are internally judged by whether they support or obstruct valued goals. Thus, values are linked to daily behavior, even without conscious awareness. Values define situations, prompt goals, and influence action (Verplanken & Holland, 2002).

The values we hold influence not only actions and behaviors but also decision making. This is particularly true for people who do not have previous experiences on which to draw in decision making. This article describes the leadership story of Ingrid, a story which embraces both past and present, to answer the research question: How does a new principal placed in challenging circumstances lead authentically?

Review of the Literature

Authentic Leadership

Maslow (1962) described the self-actualized person as one who reaches full capability. Likewise, self-actualized leaders are fully functioning and, in being so, they are self-aware, understand their strengths and challenges, and accurately view themselves in accord with their values and beliefs (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Cogliser, Davis & Dickens, 2011). Avolio and Gardner (2005) contended that leaders who are self-aware make better choices and behave in ways that are consistent with their values. The notion of responsible behavior, deliberate decision making, and value laden choices has evolved from a self-aware authentic person into the field of authentic leadership. Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005) discussed authentic leadership in terms of its objective, which they describe as “to train and develop leaders who will proactively foster positive environments and conduct business in an ethical, socially responsible manner” (p. 477).

Authentic leaders are defined by Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May (2004), as cited in Avolio and Gardner (2005) as



those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character. (p. 320)

Myriad characteristics have been applied to authentic leaders, including self-confidence, reliability, trustworthiness (Illies, Morgenson, & Nahrgang, 2005), a moral center, fair and transparent (Avolio, 2010), and one who owns "one's personal experiences be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 320).

An overview of recent literature has surfaced three components generally agreed upon as reflecting an authentic leader. These components, as gleaned across the literature, are awareness, behavior, and relationships. A discussion of each of these components follows.

Awareness

The first component of awareness involves self-knowledge of feelings and desires, valuing each (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). Motivation to continually reflect upon, increase knowledge about, and solidify trust in one's "motives, feelings, desires, and self-relevant cognitions" is all part of gaining self-awareness (Kernis & Goldman, 2005, p. 32). As part of self-awareness, self-understanding (the short term perceptions of one's actions) is essential. Thus, this component is not an end point but a lifelong process of continual understanding of one's strengths and challenges, values and beliefs (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Illies et al. (2005) discussed the concept of eudaemonia, whereby human happiness is based on living life with exemplary character and virtue. This Aristotelian view requires continual reflection as one attempts to live a 'true' life, deeply enmeshed in one's values. Illies et al. (2005) connected this to the notion of self-awareness and authenticity, as one achieves happiness through trust in the innate self.

Behavior

Authenticity accounts for the connection between thought and behavior. The inauthentic leader behaves to please society's mores or to avoid punishment. The authentic leader behaves according to the innate values, feelings, and perceptions of the 'true' self, rather than acting 'falsely' (Illies et al., 2005; Kernis & Goldman, 2005, 2006). Through an honest assessment of self, behavior is chosen. When behavior is authentic, leaders are free to make moral and ethical choices (Novicevic, Harvey, Ronald, & Brown-Radford, 2006). However, Kernis and Goldman (2005) caution that behaving authentically takes courage because there may be times when the leader's values are in opposition to the prevailing norms of the organization they lead. For the leader, behaving in ways that conflict with one's true self can cause damage to authentic leadership.

Relationships

Authentic leadership is also grounded in relationships through modeling values. Authentic leaders lead "by example as they demonstrate transparent decision making, confidence, optimism, hope and resilience, and consistency between their words and deeds" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 326). Followers observe this way of leading and increase their connection to work by following this model. Moreover, the transparent decision making builds trust with followers, thus cultivating a more positive and ethics based climate, encouraging all to act with openness and truth (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Illies et al., 2005). Building trust with followers is gained through consistent behaviors and decisions. Followers can begin to know the leaders' values and decide if these values are shared when trustworthy and dependable behavior is demonstrated. Authenticity is reinforced when the leader models behavior that is consistent with the values shared by the group (Illies et al., 2005).



The Importance of Stories

Leader stories provide a view into what leaders deem important, including those moments and models that particularly influenced the core of their leadership. The stories reflect what the leader has learned to value, which then informs awareness of self, shaped behavior, and informed followers. Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, and Adler (2005) argued that

The leader's biography is an important source of information from which followers and potential followers learn about the leader's traits and behaviors, that the leader's life story provides the leader with a self-concept from which he or she can lead, and that telling the biography is an important leadership behavior. (p. 13)

Sharing leadership stories benefit both the leader and the follower; the leader by way of forming the meanings they wish for the followers to understand about their leadership and the organization and for the follower through identification with the leader and knowledge about the values the leader holds (Shamir et al., 2005; Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Stories convey messages. This can allow the leader to highlight life story events that presents the leader in a way s/he desires. Behavior and decisions are informed and supported through the stories told. Moreover, justifications are given for behaviors through stories told and known, acknowledging that stories can be used by the leader as a tool for influence (Shamir et al., 2005).

Role modeling is not the only means by which leaders can establish relationships with followers. Leadership stories serve as a source of information to the followers about leaders' traits, skills, style, and focal points in their lives that formed their leadership practice, which forms the leaders' identity and explains the leaders' actions and reactions (Shamir et al., 2005). This information shapes relationships through followers opening a door into what the leader values, thereby strengthening trust if the values are shared.

Authentic leadership is supported through the telling of life stories. Leaders are "authentic to the extent that they act and justify their actions on the basis of the meaning system" gained from their

stories. The essential outcome of this is from “the current emphasis on the development of skills and behavioral styles to an emphasis on leaders’ self-development, and especially to the development of their self-concepts through to the construction of life-stories” (Shamir & Eilam, 2005, p. 396).

Values, the leader’s awareness of these values, and the behaviors and relationships that emanate from these values, are formed from the life stories of the leader. While leaders may have shared values, how the leader arrived at these values is built through their stories and the experiences in their stories. The ‘trueness’ of a leader’s values are not identified from the organization or through current popular culture but are created from life events that the leader has experienced and fashioned as personal belief systems (Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

Methods

Data for this research were collected as part of the larger ISLDN research on school leaders’ enactment of social justice. Adhering to the definition constructed by the ISLDN social justice (SJ) group, for purposes of this study, social justice leaders were defined as *principals/head teachers (elementary/primary or high school/secondary) who are committed to reducing inequalities and make this aim a high priority in their leadership practice.*

Using this definition, Ingrid was asked to volunteer, following recommendations of university personnel and school district personnel, who were given the ISLDN SJ definition of a socially just leader. No criteria regarding gender, ethnicity, years of experience, student achievement levels, or school context were considered in selection of principals who were perceived as social justice leaders. Ingrid participated in an initial interview as well as a follow up interview.

Following institutional approval, Ingrid was interviewed using a standard protocol across ISLDN countries. Interview times varied from 60-90 minutes for each of two interviews. Interviews were



recorded and transcribed, then coded and categorized (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Transcription data indicated the unique circumstances under which Ingrid took on the role of first time principal.

Site

Northside Elementary School serves approximately 475 students in grades K-5. The community surrounding the 100 year old school is an old, established neighborhood, in addition to the newer government housing projects. As the community has grown, it has also become more diverse. Nonetheless, newcomers are welcomed into the community and encouraged to become involved.

The three largest Northside subgroups by ethnicity are Caucasian (44.9%), African-American (40.5%), and Latino (13.9%). With almost 75% of the student population living in poverty, Northside has been designated a United States Department of Education Title I² school and receives federal funding to support the education of these at risk children. The Latino student population is largely concentrated in the lower grades, K-2, and two English Language Learner instructors have been assigned to the school to assist these children and their families. Moreover, additional personnel have been assigned to accommodate students with disabilities, including a speech therapist, a resource teacher, and a school psychologist.

Ingrid began her education career in 2003, working as a lower, then upper elementary teacher. After completing a specialized leadership program in the Valley City District, Ingrid was assigned as an assistant principal, then promoted to interim head principal at Northside, when the previous principal left for medical reasons. The interim status became permanent and Ingrid's first official appointment as principal was at Northside Elementary.

²The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and its reauthorizations No Child Left Behind Act and Every Student Succeeds Act, includes Title I, Part A, which provides funds to schools and school systems which have a high number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The funds are to assist children of poverty in meeting challenging academic standards.

Findings

Following the review of literature and the three major components of authentic leadership which emerged from the review, the a priori codes of awareness, behavior, and relationships were used in the analysis of data. Interview responses were read, coded, read, and compared to each iteration of transcript codes. Findings gleaned from the data follow.

Awareness

Self-awareness came to Ingrid through the lifelong process of understanding self, as explained by Avolio and Gardner (2005). Ingrid's earliest model for her value system was her mother, a teacher. Ingrid smiled as she explained:

Well, my mom is a big influence in my life. She was a teacher. She taught for 33 years and...I kind of laugh because when I went away to [university], I told my parents, "I'm not going to be a teacher." I had a whole plan mapped out but education was never in the picture. But I think, even from the time I was really small, she was kind of modeling that for me because she was the band director and music teacher...She taught in the rough, one of the roughest, inner city high schools in Memphis.

Repeatedly, throughout our conversation, Ingrid mentioned caring for the needs of each child as an important core value. In relaying a story about her mother as a teacher, clearly, that value was inherited.

Mom had one particular student who...she stayed at the house a lot and then later I found out that she had a very horrible home life. Her mom beat her. They rarely had any food... I remember growing up and seeing these kids, these high school kids just in our home. They'd spend the night. They'd have dinner with us. Of course, this was back when you could do stuff because you didn't have a few stupid people that made bad decisions and ruined it for everybody... She's very sensitive towards other peoples' needs and issues... She's just that kind of person and I'm a lot like her so we kind of tend to have bleeding hearts for people and issues and things so that is probably where I get it from so that really influences my background with the kids here. I mean, I just love every one of them... Even on the hard days when I leave at the end of the day, I feel like something went right...[if] the kids left feeling good about being here.

Ingrid's mother modeled the value of caring for others and Ingrid embraced that value as well. She became a teacher and believed her core mission was serving others.



I say all the time and I really believe this...that we are in the people business. I value people above everything else and that could mean staff, that could mean parents, community people that could mean the little people, you know, the kids, of course. I value how we are interacting with people. I kind of take that as my guiding principle.

While a teacher, Ingrid had not considered taking on the role of principal. However, the superintendent of schools at the time, spoke to her about the possibility, which led to self-reflection on Ingrid's part. After consideration, she decided she had the skills and abilities to be a successful principal.

He (the superintendent of schools) approached me and he said, "I think you have the skill set to make a good administrator...I think you'd really be great. I think you should apply." Really, at that time, I didn't want to because...I don't see myself as a principal. It looks boring. I don't want to do that. I want to be a teacher. So I tried the (principal preparation) program. It was a good experience and I loved it and that's actually how I became a principal. It was never something that I ever sought out to do. It just kind of found me so here I am.

Authentic leaders understand their strengths and weaknesses and find happiness through living their true self. Not long after becoming an assistant principal, Ingrid was once again approached by the superintendent to become interim principal at a school that had recently experienced an episode of violence. The surviving leadership of Northside was transferred to another school, leaving Ingrid to begin her initial role of principal in a school community still suffering emotional wounds.

When I found out I was coming here, it was a total shock. I didn't want to move up [to a head principal position] necessarily...I liked being assistant principal. I really liked the school where I was...the first time [her supervisor] asked me to come here I said no because I looked at the situation. It's a big no... By the third or fourth day, she called me and said "We need you to go there because we need you to help [the school]." Then I got excited about it. That is what drives me. Helping other people.

Ingrid said that "great learning moments" and "negative wisdom" came from those first few months in her new position. She explained:

I want to preface by saying when I met with [the district superintendent]... I wasn't sure [of the previous principal's] different leadership styles, different personalities [of the two of us]. "What is your expectation of me?" That's what I flat out asked him... He knew my leadership style. He also knew the leadership style of the previous leader and so I asked, "Am I expected to go in here and replicate what she did and was about?" And he looked

me in the eyes and said, "No. You go in and be you." So I said, "I got experience with that. I can do that." Now once I got here, there were a couple of incidents that were very challenging.

Ingrid was self-aware and had a firm self-concept. Therefore, she wanted assurance from her supervisor that she could remain true to her way of leading. This was far different from the leadership of the previous principal. There were situations where she had to make decisions on remaining true to herself or behaving falsely.

Behavior

As Ingrid began her new position, she encountered several circumstances that were contrary to the values she held. As Kernis and Goldman (2005) noted, in time of value/circumstance conflict, leaders have a choice to behave authentically or not. Ingrid recounted a story that touched her innate values and tested her authentic leadership.

When I got here, I started noticing that certain staff members...and these aren't teachers. These are mostly teaching assistants that may ride a bus route in the morning or afternoon or they might supervise lunch or breakfast duty every day. They don't really establish good rapport with the minority students and, by the time it's brought to my attention, it's completely erupted into a big huge thing...the child is very upset. So not only are they crying and they're upset, they got attitude because they are older and they're trying to be all tough... I'll take the child and we will kind of walk away a few steps, a few paces and get out of earshot and I'd be like "I need you to go to my office and calm down because you're very upset right now and when you get calm, you're going to tell me what happened"... By the time I get to the office, I just would approach the situation, approach the student with calm and trying to listen and I really built a lot of rapport that way... just be respectful towards them so they would exhibit respect back to me. Because nine times out of ten, they just want to be heard. They just want to be respected and lots of times, I find that's when a staff person has not really been respectful to them.

Ingrid received some push back from staff who felt the students should be dealt harsher punishment. She discovered that the previous administration handled student discipline in a manner quite differently from Ingrid. Initially, Ingrid attempted to behave in ways that went against her understanding of self to socialize into the new



community (inauthentic behavior), in the hope to socialize into the already existing norms. She quickly learned that not being true to self was more difficult than socialization.

One of the biggest challenges I encountered my first couple of months here were the differences in discipline... If I need to discipline a child that did something really bad - I really believe in respecting the child at all costs even if they did something horrible because I don't know all of the background of that child. I don't know why they did that. I don't know what's happened in their past. I don't know what happened to them that morning. I don't know. So I try to not just get in their face and yell and throw a tantrum right there to get them to cry because that's my power as a big person. But, after being here for a few weeks of trying my style on things, word circulated to teachers that discipline is not happening. Discipline is not being handled in the school... so I'm [in the school hallway checking on classes] and [Ms. X] pulls me in and is like, "Listen, I got to show you this." I had only been there two weeks. We had a leadership team meeting coming up and there was all these pieces of paper in her box that said discipline is not being handled. You know, people were worried. The kids were running amuck... So, I'm looking at it. I'm making some notes and stuff. I'm a little confused and bewildered. Because I thought things were going good... I saw the assistant principal discipline kids... And let's just say we were totally different; he's with lots of slamming doors, lots of yelling in kids' faces, if they don't leave crying then you were ineffective kind of thing, so I thought, "Well, when in Rome... Let me give it a whirl."

At that point, Ingrid decided to behave in ways that were not authentic to who she was. She went on to explain how she changed her behavior from an authentic approach to one that she believed would socialize her into the new community. She described the consequences this decision had.

One afternoon there was a bus issue. We had two little twins who were 1st graders who claimed that this 4th grader was picking on them on the bus... we call him up to the office towards the end of the day. He gets in here and instead of my typical way, I tried out [the way of the assistant principal and previous principal], so I'm slamming the door and I'm getting in his face. I screamed, "I know you're lying!" Kid shuts down. Would not get on his bus. Would not leave the same spot for like an hour and a half. Holding up staff members. We're calling the mom. "Your kid's not moving. Something is going on. He's not talking to anybody..." The mom kind of figures out what is going on. She's on the phone, "I'm on my way out there." Furious at everybody. Furious. She comes to get the kid and talks to him for a while. Over the next few weeks, that child continued to be a behavior problem and before the bus issue, he wasn't.

Ingrid realized that acting in inauthentic ways was detrimental to others beyond herself. At the risk of going against the prevailing culture, she sought to make amends and to work with the values by which she lived.

Since this situation had just gotten way out of hand, I told the assistant principal, "when we meet with his mom, I'm going to be at the meeting." So we are sitting there and the mom didn't say what the problem was but she knew something went wrong with the son and she was just furious at all of us. Well, after a while she kind of turned her anger on me, which I knew was coming...because I think she knew it stemmed from that incident that day... I listened for a minute and I just looked up and in that big meeting in front of everybody, in front of the teacher, the assistant principal and everybody, I said, "I need to apologize for that because I did not handle that the way it should have been handled that particular day." My assistant principal was completely aghast. You would have thought I sprouted 18 heads at that meeting because afterwards he said, "We never, me and the previous leader, we never admit fault ever. That's like the cardinal sin. You just broke it. I can't believe you'd admit it." I said, "Listen, let me tell you something. I know I'm new to this whole leadership thing, but I am driven by an ethical compass that guides me. I knew that I did not handle that the right way that day." I said if we are going to repair things with this mom and with this little boy, I don't mind to admit when I made a mistake. I don't. That's part of leadership. If our teachers, if I lead them down the wrong path somewhere, part of being a good leader is standing up and saying, "Hey, I led you down the wrong path, so sorry. Now, let's fix it." Ever since that day, the child has been great. He's a good kid. The mom likes me...It's all good now but that was the perfect example of when I tried to compromise who I really was and how I know handling things usually works out. It just didn't work for me. It just didn't.

Ingrid shared several stories of how behaving in ways that mirrored her authentic self not only helped her to become a better leader, but helped her to become a better 'self.' Modeling this way of being allowed the school community to view who she really was as a person and as a leader, which increased trust, support, and improved the culture of the school.

Relationships

Shamir and Eilam (2005) pointed out that authentic leaders do not lead for status or rewards. Authentic leaders do so from their convictions. One of Ingrid's most sincere beliefs was care and respect for children. As such, she was proud of the relationships she built



and hoped that this served as a model for others in the school community, including the community that surrounded the school. She illustrated this by saying:

I like to be involved in everything in the school...I like that the kids know me by name and they want to show me what they have been working on. It's just really neat to see and it helps the community, too, because I live in this community. When I go to the grocery store, it never fails...[I see] a lady with a cart slowly approaching me and my cart and I always see them out of the corner of my eye and this person usually looks kind of half embarrassed and they say, "My kid wouldn't leave the store until we came over and said hi to you." Then I'll see this little body hop out from behind the mom, "Hey, Ms. [Ingrid]!" It just makes me laugh.

Ingrid tried to instill in her leadership team and her faculty the importance of positive relationships with the children through modeling and sharing her story. This was, however, a challenging task because of the autocratic view of the previous leadership. Nonetheless, Ingrid continued to convey the message of respect and relationships.

After years of working in an urban school environment, it didn't take me long to figure out that in most of these kids' homes when mom and dad get in an argument... how do they see this handled in their neighborhood? They see slamming doors. They see yelling. They see cuss words. They sometimes, unfortunately, see guns and knives and other things like that. Why are they coming [to school] and we are modeling that for them? Why are we going to model more of that for them? Let's not slam doors on them... when they come to the [principal's] office, even if they did something that is horrible,...I get firm with them but they are learning something in the process and I am not disrespecting them through discipline. They are not so terrified or petrified that all they know is, I don't ever want to be in the office again. They don't leave confused. They just leave knowing "oh gosh, I shouldn't do that again."

As Ingrid built relationships with the children, she also communicated her values and encouraged the students to think about the person they wanted to be. Thus, in her authentic leadership, she was fostering an authenticity in the students as well.

I think the schools are great because they represent a little slice of society, just with little people... I look at this line of work I'm in and think, these are the kids I've been given. The task that I've been given is that when they graduate from high school, they've become fully functioning, contributing members to society. I have a hand in that. What am I going to do with it? You know, kind of look at it that way and it goes beyond the reading

and the math. It's like I tell kids all the time, you can be the smartest person, you can be the best person at whatever it is you do, but if you can't get along with other people and you can't work with other people, no one will want you working for them. I don't care if you want to be a lawyer or a dentist or a teacher or a basketball player, if you don't have manners and can't get along with people [life will be hard for you].

Self-awareness and behavior modeling the values gleaned from self-understanding is communicated to followers through building relationships. Making visible the deeply held values inspires followers to know, understand, and, hopefully, embrace these same values, encouraging authenticity in the larger community.

Discussion

This research described the authentic leadership of Ingrid, a new principal assigned to a school where her self-understandings, behaviors, and attempts to foster relationships were tested by the challenging emotional and cultural circumstances through which the school community was working. A leader who was firmly rooted in her values of care and respect for all, particularly for the children in her charge, Ingrid's efforts focused on communicating and modeling these values to those both inside and outside of the school building.

Initially, Ingrid, in attempts to socialize into the new organization placed salience on the existing culture, which was at odds with her self-understandings. When the results were less than stellar, Ingrid realized that her comfort in leadership stemmed from the authenticity with which she approached her agency. Ingrid's self-awareness was brought to the fore in the enactment of the behaviors and decision making she applied each day. In this way, Ingrid was able to model her values for others in the community, guiding their understandings of her as a leader which strengthened relationships with teachers, students, and parents. Learning from failures added to Ingrid's leadership story and increased her self-knowledge.

Given the challenging circumstances into which Ingrid was thrust, her leadership story became more important. Her self-awareness, the core of her self-concept, and the values she lived were grounded in



her leadership story. As Shamir and Eilam (2005) noted, “Life-stories express the storytellers’ identities, which are products of the relationship between life experiences and the organized stories of these experiences” (p. 402). In other words, Ingrid’s leadership story, both distant past and nearer present, gave her meaning, which then informed her values, behaviors, and relationships. The stories justify the leadership self (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). As Ingrid grew in self-confidence through reflecting on her role model, her mother, and, through the circumstances of her novice year as a first year principal, Ingrid solidified her self-concept and gained an understanding of her best self, her authentic self.

The heart of authentic leadership is the true nature of the leader, one which is moral and just, therefore, worthy of trust from the followers. As a relatively new theory, most research in authentic leadership has focused on the theory, not on the practice. This study may serve as one of the few application based research studies of authentic leadership. Future research should provide the field with more instances of authentic leadership and how principals learned to become leaders, specifically, case studies of authentic leadership from both the US and from myriad global contexts. Leadership stories such as Ingrid’s enhance our understanding of the whole person in an authentic way, rather than parts of the leader, such as the study of traits and skills. As Ingrid was thrust into a situation that required her to be a calming presence following the violence that had shattered the school community, to respect the previous leadership team while building her own culture and processes, to set the tone for a new way of ‘doing school’ for students, teachers, and staff, and to simply learn to be a principal, she called upon her innate values and models who inspired her to learn to lead authentically.

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

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Abstract

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

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Introduction

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

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



Critical Externalities: Macro and Micro Levels

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

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

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

Pushing the Concept of Positionality

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The Scottish Case Studies

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

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

- How do social justice leaders make sense of 'social justice'?
- What do social justice leaders do?
- What factors help and hinder the work of social justice leaders?
- How did social justice leaders learn to become social justice leaders?

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

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

Table 1

The Scottish Case Studies

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

Critical Moments in the Development of Social Justice Leaders

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

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

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

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

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

Personal Background and Experiences

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



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

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

Early Career Aspirations

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

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

Career Experiences

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

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

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



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

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

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

Career roles

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

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

People

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

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



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

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

Professional Learning

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

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

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

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

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



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

Career Long Interest and Stance

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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**Becoming an Educational Leader for Social Justice:
A Micro/Meso/Macro Examination of a Southern
U.S. Principal**

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Abstract

This descriptive case study examined how a principal in an urban elementary school in the southern United States became a leader working for social justice in education. The principal cited her parents' values as contributing to her own seemingly countercultural beliefs and behaviors relating to racial and ethnic diversity, and described schools as essentially middle class phenomena, requiring students and teachers on either side of the class divide to become bicultural. The principal enacted a vision for empowering her students with the same support and freedom of choice available to members of more privileged segments of society. Evidence of interdependent micro, meso, and macro contexts, nonlinearity, and self-organization in the complex system relate the framework of the study to theories of complex systems, offering opportunities to apply understandings of complex systems to the problems of social justice leaders.

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Introduction

The International School Leaders Development Network (ISLDN) is an international group of education researchers formed to investigate the work of social justice leaders in education. As defined by the ISLDN for purposes of this study, social justice leaders are principals (elementary or secondary) who are committed to reducing inequalities and make this aim a high priority in their leadership practice. By reducing inequalities based on socio-economic status, race, gender, ability, religion, or political structure, for example, social justice leaders may participate in building both individual and social capacity. Writing from the perspective of systems thinking, Serman (1994) describes learning as a feedback loop between the decisions and actions of an individual or organization and the outside world as it is altered by those behaviors. Individuals and their contexts are therefore engaged in cycles of mutual causation within the system of education. This study examines the complex system of individuals, organizations, and society contributing to the development of a social justice leader.

Since the 1990s, multidisciplinary, global researchers have recognized parallels between the system of education and other dynamic complex systems (Jacobson & Wilensky, 2006). Some study the condition of feedback loops between the micro scale of the learner and the meso scale of the school, either reinforcing or detracting from individual and/or organizational learning (Coyne, Kame'enui, & Simmons, 2001; Hmelo, Holton, & Kolodner, 2000; Serman, 1994). Others apply systems thinking to the problem of designing and implementing interventions for transformational educational change at the interface between the macro scale of the state or federal system and the meso scale of the school (Bar-Yam, 2004). Still others investigate how ideas and strategies developed by researchers studying dynamic complex systems in economics, computer science, or urban studies, for example, might be applied to the analysis of change in education (Barbera, 2004; Lemke & Sabelli, 2008; Mital, Moore, & Llewellyn, 2014).

When complex systems function optimally, the flow of information facilitates individual, organizational, and societal learning. In reality, various barriers interfere with the quantity and/or quality of feedback flowing across scales in a complex system. Examples of impediments to learning include poor awareness of internal or organizational cognitive maps, inadequate social resources in the form of interpersonal skills or organizational structures for constructive interaction, and misalignment of perception and/or purpose (Serman, 1994). The purpose of this study is to enhance understandings of how social justice leaders develop within the complex educational system connecting individuals, organizations, and the broader social fabric. The focus of this leadership story is how one individual from a Southern U.S. city became a social justice leader in education. Her story offers evidence responsive to the following question:

How does constructive feedback within and among micro, meso, and macro scales contribute to the development of an individual as a leader committed to reducing societal inequalities?

This leader's story also offers evidence of how destructive interference within and among micro, meso, and macro scales detracts from the development of individuals and communities and increases social inequalities. More broadly, this leader's story contributes to improved understanding of how social justice leaders can navigate the multi-scaled complex system of a culturally diverse society to fully develop all individuals and reduce social inequalities.

Conceptual and Contextual Framework

To accomplish its purpose, this exploratory, qualitative case study theorizes a social justice leadership story through the conceptual framework of the ISLDN. Respecting the ways in which individuals and society participate in mutual causation, the ISLDN framework investigates social justice leadership by examining interactions within and among three contextual scales: the micro scale of the individual's



personal narrative, the meso scale of the individual's school and community context, and the macro scale of state and national policy and discourse. This study places the ISLDN framework within the broader theoretical context of dynamic complex systems.

American social justice leaders practise within the historical context of generations of education reform initiatives. *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) began with words worthy of social justice leadership: "All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost" (¶1). The report also raised the alarm that graduates were losing ground when compared to graduates from previous generations and to contemporaries around the world, initiating a new wave of education reform that few would argue has achieved its intended purposes.

Education reform initiatives in the 1990s featured decentralization of control. Studying such an initiative in urban Chicago elementary schools, Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that some schools improved under local control, while others did not. Using quantitative factor analysis on socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic factors, Bryk and Schneider found that the factor correlating most strongly with features of school improvement was the level of relational trust within and among the meso-micro contexts of the school: between parents and the school, among teachers, and between teachers and the principal. Bryk and Schneider identified relational trust as a core resource for school reform. Learning requires personal investment, and investment requires trust in the intentions and capabilities of teachers, principals, and schools.

Although successful at reducing inequalities in some schools, the local control movement of the 1990s failed to transfer those successes to the macro scale of the system. Likewise, Fullan (2007) argued that the top-down approaches that ensued failed to engage individual commitment. He examined how individuals have tried to make

meaning amidst waves of educational reforms at all scales in the system, often emerging from the process more skeptical and less willing to invest in the latest innovation.

Schlechty wrote in 1997, “Structural change that is not supported by cultural change will eventually be overwhelmed by the culture, for it is in the culture that any organization finds meaning and stability” (p. 136). Fullan (2007) described why and how classroom and school cultures have typically resisted change, only succeeding provided that there is sustained support and investment from the system and that the schools have the social capacity for change. Fullan embraced the elusive goal of bringing isolated successes to scale in the system of education and identified challenges associated with the twentieth century vision of applying education to the task of reducing inequalities in society: “To the intrinsic complexity of changing one’s own practice was added the enormous difficulty of tackling the existing power structure and overcoming the prejudice and ignorance of ethnic, class, gender, and special differences of all kinds” (p. 6).

Micro, Meso, and Macro Contexts, Complex Systems, and Social Justice

Complex systems are composed of interdependent, interacting components, such as the micro, meso, and macro contexts of the ISLDN social justice framework. Even within these contexts, we see complex interactions among sub-components. The micro context consists of interactions among the school leader’s experiences, values, and perceptions as they relate to social justice decisions (Angelle & Ogden, 2014). In addition to interactions among individual micro contexts, the meso context encompasses interdependent features of the school and local community—their histories, demographic profiles, cultural values, and relative stability or mobility over time, for example. The national history and economy, political philosophy and policy, and cultural values and perceptions of the macro context frame decision making of social justice leaders in education,



potentially supporting or hindering efforts to reduce inequalities. Of particular interest to this study is how resonance among these contexts contributed to the development of a social justice leader acting to reduce inequalities in her school, community, and, by extension, society at large.

Nonlinearity and Self-organization in Social Justice Leadership

Complex systems are *nonlinear*, meaning that the net effects of the actions of the components of a complex system cannot be assessed as the linear sum of the effects of their independent actions. In a complex system, secondary effects emerging from interactions among components must be understood and taken into account (Sawyer, 2005). On the one hand, interactions may result in resonance among individuals, associations, and processes comprising the system so that advances in system resources are greater than the sum of the contributions of isolated components. On the other hand, system interactions may result in interference among components, resulting in losses to the system, inequitable distribution of resources within the system, or, at best, lost opportunities for constructive system effects (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Coleman, 1990). Successful social justice leaders find ways to mitigate destructive interference within contracting, lower capacity contexts and to reinforce constructive resonance among contexts, thereby expanding the material, personal, and social resources available to the system as a whole and/or improving equality of access to those resources (Dooley, 1997; Fullan, 2007; Tartar & Hoy, 2004).

Complex systems feature *self-organization* in dynamic change. Comfort (1994) describes self-organizing order in dynamical systems of communities as, “a creative process of reciprocal exchange, learning, adaptation, and choice among multiple participants operating at multiple levels of responsibility, experience, and knowledge” (p. 393). Self-organization on the scale of the system is mathematically analogous to decision making on the scale of the individual (Yukalov & Sornette, 2014). Cole (1991) describes the

phenomenon of *circular causality* in social systems, in which society and individuals mutually influence their respective developmental courses through the mechanism of micro-macro feedback loops. Social justice leaders aim to balance interactions within and among micro, meso, and macro, contexts aiming to shift system order so as to reduce inequalities in society. At the same time, self-organizing order emergent from interactions within complex, multi-scaled social systems shapes the development of all components within the system, including social justice leaders.

Methodology

Mital, Moore, and Llewellyn (2014) identified key features of a complex system in education: “The educational system is a complex system because of the following properties: constant change, tightly coupled parts, feedback loops, nonlinearity, self-organization, adaptation, and emergence” (p. 371). Systems engineers are now working with education researchers to apply system dynamics and agent-based modeling to the task of modeling the system of education, introducing new research strategies to join qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research. However, understanding the journey of becoming a social justice leader in education is a task well served by the strategy of case studies. The “flexible, evolving, emergent” characteristics of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998, p. 9) are well matched to the multi-scaled, dynamically changing, emergent system of education.

This research is an exploratory, descriptive, qualitative case study of a school leader perceived to practise social justice leadership. This study is part of a larger longitudinal study of individual school leaders in diverse global contexts conducted by ISLDN researchers around the world. Using a modified snowball sampling approach (Goodman, 1961), each researcher identified elementary or secondary principals who are social justice leaders as defined by the ISLDN: school leaders who are committed to reducing inequalities and who make this aim a high priority in their leadership practice.



The leaders were interviewed using a standard protocol across countries. Interview times varied from 60-90 minutes. Leaders described their preparation and practice, features of their particular contexts, and supports and hindrances to their work as social justice leaders. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, then coded and categorized (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). No attempt was made to generalize findings to social justice preparation or practice in each country. Rather, this is an exploratory case study of the preparation and practice of one social justice leader in context.

The principal selected for this study was identified based on the purpose of the study. “Mary’s” story of preparation for social justice leadership offers opportunities to enhance understandings of how the complex system of micro, meso, and macro contexts contribute to how individuals learn to become social justice leaders within that system.

Findings

Mary’s story of preparation for social justice leadership begins with her upbringing in a suburban area of the same southern United States city where she now practises social justice leadership as the principal of an urban elementary school. To emphasize the interconnectedness of micro, meso, and macro contexts across time, all contexts will be interwoven in both of the following sections: Mary’s account of her multi-scaled path to social justice leadership and her perceptions of her social justice leadership practice within her current meso/macro context.

Mary’s Path to Social Justice Leadership

When asked how she came to be a principal, Mary joked about going to her college advisor every semester saying, “I don’t know what to do with my life.” Her advisor would tell her to sign up for certain classes and four years later she was a certified teacher of Physical Education. Mary allowed that she was actually quite committed to the profession after the first two years, but went on to

say, "I don't really have big long-term goals.... People say, 'Do you want to do this?' And I say, 'yes," or, 'no.'" Mary did request an urban schools placement for her teaching internship and was subsequently hired to replace her mentoring teacher, who relocated with her family. Mary taught at that school for 17 years and enthusiastically characterized her experience there as a "great, great job."

When asked what attracted Mary to an urban school placement, she expressed her appreciation for the experience of growing up in a home and neighborhood well equipped to give her choices, but added that she wanted to do something different in a more diverse setting than the suburban, middle class community of her upbringing. Mary quickly credited her experience as an eleven-year-old at Children's International Summer Village (CISV) as a seminal event in her development:

I got to go to the French West Indies when I was eleven as part of a group, and so I went to camp there and met people from all over the world.... I am still in contact with [some of] them.... All I asked for for Christmas that year was for my parents to give me money so that I could call these people that I had met.

Although Mary was reared in a middle class, suburban neighborhood in this southern American city and she speaks with a southern accent, Mary also credits her parents' California roots as influencing her interest in cultural diversity: "My parents didn't raise us as southerners, really.... Culturally, they were not southern, although you couldn't tell it now to hear any of us talk." When one of her sisters had a middle school relationship with an African American boy, people assumed that her parents were, "freaking out," but Mary replied, "No, my parents don't care." Mary's parents' mobility modeled a wider worldview for their children than that experienced by many peers, whose multi-generational roots in the community may have contributed to a more provincial outlook.

Motivated by a fundamental desire to "do the right thing," Mary selected the Urban Specialist program offered by her local university for her graduate studies. Emerging from a broadening meso and



macro context of regional and national dissatisfaction with achievement gaps that were becoming undeniable in the wake of desegregation, this program became part of Mary's meso context. Mary attributes this program and the Urban Administration concentration she would later complete in her doctoral studies with providing her with the "vocabulary and framework" to articulate decisions and actions she had already undertaken just because they were right. Mary's educational opportunities and choices developed her thinking about social justice and transformative leadership.

Beginning her teaching career in an inner city school, Mary shared that she enjoyed being the only white person in the room at her first teaching position: "Every white person should have that experience." Transitioning from 17 years of teaching in urban schools to administrative leadership, Mary served as Assistant Principal for a total of four years in two other urban elementary schools. At one of these schools, Mary additionally served in a newly created district level position as Magnet Facilitator. As part of a countywide initiative to reduce minority isolation, Valley City's school district had invested in enriched programming in schools located in economically disadvantaged situations, a program which Mary coordinated locally. The strategy was intended to attract students from wealthier, mostly white neighborhoods, in order to increase diversity and reduce inequalities for all. At the time of initial interviews for this study, Mary had served as head principal at Glenwood School for three years.

Mary's Perceptions of Her Practice of Social Justice Leadership

Mary is the principal of "Glenwood Elementary," an elementary school in the urban center of a southern United States city. Like many similarly situated cities, "Valley City" still exhibits evidence of the cultural isolation of subgroups formed within a historic context of explicit and de facto racial segregation. Mary reports that members of the African American community served by Glenwood Elementary still refer to Glenwood as the "white school," years after the end of

officially sanctioned segregation, and that the director of the now integrated recreation center confronts these residual issues daily: “It’s *not* the ‘white rec center.’ It’s the rec center for the *community*.” Mary believes that her willingness to dialog openly about the issues of race and poverty is an essential strategy for building bridges between isolated subgroups.

The racial profile of Valley City’s school system closely matches that of the broader community as reported in the 2010 US Census¹, suggesting that Valley City largely avoided the exodus of white populations from public schools experienced in some areas. Within those aggregated data for the 91 schools in the local system, however, neighborhood schools display widely varied demographic profiles, often determined by the economic segregation of Valley City into neighborhoods of greater poverty or wealth. While 29.9% of students in the school system as a whole are economically disadvantaged, 79.5% of students at Glenwood were designated as such in 2015-16. Mary identifies the problems of poverty, “gangs, drugs, and violence,” as challenges to her practice. State and local school system expenditures are about \$9098 per pupil. Because of high poverty, Glenwood also qualifies for federal funds allocated for children of poverty and attracts significant private funding for social supports ranging from food to medical care to help with bills, to English lessons for family members. Careful to explain strategies to avoid establishing cycles of dependence, Mary went on: “We need to kind of help them meet those needs, which then builds trust in us as a school, and then, hopefully allows us later to work on empowerment.”

Reflecting meso and macro demographic trends, the school features a dynamically changing population. The school had only about 180 students some 10-15 years ago. According to the State Report Card, that number had grown to 410 students by 2015-16,

¹(75.2% White and 16.1% Black or African American for the school district in 2013 vs. 76.1% and 17.1%, respectively for the City, according to the 2010 US Census)



leading Mary to cite lack of space as a hindrance to her practice. What was once a largely black and white student body has changed to include a quickly growing Latino/Hispanic majority population. Glenwood's population is now 9.3% white, 33.4% black, and 56.8% Latino/Hispanic. Mary reports that the white and Hispanic students largely live in the single family housing around the school, while black students tend to live in a nearby housing project. Within the third of the population that is black, a growing number are recent immigrants from Africa. Forty percent of Glenwood's students are identified as English Learners, speaking Spanish, Mayan, or Kirundi at home. Mary reports that a full-time Spanish-speaking liaison provided to the school by a private foundation is key to her work connecting the school with parents and parents with the broader community: "Our Spanish-speaking families know that she's here ... and she'll have lines of people to see her." The liaison helps families with educational and other needs. Mary cited efforts to ensure that her emerging population of Kirundi-speaking students receive, "the same level of service that we provide our Latino families," as part of her strategy to reduce inequalities in her school and to "do the right thing":

It is the right thing for me to make sure that every kid in our building receives the best education that they can receive. It is the right thing for me to make sure that parents have an interpreter at their IEP meeting or anywhere else.... and that their kids don't have to translate. It is the right thing for [our liaison] to help them to fill out their paperwork because they're not literate in Spanish.... And it's the thing that allows ... all of our families to be on equal footing.

Mary's perception of her practice as a social justice leader is couched in cultural terms, a focus expressing her early experiences with the Children's International Summer Village camp and exchange programs. Describing the traditional school experience in the U.S. as a white, middle class, suburban phenomenon, Mary sees multiculturalism as a strategy to address the challenges of poverty, race, ethnicity, and rapid change. Whether meeting with African American pastors or parents newly arrived from Guatemala, Mary conveys a willingness to learn their perspectives and an eagerness to

bring their unique contributions to the school. Mary is proud of her school's Hispanic night, in which the parents prepare and serve ethnic foods for some 200 guests at the school. Funded by a grant from a private foundation, the school purchases groceries as directed by the parents, and the parents do the rest. Mary and her team are looking for the right time of day and event to replicate this program and welcome the school's growing population of African families.

When speaking with her largely white, middle class faculty and staff, Mary intentionally aims to help teachers to develop the multi-cultural skills they need to transition from their middle class lives in suburbia to serve their diverse students in the economically disadvantaged urban center. If a staff member wonders why children who cannot afford to pay school fees come to school wearing new shoes, Mary explains: "In black culture, it is *very*, very culturally important to look good—that you don't look poor." If someone presumes that an immigrant parent doesn't care about education because she does not respond to communications from the school, Mary responds with feeling: "Yes, she *does* care, but she just doesn't understand or just doesn't feel welcome, or doesn't feel like she can come, or is working three jobs and can't get there."

Applying lessons learned in her University preparation as an Urban Specialist and her life's work in urban settings, Mary works with her faculty to reduce higher discipline referral rates for black boys by developing widespread understanding of student behaviors. The school also implements strategies to help these children to transition more seamlessly between the world beyond the school, where call-and-response and physicality are culturally appropriate behaviors, and the world of the classroom, where children are expected to raise their hands, wait to be recognized, and observe personal space. Mary emphasizes that targeting their language and behaviors for the varied contexts they experience through the day is a multi-cultural skill that will help students to achieve all they hope to achieve in life without sacrificing their family and community culture:



We need to teach our kids that both are good—we need to teach them to be bi-cultural so that they can do what they need to do. If I'm in a job interview, I'm going to talk one way. If I'm with my friends, I'm going to talk another way. If I'm in class, I may need to raise my hand, but at home or at church, I don't have to. And that's fine.

In addition to a history of racial isolation, the problems of poverty, and the challenges of a community absorbing rapid change towards cultural diversity, the first macro context challenge Mary cited for her practice was accountability. In the years following enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, high stakes testing was a means to enforce a policy of reducing achievement gaps among students from varied socioeconomic, racial, language, and special education subgroups. In the 2015-16 school year, the time-consuming regimen of testing in the state was suspended mid-administration owing to significant failures in testing structures. The state's accountability website states: "Because assessments in grades 3-8 were not fully administered during the 2015-16 school year, 2015-16 data is not available for grades 3-8." Mary was concerned about the capability of state testing structures to inform instructional decisions: "How will we know that these children are learning and growing as expected?"

In 2015, Glenwood's 4th and 5th grade students exhibited estimated school average achievement levels of 36.5 and 31.5 Norm Curve Equivalent (NCE), respectively, relative to the statewide achievement level of 50.0 NCEs, suggesting persistent achievement gaps related to the poverty and language challenges of the school's meso context. To assess student growth relative to expected outcomes, the state relies upon a growth model measuring how a student's test scores compare with his or her own performance the previous year. Glenwood's 4th graders growth was similar to the state's growth standard, but 5th graders offered evidence that students made significantly more progress than the statewide growth standard.

Discussion

In this section, we will discuss how Mary's story relates to the primary question framing this study: How does constructive feedback within and among micro, meso, and macro scales contribute to the development of an individual as a leader committed to reducing societal inequalities? We will also consider Mary's preparation to handle destructive interference evident in Mary's leadership story and the significance of findings relating to intercultural exchange as a strategy for social justice leadership.

Constructive Feedback

Constructive feedback loops within and among the micro, meso, and macro scales of Mary's development as a social justice leader were supported by resonance among signals from home, school, and community. Although Mary grew up in a time and place clearly marked by a history of institutional racism, her parents made decisions and took actions to change that cultural dynamic. Mary's parents were not alone. The family's partnership with CISV created a meso context signal reinforcing a value for cultural diversity and stimulating Mary's thirst for understanding of the beliefs and behaviors of new friends who stretched her cultural boundaries. In a linear system, one might evaluate the cumulative effect of these signals using simple addition, but their combined effect on Mary was amplified beyond simple addition. Mary's parents were able to achieve the transformative task of overcoming prevailing cultural values and raising Mary's awareness of her own cultural blind spots. This step in Mary's development as a social justice leader exemplifies the effects of constructive feedback among resonant signal and of nonlinearity in complex systems developing individual capacity.

Mary's development as a social justice leader also demonstrates self-organization in a complex system. Recall that Mary did not really set out to become a social justice leader. Beginning with an imperative to "do the right thing," Mary's social justice leadership



was nurtured, but also emerged from constructive interactions in her system of micro, meso, and macro contexts. Reinforcing the micro scale influence of her parents and the meso scale influence of CISV and other cultural exchange opportunities, for example, Mary's love of sports led her to enroll in a Physical Education program at University, creating another meso channel reinforcing her commitment to education as a long term strategy for relational social justice:

I believe whole-heartedly that education is the key to whatever our kids want to do... regardless of what that is.... The thing I love about my position ... and what I really loved about teaching physical education...was when the kids [come] to us..., because we have pre-K, we can have them for 7 years. And we develop this really great relationship with families and with kids and really watch them grow.

As Mary progressed to graduate school, she chose an Urban Specialist program, intentionally joining a community of professional educators committed to social justice. These life events occurred against the backdrop of the macro context of educational and social reform in the 1990s. When Mary began to teach, she found mentors and partners in the system, who were working to reduce minority isolation by investing in magnet programming. When Mary became a principal, she connected with community partners in the form of private foundation support and local communities of faith. From the home, to the school, to the workplace, there was significant resonance among her experience, values, and perceptions. Such is often the case in high capacity segments of society, such as Mary's upwardly mobile, middle class community. Parents, schools and community forces work together to develop high capacity individuals.

Subverting Destructive Interference

The picture is not perfectly coherent. Within the meso context, for example, Mary has found it more difficult than expected to move the local system to do something as simple as adding spaces on computer generated forms to accommodate her Hispanic students' hyphenated names. Within the macro context, the picture is even more conflicted.

On the one hand, broad trends and policies such as the Civil Rights Movement, federal funding to enhance education for the poor, and private partners in community development reinforce Mary's development and practice as a social justice leader. On the other hand, seemingly well intentioned state and national policies intended to challenge the "soft bigotry of low expectations" (Bush, 2006, ¶24), have created challenges to Mary's practice when implemented, as in the case of the state testing failure. Mary identified national immigration policy as a barrier to parents feeling free to engage with the school. Mary is well prepared, however, to balance interactions within and among these contexts to notice and act on opportunities to reduce inequalities in the system.

Most of Mary's students come from poverty. On the day of her interview, Mary had visited a classroom where the teacher had assigned a project in which students identified their favorite things. One student had listed two favorites: her family and clean water. Although Mary has worked for decades addressing the unique needs of students in poverty, the simplicity of the list stopped her in her tracks with a fresh realization of the challenges facing some of her students. Mary's school and community have access to a rich array of outside resources, including emergency help with food, utility bills and/or medical care, to name a few. However, poverty often comes with a lack of social resources needed for the optimal development enjoyed by Mary in her own richly supported upbringing. Mary's families are often disadvantaged by their lack of awareness of the societal cognitive maps and organizational structures identified by Serman (1994). Mary understands the implications of her students' parents' relative disempowerment as it relates to their capacity to lobby the School Board for much needed space for the school, for example, and she must account for that deficit in order to provide for the needs of her school.

Mary also understands that barriers exist in these parents' minds to engagement with what Mary calls the middle class, white culture of American schools. To overcome such barriers, Mary intentionally



develops her own bicultural understanding and skills by engaging in conversations, applying life experiences, and performing academic research to increase her own understanding of these families so that she can develop and convey a genuine respect for what they bring with them to school. Mary shares these findings with her faculty so that they have the information they need to create the welcoming environment she wants for her school. Mary's sensitivity to parents' efforts to make sure that their children do not look poor, for example, and her understanding of the importance of sustaining even the illusion of connection to the middle class life for these parents provides a basis for a constructive relationship between the school and parents on behalf of their children. Such relationships can provide the intercultural bridge these students need to participate in the constructive reinforcement that came naturally to Mary and her parents as their birthright.

Intercultural Exchange as a Strategy for Social Justice Leadership

Mary has collaborated with a rich network of social supports to develop Glenwood School as a hub for parents and families to enter into relationship with the broader society, strengthening families' sometimes tenuous connections to macro contexts beyond community and school so that her students can enjoy the benefits of Mary's own empowering preparation. Mary's strategy of teaching multi-cultural skills to students and staff and celebrating diversity develops relational trust in her school and helps her students to enjoy the best of the many social worlds they will ultimately navigate. It is easy to recognize how Mary's personal pathway through the multi-cultural immersion program of CISV in the French Indies, continuing through training as an Urban Specialist in Education led to this style of social justice leadership. Reinforcing constructive practices, providing feedback to correct destructive presumptions or behaviors, and celebrating successes help her staff to trust that what they are doing is important and is making a difference.

Conclusion

The complex system of education may support or hinder the development of social justice leaders and their work. Micro, meso, and macro contexts are interdependent components of a complex system. They reinforce one another when in resonance and work against one another when out of phase, resulting in either amplification or damping of the efforts of those aiming to effect change. When purpose, capacity, and practice align, individuals develop the confidence and trust to invest in the system, creating the conditions for nonlinear growth of both individual and society. Conversely, misalignment of disadvantaged individuals' micro and meso contexts with the prevailing majority culture means that individuals and society miss opportunities to build individual and social capacity. Even worse, the principle of nonlinearity means that when negative trends across contexts reinforce one another, they may actually contribute to increasing isolation and accelerated decline in individuals' access to material, human, and social resources.

Prevailing conditions of social inequality may be viewed as self-organizing equilibrium states of a complex system, even in the absence of any specific nefarious intent. As Schlechty (1997) observed, cultural equilibria may prove to be quite intransigent to the decisions and actions of social justice leaders. When the equilibrium state of a complex system is very far removed from a desired transition state, as in the case of institutionalized racism in the mid-twentieth century, for example, social justice leaders may need to work in concert over an extended period of time in order to initiate, nurture, and sustain evolutionary change. When positive results are not immediately evident, however, individuals and organizations tend to move on to the next initiative, risking disruption of the evolution of constructive feedback loops towards reducing inequalities. As Fullan observed (2007), this cycle contributes to diminished willingness to invest in subsequent innovative initiatives. To support sustained investment in reversing generations of inequalities, successful leaders like Mary look for, report, and



celebrate longitudinal evidence of incremental progress, even as they document evidence of ongoing gaps.

Sustained work over time may seem to yield small returns, even as the system is moving slowly towards a transition state. Systems very close to a transition between two or more equilibrium states, however, may be quite volatile, meaning that even relatively small interventions may result in a revolutionary change from one state to another. Mary's strategic investment in developing the multicultural skills of parents and students, teachers and staff, and community partners may be such a high yield intervention, which was only possible because of the decades of incremental change moving towards this moment. Mary honors the work of those who went before for the results she is seeing:

The culture in this building, from the time I got here, was very supportive of trying to empower our community and trying to empower our kids, trying to give them a voice, and our families, trying to give them a voice.... The culture in this building has just been supportive of continuing that.

In the same way that Mary is building on the foundation laid by those who went immediately before her, those predecessors built on the work of pioneers in teaching English Language Learners, advocates for students with disabilities, and Civil Rights leaders, some of whom never lived to enter the Promised Land of their dreams. Successful social justice leaders in education target their interventions to present micro, meso, and macro contexts of their schools. But to be effective at reducing inequalities additionally requires sensitivity to the dimension of time, viewing one's work within the scope of previous and future generations.

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Women Becoming Social Justice Leaders with an Inclusive View in Costa Rica, Mexico, and Spain

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Abstract

This study looks at three female school directors in Costa Rica, Mexico, and Spain who worked under challenging conditions to establish social justice. We were particularly interested in how they learned to become social justice leaders. Qualitative interviews were used to hear directly from the school directors about their experiences. Transcripts were analyzed for common themes. The commitment of these directors to social justice came from early family experiences that gave them strength and core values. They met adversity in young adulthood which reinforced their commitment to inclusive leadership.

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Introduction

There is increasing attention to social justice in education around the world (Apple, 2010; Belavi & Murillo, 2016; Bogotch & Shields, 2014). On the one hand, schools can exist to perpetuate the status quo or on the other, they can be an instrument to overcome inequities and change society (Dewey, 1916). Distributive justice suggests that resources should be spread equally or if there is a difference, it should be employed to overcome a disadvantage (Rawls, 1971).

Social justice is concerned with resources and also with recognition, access to power, and inclusion. Cribb and Gewirtz (2003) summarized three types of social justice: economic justice, cultural justice, and associational justice. Economic justice assures equal opportunity as well as a minimum standard of living; cultural justice includes recognition of a person individually and as a member of an ethnic group; associational justice refers to encouraging the participation of all.

Furman (2012) argued that you cannot have social justice without democratic participation (associational justice). Democratic participation in community is the center of moral responsibility where communal skills such as listening, understanding others, communicating, arranging teamwork and promoting dialogue are learned.

The role of social justice leadership then becomes one of advocacy to challenge the status quo and transform society (Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006; Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Shields, 2004). Starratt (1991) and later, Marshall (2004) issued a challenge to the educational administration profession to examine how school conditions can be oppressive. Anderson (2009) responded and wrote passionately about the need for leaders to advocate for students of color and low income students. It is not enough to manage the school well and provide technical solutions to problems within the school; the role of leadership includes a broader look at

societal conditions that contribute to poverty, oppression, and injustice. However, it is difficult to make generalizations about how principals should confront these injustices without looking at each context.

Samier (2017) has outlined the researcher's role as using biographical studies to highlight what school directors believe and how they advocate for those who are marginalized. She warns that stories of school leaders may focus too much on a neoliberal technical view that ignores oppression in a postcolonial world. The combination of advocacy for culturally and linguistically diverse learners (CLD) and critical race theory come together in what Santamaria (2015) has called applied critical leadership (ACL). This approach includes characteristics common to other leadership theories and adds a critical perspective.

DeMatthews, Edwards, and Rincones' (2016) biographical case study can be considered an example of ACL. A school director working in a demanding area with few resources and extreme poverty along the U.S. Mexican border was able to challenge dominant beliefs and power dynamics to address deficit thinking. Her most forceful contribution was to involve parents and give them a sense of ownership of the school.

Gardner (2011) best expresses the primary criterion for a leader who will advocate for social justice in a way that is straightforward and easy to observe. The just leader is inclusive while the unjust leader is exclusive. The inclusive leader invites people to join social initiatives no matter what their background and defines the audience broadly whereas the exclusive leader does not allow others to enter who are different from the core group. He studied major 20th Century inclusive leaders from business, government, and education and reported certain commonalities about their upbringing. They had gifts for speaking and understanding others. They took time to reflect. They were willing to confront authority and their solutions to problems grew out of their life circumstances. Often they lost a father



when young and perhaps had to speak for themselves. They were concerned about moral issues, identified with leaders, and developed their own story.

Gardner's contribution helps to explain how socially just leaders grew up and came to possess their dispositions and beliefs. Stories and case studies of the development of socially just educators are becoming more common, (Cowie, 2011), and most recently more attention has focused on women who lead schools (Galloway, 2006; Rodriguez, 2014).

These socially just leaders are able to use ideal practices to establish justice. Kouzes and Posner's (2012) *Leadership Challenged* described five ideal leadership practices; challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart. Challenging the process means trying things in new ways and not accepting the established patterns. It is exemplified in the cultural work undertaken in New Zealand where the usual patterns of people living in separate cultures are not accepted. People of European and Maori origin are not only striving to respect each other's culture, but they are adopting each other's practices in a new biculturalism (Sibley & Liu, 2007). Schools contribute to this approach through an emphasis on social goals such as Innovative Learning Environments (ILE) that teach students to cooperate and to become independent (Ministry of Education, 2017). The role of school leaders is then to challenge the usual way of doing things and work with teachers to inspire a shared vision of enabling students to become independent learners who will respect other cultures.

The concept of challenging the process as described above can also be seen in the commitment of Costa Rica to rural education. It is well exemplified by an award winning school director and teacher, Humberto Gonzalez (Soto, 2016). He followed a constructivist philosophy to create classrooms where students would be free to create and explore. His students come from rural mono-cultural

backgrounds with little academic experience. Normally, these students would not have gone on to higher education, but he expanded the horizons of these rural children to aspire to university education.

The examples from New Zealand and Costa Rica challenge the process. They are both characterized by inclusion that breaks out of mono-cultural dominance to cross cultural borders and create a more just society. Slater, et al, (2005) outlined a sequence of four leadership stages beginning with mono-cultural in which the leader is sealed within one environment with little understanding of other cultures. One-way cross-cultural leadership acknowledges the existence of another culture but it may be viewed as inferior or less relevant. Two-way cross-cultural leadership provides for exchange of ideas on an equal basis. Finally, meta-cultural leadership creates a mix of cultures that result in new possibilities. Cecilia Fierro has worked with teachers in isolated rural areas of Mexico. The teachers often struggle with how to work with parents and children who live in a mono-cultural world. She has helped teachers to overcome the intolerance of one-way cross-cultural leadership to respect differences, and proceed along new paths (Fierro, 2008).

Fierro's advocacy for teachers in rural areas is significant for this paper because she represents a case of women in leadership, particularly in Mexico. This study will examine women's social justice leadership in Mexico, Costa Rica and Spain. For many years in the Ibero-American countries management has traditionally been assumed by men (Cuadrado, Navas & Molero, 2004, Onorato & Musob, 2015).

Although women have proven to be successful leaders, there are still barriers to their incorporation into managerial positions. As a result, the number of women in leadership positions is well below the statistics. For example, in the case of Mexico, according to the TALIS report (Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación Educativa México, 2013), the number of female primary school principals is 43%. In the



case of Costa Rica, according to Valitutti, Salas, Castro, Rojas and Vargas (2015), 28% of the boards of government are occupied by women. In the Spanish case, Catalonia has 71% of principals in primary schools, but in the Community of Melilla only 28% (Institute of Women, 2012). These results do not differ from studies conducted in North America by Teague (2015), which indicates that 59% of students in the university are women and only 26% hold management positions. Colorado Women's College, (2013) identified that only 18% of women held leadership positions in 10 sectors such as medicine, architecture, among others

The leadership of women may offer promise for a more just future. They are currently under-represented in leadership roles and have untapped talent to address continuing social, economic, and educational issues. Women may have a tendency to be more inclusive and to challenge the process from the perspective of those who have been excluded.

In this paper, we are particularly interested in how women school directors become social justice leaders. Their experiences growing up, going to school, entering the profession of teaching, and taking on leadership roles can be highly informative.

Methods

While we may recognize inclusive leaders by what they say and do, less is known about how they developed their dispositions and beliefs. This study will seek to explore the question of how female school directors come to believe in social justice. The research question is *how did female school directors learn to become social justice leaders?* We were interested in their formative experiences, what they identified as helping them to develop their leadership and their values.

This study is part of an on-going project to examine social justice leadership of school directors in countries around the world. The International Study of Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) is

made up of researchers from 20 different countries. This study included three Spanish-speaking countries: Costa Rica, Mexico, and Spain.

Spanish speaking countries are not often included in studies published in English language journals. This study adds to the literature by including three of the many Spanish-speaking countries. Within each country, there is a diversity of ethnicity, race, and culture. For example, even though Costa Rica is a small country, its people vary from Pacific, mountain and Caribbean regions. Mexico officially recognizes 68 different indigenous languages; and Spain is experiencing a new influx of immigration from countries around the world. , Our work only extends to one school in each of the three countries being studied. Nonetheless, the results are important to begin to probe the origins of women social justice leaders.

Purposeful sampling of directors used criteria similar to those of Theoharis (2010) criteria to identify public school directors who believed that social justice was a key reason for their assuming leadership, kept issues of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other marginalizing conditions in focus, and had some evidence to indicate that the school was more just following their leadership. The researchers in consultation with regional educational authorities identified schools that they were aware of that confronted inequality of income, conditions of ethnic and cultural diversity, exclusion from the larger society, and poverty. The schools were also selected because the principals were women who were recognized by regional educational authorities as addressing social justice issues.

During 2016, data were collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews in each school. The protocols were based on those used in other ISLDN studies (Norberg, Arlestig, & Angelle, 2014; Richardson & Sauers, 2014; Slater, Potter, Towers, & Briceño, 2014; Sperandio & Wilson-Tagoe, 2015; Szeto, 2014; Torrance & Forde, 2015). The protocols are intended to bring out the narrative of each school director. Other studies in Spanish speaking areas have used



this narrative approach, such as, Coral Aguirre, Caso, and Rodriguez's (2016) work with college students.

The length of each interview was approximately 90 minutes. It was digitally recorded and transcribed. During October of 2016, authors who were native Spanish speakers and residents of the country wrote a narrative for each school director based on the transcript. The narratives were reviewed by team members and translated into English. This study is an attempt to understand the experiences of participants through the systematic analysis of their narratives (DeMatthews, Edwards, & Rincones, 2016; Samier, 2017; Slater, 2011). The transcripts and narratives were examined for common themes, and comparisons were made between the experiences of schools directors in each country (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The names of the directors have been changed in the following accounts.

Results

Costa Rica: Ashamed of Injustice

Five years ago, Liliana assumed the challenge of running a school in Costa Rica, located north of Heredia. Her choice to study rural education at the University was not accidental, since she grew up in a rural area and had a strong connection to the countryside. She was raised in a large family with eight siblings; she is one of the oldest. "Being born and growing up in an extended family taught me to share and to understand the value of the concept of equity; I have always tried to advocate for justice; I am ashamed of injustice."

Liliana emphasized that the training she received in her university studies helped her to keep clear her commitment to rural children. She studied in the only university in all of Central America that offered studies in the problems of rural education. In her university education, she consolidated her sensitivity and commitment to problems in rural areas.

She developed a philosophy of social justice, establishing small goals and achieved them. She wanted to build consensus around her proposals and collaborate with leaders of the community. Her goal was to provide better educational opportunities for children in rural areas, since she knew their needs well having been raised and educated in a rural area with her family.

Her rural education faculty focused its pedagogical activity on the training of teachers who live and work in rural areas, indigenous territories and remote areas of the country. The university professors moved from place to place to teach classes in rural. She remembered some university professors who were models to her because they dedicated more attention and effort to attend not only to academics but also to economic, emotional, and family issues that students faced.

She also recalled courses such as Human Rights for children and adolescents, attention to diversity in rural areas, and seminars on the realities of rural life, which helped her to consolidate her understanding the responsibility as a rural teacher. She wanted to be in a position to change and improve the life and quality of education received by children in rural areas.

Her work experience as a teacher was marked by job instability, typical of a new graduate working for the Ministry of Education in recent times. She is divorced and a mother of two daughters. She has persisted in continuing to study despite the difficulties of work; she lives twelve kilometers from the school where she works. She has now become a teacher and principal at Sacramento School, which has sixteen students enrolled and is classified as a one-room school.

Liliana is a young teacher and director, thin, athletic, vivacious, very feminine, and friendly-looking, who travels by motorcycle daily on narrow, steep, little traveled, roads, for forty-five minutes from home to school. Building links and trust with the community was not easy,



The school is located in a rural community at the foot of a volcano. The cold and cloudy climate is conducive to the cultivation of flowers, strawberries, and dairy cattle, and there are small factories that process dairy products. The main source of work is day labor, and the children come from farm families. Parents support the school and volunteer to donate time to paint, weed, and clean.

Despite her eagerness to take the job, Lilibian felt some lack of confidence at first. Her friends and family perceived her as weak because she was young and a woman. She said that the people of the area did not love her; they thought she was young and inexperienced. Nevertheless, she knocked on the doors of big companies to get resources and when they did not respond she went to every farm asking for help.

She persisted in the school and community and gained the confidence of people through real accomplishments.

When I arrived, I went to the town to get to know the community. I worked as a volunteer in local organizations, helping to formulate local government projects, and I attended meetings of the Municipality (Mayor's Office) where matters of importance to the community were decided. After a year, I was able to demonstrate to the community that I could manage the school. When they began to see academic results, the improvements that I made to the school building, and the games I put in the playground, the fathers and mothers began to approach me and to have more confidence in my work as a director.

Her identity as a woman required that she fight for recognition as being strong and later, her identity served to help gain the support of other women and the following quote shows how it gave her a perspective on the importance of advocating for early childhood education:

Women are the ones who support me most with their work and presence. I am clear that my goal in this school is to get all the boys and girls to feel good, learn joyfully, eat well and feel happy...As a woman and a mother, I understand the importance of children having opportunities to go to school and to early childhood education, which prompted me to seek equal opportunities for rural areas, because there are huge differences (in resources) in comparison to the urban area. Through my efforts, the Ministry of Education opened a kindergarten at school and provided a program that gives computers to each child. Entering this program requires a great deal of administrative management, now the school has opened a computer center to the whole community, and high school

students and parents can use the Internet and the printer when needed. The fact that every boy and girl can take a computer home has been a triumph and a breakthrough for the whole family.

Liliana understands social justice as a responsibility of every educator, translated into making each student and family find a backing, an ally, a place where they seek and find help.

I understand social justice as equality, equity and respect for rights. My role is to make sure that everyone has the same conditions in respect, validation and promotion of their rights. To achieve this, I understood from the beginning the need to incorporate families and the community. I understood that community organizations can become my allies because they are local political actors. I think that education is an axis of society. If school triumphs, the community triumphs, society triumphs, and boys and girls are happier.

Liliana described the budget allocated by the State as limited. It is allocated according to the children enrolled and only covers the cost of paying for water and electricity. The allocation for food is insufficient and is not enough to feed the children unless she obtained aid and donations. In the following quote, she offered her perspective as a woman

You have to leave aside the comforts and think about what the community needs. It is not easy to be a woman and move in a world designed by men and for men. I have asked for help from the central authorities and they do not answer me, but I do not pay attention to that kind of behavior.

Commentary on Costa Rican Director

Liliana is a young teacher and director who is clear about her role as a woman and an educator and is a living promise of equity and social justice. She said that she does not want to move to a central school or get a job in a larger school. She feels happy and privileged to be able to contribute to the life of children. She thinks the children are kinder and more pleasant because they learn in a healthy environment that is filled with respect and affection.

She continues to work to maintain the trust built with parents and organizations in the community. The school offers better opportunities for children who are enrolled. They plan to extend services for their families and, in general, for young people. Her goal



is for the school to be the cultural, social, and educational center of the small community.

Mexico: A Sense of Dedication Out of the Experience of Injustice

Cecilia is the director of a small rural primary school located in northern Mexico. She has been director since October 2005. The school has six groups and 150 children. In spite of the deafness that is not overcome by the hearing aid that she carries, she talks passionately about her work and her life. She says that most of the students are indigenous and that the parents have little education. Almost everyone "is illiterate and has difficulty helping their children ... they go to work at 5:00 am and they come back late ... the children are alone when they are not in class." This situation worries her because, "there is vagrancy, drug addiction ... and violence in the neighborhood." She argues that for children to learn "they must be well fed." For this reason, nutritional needs are part of school management. She frequently speaks using terms such as fight, demand, respect and equity. She has negotiation skills, knows how to be energetic and is a persevering manager. She knows how to comply but also knows how to demand without ceasing to be respectful. She is practical, avoids complications and constantly seeks opportunities for students to have a right to a dignified life. For all this, she believes that communication is basic.

Her sensitivity to the victims of injustice seems to be associated with her personal history. She ended her marriage when she felt that the youngest of her children who has Down syndrome was at risk.

I was very affected by my marriage ... I lived a lot of violence and I do not want my students or mothers of families to go through that, I opened my eyes and decided to get a divorce ... I lived for 25 years with alcoholism ... My son with Down's syndrome benefited from the separation ... I think I'm very sensitive about what I've been through with my son, so I want all the children to have the same opportunities...

Cecilia also experienced her son's rejection from a regular school.

"Inclusive education is a big lie, not all children are accepted in schools. That's what I experienced. I wanted to integrate my son into my school and I was not allowed ... because

it could cause problems with the parents ... I was not allowed and I needed to have my son close ... they made me cry so much, so much ... until I learned how to defend.

Most likely, adversity and maternal instinct influenced her leadership, and today she is a defender of children and mothers in disadvantaged situations

While experiences as a wife and mother started Cecilia's current mission, responsibility and probably resilience are traits that she learned in her parents' home. "My dad was a hard worker, not a lot of words. He's a street vendor but he gave us all that we needed ...he never demanded anything; his example of work and responsibility formed us. All women work, we are housewives and also hardworking, and my brothers-in-law do not work ... we women have a career and my brothers only studied."

She distinguished between women and men in the family. The mother spoke little. Why did the daughters not study a career like the sons? And why do her sisters and she work and care for the home unlike her brothers-in law? We do not know but we assume that it is related to the culture that imposes feminine and masculine roles altered by other circumstances.

Cecilia's sensitive, proactive, firm and determined style of leadership also came from models she was exposed to as a student and later as a teacher. She was born and studied in an agricultural village located 200km south of Ensenada. She admired her hardworking teachers, who treated everyone humanely and defended students.

My sixth grade teacher was never quiet, he wanted us to have better classes and better opportunities ... one of my high school teachers was an extraordinary human being, hardworking, very human ...in Normal School I liked how we were treated by a teacher who was very active, he always defended us, nobody could touch us, he insisted that we all had to be treated equally, that we all had the same rights, and we learned to defend ourselves and defend others. In college, I had a wonderful tutor, he was very hard but he was an excellent teacher.

She learned to strive for equality from her own teachers and, that we must strive to achieve the best for all students, that we must



defend students, that we must know how to make demands when it is necessary, and that we can be energetic while remaining respectful.

After finishing her professional studies, she moved to a town near the city. As a teacher, she worked for several directors whom she admired.

My first director would see me from afar, and he would ask me, "What is happening to you today? It was as if he knew what we were thinking, he gave us guidance; he always helped us. I also learned a lot from another director who was always looking for alternatives ... he was always looking for ways to make the school better ... I think I'm just like him.

Commentary on Mexican Director

The stories about the father, the teachers and directors, whom Cecilia admired, have in common the procuring of the well-being of those who are under their tutelage. They give an account of the inspiring force of example in leadership and orientation, but they do not explain in themselves the way she thinks and acts. The stories about her father, the teachers and directors, whom Cecilia admired, have in common the procuring of the well-being of those who are under their tutelage. They give an account of the inspiring force of example in leadership, but she also has very particular experiences - not professional but personal, as a mother and a wife - , that oriented her towards social justice. Her experiences as an abused wife, as the mother of a child with disabilities and her own auditory deficit, mark her perception of the difficulties experienced by a disadvantaged person for different reasons and about the fundamental role that some people had in moving forward in their lives. Her particular style of leadership, resilience, and her work focused on helping economically or socially disadvantaged children and abused mothers. They are closely related to cultural patterns associated with machismo and the traditional role of women in Mexico, accentuated by features in rural areas of the country such as those in which Cecilia was born, trained and currently serves as director.

She draws attention to the fact that, despite the emphasis on the female roles observed in her stories, all of her leadership models are masculine: her father, some teachers and some school principals. Elementary education in Mexico is an organization where most teachers are female and most directors are male. In her professional life, she learned from and admired male directors. Her leadership models may be masculine because the school director is more likely to be masculine.

Cecilia comes from a traditional home where marriage is for life. Unlike other girls, she had the opportunity to study a profession. She reproaches her brothers for not having studied a career, and their wives for dedicating themselves exclusively to the home. Cecilia talks about her ability to support her family after breaking away from years of family violence.

Spain: Maximum Complexity

Araceli is the director of a school in Catalonia, Spain. It provides preschool and elementary education services, has nine groups, one for each grade (P3 to 6th grade). The school serves 245 students from the surrounding neighborhood with a staff of 20 teachers. She has twenty years of teaching experience, of which 12 have been as director. Previously she worked as head of studies of the school and agreed to take charge at the request of the former director who became ill and changed schools.

The urban and social context in which students live is very diverse and complex. Very few were born in the Autonomous Community of Catalonia; 90% are foreigners. Their nationalities are diverse. There are children of Moroccan origin, as well as Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Ecuadorians, and Bolivians, and there are also children from Honduras, the Dominican Republic and Nigeria, among others. Because the school serves poor families, many of whom do not speak Catalan, the school is classified as being "of maximum complexity".



Araceli had already worked in the school as a teacher when the situation and the social dynamics of the neighborhood were changing. The neighborhood has always received migrant populations. However, the migration to which she and her companions were accustomed had come from other cities in Spain until then there had been... immigrants, but from the rest of Spain... who had been here for a few years, who were already quite adapted, working people, people from the outskirts of Barcelona. But a large foreign population was beginning to arrive, in great quantities; of course nothing like what is now, but a large foreign population.

These changes, with these new students, generated uncertainty and confusion in the school. Each person, according to Araceli, took it in a different way. When she took over as director, she observed that the teachers instead of adapting were becoming overwhelmed:

We teachers were a little frightened; we did not know what to do. My colleagues complained. And that's when I thought, "No, we do not have to complain, we have to see what is happening to us, and we will remedy it, and we will see if we have to change something."

In her case, she observed that the resistance of the teachers was natural, but they needed a project, objectives, and a series of actions to deal with the situation.

There were a series of faculty meetings to write a letter, a rather desperate letter, with much information, which we sent to the head of the schools in Catalonia and in that letter, they expressed their concern. And then I remember that the director of educational services called us and I thought: "All right, fantastic! Let's work together."

And from here, we had already made a diagnosis in that letter. We made a pretty good diagnosis of the situation, we talked about it, he told us that, indeed, we needed help and he said he would come and see us. He came to see us at school and observed, really on the spot, that everything we had said was absolutely true.

The visit from the director of educational services recognized that teachers faced difficult conditions and vindicated their concerns. However, it seemed unlikely that they would be able to get the authorities to recognize their concerns. They did not expect to be taken seriously. When the authority actually agreed with them, it

served as a turning point when teachers began to have hope that their efforts would make a difference.

Araceli's concern for issues related to social justice was not only due to the new reality of the center. It was grounded in her personality ... "for years I have taken part of my vacations to travel to third world countries to help and participate in solidarity projects for people in need ... I have always had that interest."

Her interest was further awakened when she observed the needs of the school and when she took over the management.

I think I've always had sensitivity for others. In this school, what drives you is the need. You are in a neighborhood of people who have many social needs. The vast majority of students, as you know, are in a precarious social context. They are not native-born families. They come from many countries, especially from North Africa, Latin America and, above all, China. The largest Chinese community in Catalonia is in this neighborhood.

Day by day observing the needs of children and their families generated a greater understanding of the importance of focusing part of their efforts in addressing other issues outside the academic field.

You are with children who have so many deficiencies in their homes and families. Their situation forces you to mobilize, to think of new ideas, to look for resources everywhere: the Generalitat (the government of Catalonia), the Town Hall, social services, so that they are well cared for.

Araceli saw the needs of her students clearly, and she also understood herself to be a competent and caring person. The observation of need connected with her own sense of confidence spurred her into action. She became an advocate in search of resources from around the community and was emerging as a social justice leader.

Given this scenario, when you are in the position of director, you must be the one who takes the initiative. It may sound a bit weird but it's you who leads others. I did not aspire to be a leader but I was clear that I should be the one to encourage others to move forward.

Besides the commitment that Araceli has had with the school and its families, another aspect has had significant influence. It was her commitment as a social leader. Her political affiliation also



determined her way of being and acting in favor of social justice. Living in the same area where she works allowed her to observe closely all the changes and needs of the community:

Something that has influenced me a lot, are my political ideas as a leftist and my links to social projects in the city. I have mixed in the political party that governs my city, and I have been chosen by the citizens to exercise the position of councilor. Now I am looking at social issues from a more complete point of view, and I realize the complexity of trying to achieve social justice that we talked about not only at school but in our local community.

One more element that Araceli highlights in her experience is the importance that families have. The director and teachers observed the difficult living conditions of these families and determined that they should focus on strengthening their relationship the school and parents:

And in terms of social cohesion we realized that we had a very important job to do with families, and we got the families involved more with all the artistic activities because we knew that if families were involved with the school, they were getting involved with society, they left their family and social environments and integrated in a much more mixed, and varied way, which was the environment offered by the school.

Commentary on Spanish Director

Araceli's experience showed how she learned to be a leader for social justice. A first element was that the construction of her identity was marked by her personal and professional history. She has been a person who has always been concerned with the community. Part of her free time occupies her in participating in solidarity projects in different countries that need it and that to act in the same way in the center has been something natural.

A second key element is priorities. The well-being of children has become the focus of school activity. Social cohesion and family ties have also been important to her. Finally, she has a strong social commitment to meet the needs of staff, families, members of the educational community and the population in general. Her political affiliation and her relationship with the population influenced daily activities in school. Her performance not only focused on the school, but was also related to global issues. Her leadership went beyond

preserving her status as a director but committed her to macro problems beyond the school and community.

Araceli is a leader who strives to improve her school and strengthen democratic participation and advancement of the potential of the entire community. Constant reflection and innovation are part of a continuous cycle of improvement. For her, social justice will not be achieved by itself, but requires a continued effort of all people.

Discussion and Conclusion

The three school directors in this study had many of the characteristics of inclusive leaders as described by Gardner (2011). They were willing to confront injustices based on what they had experienced in their own lives. Liliana, an attractive young leader, grew up in a Costa Rican family in which injustice was viewed as a personalembarrassment. She went to work in a rural school in an area similar to where she grew up. She became active politically and earned the trust of parents. Cecilia's experience in Mexico was more dramatic. She persevered through domestic abuse and raised a child with Down syndrome; often having to confront school authorities to address his needs. Meanwhile Araceli had developed empathy for immigrants outside of Spain and travelled to see other cultures. The maximum complexity of diversity in her school was a motivation for her to rally on behalf of immigrants.

These three women found their voice to speak on behalf of others. They focused on the community and put parent involvement at the center of their work. Inclusion was at the center of their stories of social justice. Their leadership is consistent with what DeMatthews, Edwards, and Rincones (2016) found in their study of Mrs. Donna, a school director along the Mexico Texas border. Her leadership was oriented toward the lived experiences of marginalized communities, and she saw how their lives connected to achievement in school. She was committed to a view of schooling that included more than



academic achievement and gave priority to interaction with the community. She challenged dominant ideologies and had the strength to admit that she did not have all of the answers and had to enter into partnership with parents to educate their children. She had

a commitment to promoting socially just family engagement through school-community partnerships that draws upon cultural community wealth and prioritizes the needs of students, families, and communities. (p. 784).

The research question of this study was *how did school directors learn to become social justice leaders?* The answer for these women seems to come from early family experiences that gave them strength and core values. Two of the three met adversity in young adulthood, which only reinforced their commitment to inclusive leadership. They may have admired other leaders, but we did not ask about mentoring experiences, and they did not mention formal learning experiences in their development. Rather, these leaders reflected and sought out their own learning.

Liliana in Costa Rica, Cecilia in Mexico, and Araceli in Spain assumed their positions of responsibility with the fresh hopes of a newly arrived person. Their behavior was consistent with the observations of Sánchez and López-Yáñez (2008) who said that women in managerial positions are deeply involved in tasks, both in terms of the time they spend and the intensity they put into the job. The intensity appeared to be related to the values that they brought to their work. They had a keen sense of economic, cultural, and social justice (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003).

In sharing the stories of these three women leaders from Spanish speaking countries, we hope to add what is known about how school directors become social justice leaders. Future research should include additional narratives from around the world to identify experiences that prepare leaders to create inclusive communities. Creating an educational community and a sense of belonging characterize the accomplishments of these women.

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On Becoming a Social Justice Leader: A Fictionalized Narrative Approach

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the experiences and influences that aided, prompted, and informed a principal in the south-western United States to act as a social justice leader with a keen focus on creating equitable conditions and outcomes for marginalized students within his school (Bruner, 2008). By employing a fictionalized narrative approach to findings, the aim of this study was to illuminate the shadows around the formal position to more fully understand what experiences caused an educational leader to act with and focus on social justice in his formal capacity as a high school principal. Findings highlighted that parental upbringing, experiences while in college, a competitive nature reinforced through athletics, and a meaningful relationship with a mentor all had a profound influence on the participant's orientation to and belief in reducing inequities in his school and providing opportunities for all of his students.

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Introduction

Social justice leaders orient their educational philosophy around prioritizing equity within schools and proactively working towards equitable outcomes and experiences for marginalized groups (Bogotch, 2000; Bruner, 2008; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003; Dantley & Tillman, 2006, Theoharis, 2007). The International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN), an international collaboration of educational scholars supported by the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) and the British Educational Leadership, Management, and Administration Society (BELMAS), broadly defined a social justice leader as a principal who has a “strong educational philosophy that commits to reducing inequality” (ISLDN, 2016). Bogotch (2000) noted that individual perspectives start from the notion that “social justice emerges from the heroic [capital H or small h] efforts of individuals, someone with a vision and a willingness to take risks to see that vision enacted” (p. 6). In the spirit of the ISLDN and Bogotch (2000), this study interrogates the life history and events of a principal to understand how the educational philosophy and vision of a “heroic” individual came to be in the first place.

However, available investigations on leadership for social justice tend to examine the actions of individuals who hold a formal leadership capacity. This focus ascribes importance to the engagement in socially just practices from a formal position, but does not provide much in the way of elucidating the philosophical underpinnings or transformational experiences that informed those actions, predispositions, and/or beliefs. Despite the emphasis placed on the individual and their enactment of these specific practices, there is a scarcity of literature that provides information on what ultimately informed the embrace of, belief in, or adherence to leadership for social justice as the principal’s operational paradigm. The question of “What is social justice leadership?” is fore grounded while the embodied life experiences, beliefs, and learned information that pre-empted the decision to lead in such a way are kept in the dark wings

and out of view. This study attempted to remedy that by carefully and purposely focusing on the individual and specific rather than the general and theoretical. Hopefully, this myopic approach highlights those experiences, beliefs, and learned information so that they are no longer overlooked in favor of answering more grand questions.

Therefore, the purpose of the study was to examine the experiences and influences that aided, prompted, and informed a principal in the south-western United States to act as a social justice leader with a keen focus on creating equitable conditions and outcomes for marginalized students within his school (Bruner, 2008). That is, the aim of this study was to illuminate the shadows around the formal position to more fully understand what experiences caused an educational leader to act with and focus on social justice in his formal capacity as a high school principal.

The study was commenced as part of the ISLDN's research specifically focused on understanding social justice across the world. "The defining feature of the group is a network of researchers, guided by the same research questions, adopting a common methodological approach, and undertaking work in a diverse range of international contexts" (ISLDN, 2016a). This work addressed a major component of the ISLDN research agenda and aimed at answering the following question:

- How did a social justice leader learn to become a social justice leader?

By sharing this leadership story, I hope to accomplish three goals. First, I want to release the social justice leader in this article (and all of those in the journal) from his silo where he works so hard on the behalf of the marginalized and largely overlooked students in his school so that his story is animated for others to take in. Secondly, I aim to showcase that social justice leaders, who tend to work with their eyes focused on tasks of urgency and immediacy, are not rare instances of leadership to be viewed as isolated examples of excellence and spoken about in hushed reverence. I hope to inspire



action on the ground level through and because of this real-life exemplar. Lastly, I hope that this story reinvigorates those doing social justice by reading tales of their colleagues from around the globe. There is relief and inspiration in knowing that people from other cultures, countries, and backgrounds are fighting parallel “good fights” right alongside each other

On Social Justice Leadership

Educational leaders must be equipped to meet the needs of marginalized students (Capper & Young, 2014; Marshall & Hernandez, 2013; Riele, 2006; Theoharis, 2007). These students include those from linguistic minorities, students of color, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, students with varying sexual orientations, students with disabilities, and students across the gender spectrum.

A number of scholars have commented on the difficulties of creating a singular and all-encompassing definition of social justice (Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002, 2014; Bogotch & Shields, 2014; Furman & Gruenewald, 2004; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002; Harris, 2014, Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Marshall, 2004; Shields, 2004). Definitions of the concept have been described as elusive, ubiquitous, changing, and conflicting (Brown, 2004; Harris, 2014; Zembylas & Iasonos, 2014). Blackmore (2009), in lieu of a definition, commented on the wide range of terms that social justice encompasses including “equity, equality, inequality, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and most recently diversity” (p. 7).

Generally speaking, social justice in educational leadership refers to actions that alleviate inequality, promote fairness, and stop discrimination based upon broad student categorizations (Blackmore, 2009; Bruner, 2008; Dantley & Tillman, 2006). Educational leadership and social justice have been bound together and interwoven with issues of diversity, equity, democracy, and injustice (Bogotch, 2000; Bruner, 2008; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003; Dantley & Tillman, 2006,

Theoharis, 2007). Furthermore, researchers have stressed that social justice leadership must be grounded within the context in which it is enacted to be fully understood (Bettez & Hytten, 2013; Bogotch, 2000; DeMatthews, 2016).

The social justice work of leaders is dynamic, ever evolving, and grounded in reality and is worthy of deliberate and continuous critique (Bogotch, 2000). Research that focuses on how principals in different international settings learn to become social justice leaders will add to the literature by answering the call of Bogotch (2000) and Furman (2012), to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of social justice leadership in general and the story of the individuals that carry out the *doing* of social justice leadership specifically. This research will be placed in the literature as an exploration of how a social justice leader came to occupy and engage in that role. By understanding the formative experiences, moments, and processes that served as a catalyst or precursor for a principal to engage in socially just work, scholars, researchers, and principal preparation professionals may be, at the minimum, aware and, more optimistically, able to adapt trainings and programs to mirror aspects of these social justice leaders formative stories so that *all* students obtaining an administration certificate may benefit from a more robust training and the resultant perspective.

Conceptual Framework

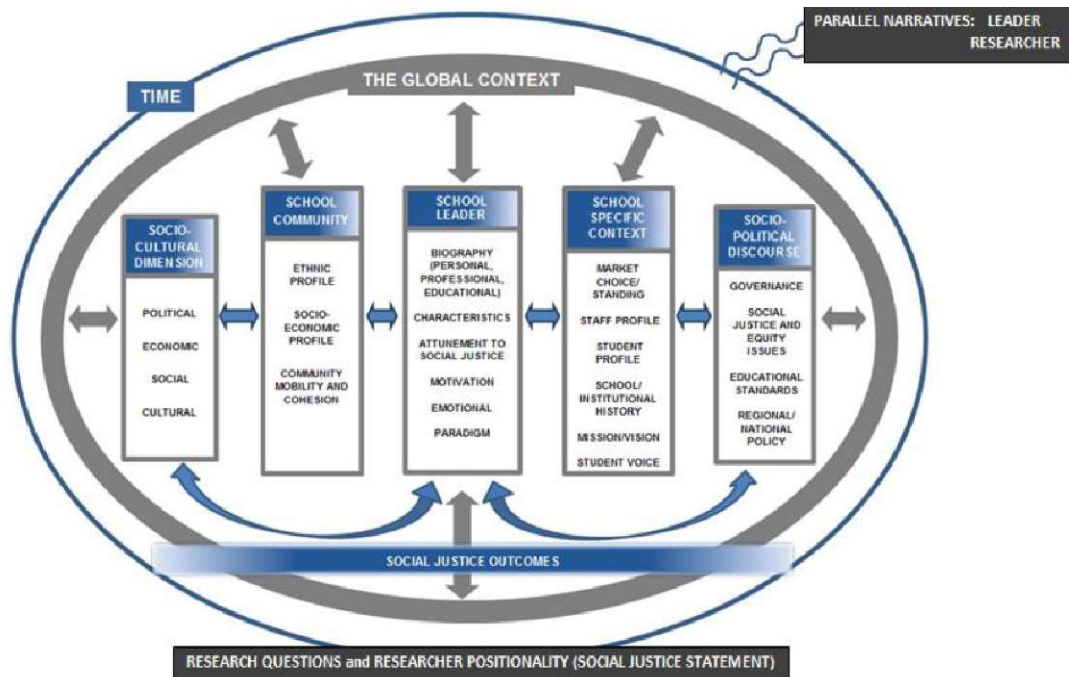
The study utilized the ISLDN conceptual framework to guide analysis and interpretation (see Figure 1). The current framework was constructed iteratively with feedback from international scholars from a diverse range of countries and settings. The ISLDN conceptual framework situates leadership for social justice within a variety of contexts and is useful for comparative analyses across cultures, nationalities, and geographic borders.

Specifically, the framework situates social justice leadership as intersectional, interactional, and influenced by a variety of contexts.

These contexts include factors from meso, macro, and micro levels. Morrison (2017) succinctly and expertly describes the framework:

Moving from the center of the conceptual frame to the outer perimeter micro-level factors are indicated in the 'school leader' box, meso level factors in the 'school community' and 'school specific context' boxes, and macro level factors in the 'sociocultural dimensions' and 'sociopolitical discourse' boxes. The addition of the time dimension recognizes that micro, meso and macro contexts are continually in flux. The situated and temporal nature therefore requires that school leadership for social justice is an ongoing rather than episodic endeavor. (p. 60)

Figure 1
ISLDN Conceptual Framework



Methods

This study utilized an in-depth qualitative interview to gain insight to be able to address the research question (Flick, 2016; Kvale, 1996). The interview protocol that was administered was developed by ISLDN. The interview was transcribed verbatim. The resulting transcript was coded using an open coding approach informed by constant, comparative analysis. Constant comparative analysis ensures that a continuous back and forth between data and codes occurs to arrive at a thorough, robust, and well-informed interpretation of the available data (Charmaz, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The coding process was iterative and involved several rounds of coding. Each round of coding was informed by and built upon the previous round. Following the last iteration, the generated codes were used to inductively construct abstract categories and themes (Charmaz, 2003). Those themes structured the findings and, ultimately, guided the discussion of this manuscript.

Participant

John Kelly (pseudonym) is a principal in a southwestern US state. Mr. Kelly was invited to participate in the research study because of his passion for working with migrant students and English language learners. I knew Mr. Kelly from my previous work as a high school teacher and was able to see firsthand how he engaged with and consciously prioritized his leadership to account for the marginalized student groups within his school. Due to his experience working with and for his students, I identified him as an ideal-typical case who was representative of a social justice leader. LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch (2003) defined ideal-typical case selection as “a procedure in which the researcher develops a profile or model for the best, most efficient, most effective, or most desirable example of some population and then finds a real-world case that most closely matches the profile” (p. 77).



Mr. Kelly, self-deprecatingly, described himself as the “accidental principal”. He started his career in education as an elementary physical education teacher and high school football coach who had no ambition to pursue a career in educational administration. He taught PE for ten years and decided to get his master’s degree to possibly go into administration for the final three years of his career because the state he works in based their retirement benefits on the highest-earning three years of an individual’s career. The move was rooted in strategy rather than passion. However, a year and a half after he obtained the degree, his superintendent encouraged him to apply for the open principal position at the high school within the same district.

Mr. Kelly stated that he absolutely “hated” being a principal for the first four months and he longed to return to the classroom. However, as the months passed, he began to tolerate and then to love being a principal. He placed a strong emphasis on providing the same opportunities to his students that students in more affluent schools receive. His leadership focus prioritized getting students ready for life after high school whether that be in the form of making sure students were ready for postsecondary education or prepared to be competitive in the job markets that await them post- graduation.

His leadership for social justice was evidenced by and through his work with and for English language learner students, migrant students, and students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. These observed actions and his willingness to advocate on the behalf of the marginalized groups within his school served as the basis for his selection in the study.

Site

The high school where Mr. Kelly works was located in a small, rural town in the American southwest. The Los Arboles School District (pseudonym) consists of three schools. The elementary, middle, and high school are all located in the same physical building.

The student population for the entire district fluctuates with the agricultural seasons, but is around 1,050 students. There are 45 full time teachers and 12 paraprofessionals in the district. The high school where Mr. Kelly was principal had 170 students (ages 14-18). Mr. Kelly's student body was comprised of a large number of at-risk students. The student demographic of his school included over 90% of students on free/reduced lunch, 90% Hispanic students, 38% classified as English language learners, and a sizeable migrant/homeless population. In Mr. Kelly's words, his school "is a very impoverished, high Hispanic, high ESL, monolingual school where a lot of our students, faculty, and community members come from Mexico and Guatemala".

For the past six years, the Los Arboles School District had been a high growth, low achievement district as measured by the state's standardized tests. This means that many students demonstrated a year or more of content area growth within one school year on the most recently available standardized test results. However, for the most part, students achievement scores across grades and groups ranked below the 50th percentile. The high school has served as a model for similar high-poverty/high-ELL on how to help students make multiple years of growth in subjects during the course of an academic year. While teachers and administrators celebrate their ability to "grow students", many still problematize the difficulty they face in moving student achievement beyond simple proficiency. Mr. Kelly certainly struggles with simply "hanging his hat on growth", something his school does very well, with all of the difficulties his school has in surpassing state achievement benchmarks. The complexity of his professional situation and the conflicting nature of growth versus achievement provide the backdrop for the findings in the following section.

Findings

Findings will be reported using a fictional narrative approach that expresses the themes found in the data through a first-person, stream



of consciousness recollection of the principal's transformative experiences, events, and influences on his journey to being a social justice leader filtered through his own subjective positioning and understanding. This methodological choice was informed by Krieger (1983) who advocated for the use of *fictionalizing* findings as a way to more fully understand the focus of the inquiry. Krieger (1983) "examines fiction and social science as alternative approaches to representing reality, both in order to identify difficulties that the use of fiction raises for social science and to suggest the nature of the rewards that fiction offers" (p. 173).

The following sections will detail the major findings regarding how Mr. Kelly learned to become a social justice leader. Each section investigates a specific theme while the fictionalized narrative draws upon his own words to detail his accounts in a fictional manner consistent with his own answers and anecdotes. The fictionalized narrative, much like our own thought processes, will be presented as a stream of consciousness and highlight the aspects that informed, influenced, and, ultimately, led Mr. Kelly to be a principal that posited social justice outcomes at the forefront of his leadership. To visually reinforce this technique, Mr. Kelly's fictionalized stream of consciousness will appear in italics.

Upbringing by Parents

My mother was a saint. Whether she was riding my ass to stay in school through high school or college or providing the perfect example of how to treat people, she really has been a guiding force in my life. My father, while he is an educator, helped provide some examples from which to contrast against. You know, some things he does and says really created what I didn't want to be... that became very useful for me to model myself against. It always surprised me that an educator in a primarily Hispanic context he could use some of the words he did to describe our kids. And he has a good heart. I truly believe he does. But when those ways of thinking and viewing the world are so engrained, I'm not sure how you change the person. I don't know if you can. But you can change yourself. However, I learned quickly

that, for me, I couldn't be fully committed to leading these kids if I didn't fully buy into what I was doing. The good ol' boy talk, the racist rhetoric of my grandparents' generation, and this idea that what I did mattered more than what I said and believed behind closed doors had to go. I have to be fully committed and not for the appearance of being the good principal. It's a much more fundamental issue for me. I can't look these kids in the eyes and have them completely trust that I am in it for them if I wasn't. I live this. It's not for a paycheck. It really has become the foundation of who I am and what I stand for.

So, I'm rambling, but I'll just say this. I had to model my mother's example. Deep empathy. Sincere engagement. I don't check how I feel at the school door when I leave for the day. It's woven into the fabric of who I am at this point. I care. I care deeply about these kids. I've found that I'm much shorter with my dad now, too. I can't let him pop off his nonsense unchecked. He gets an earful now. For example, we will be watching a football game and he will say something about a player's race or compare them to a kid in my school in a nonchalant manner. I let him have it. I let him know that these unconscious ideas he holds onto manifest themselves in real life. I don't believe you can provide sanctuary for these ideas only in your mind and not have them affect how you deal with people. So I let him have it, and more often than not, I catch my mom's face out of the corner of my eye nodding with approval and pride that she raised someone that's private message and public charge are one and the same.

Experiences in College

I'm lucky I got out of my hometown for college or else I fear I'd have the same small, narrow, and prejudiced worldview that many of the people I went to high school with did. Experience is crucial. In particular, experiences with people that don't look like me or have parallel life stories. As a white guy growing up in the valley, I was more or less similar to all of the other white guys growing up in the valley. The natural dividing line that existed...I should say, that we accepted or propagated...was whites on this side and Hispanics on the other. If I stayed here, I fear I might have become



comfortable with that reality, but that's really not how life is and going off and playing sports helped me come to that realization.

See, I moved five hours away from home to a larger city to play JUCO [Junior College] baseball before I ended up coming back home to play my last two years of eligibility on the football team. Those two years at JUCO were eye opening. For the first time in my life, I met people from all walks of life. Regardless of our backgrounds we were all able to bond over a common thing, sports. People talk about diversity here in the valley, but I think we are more homogenous within this rural setting than most people would admit. Leaving the valley made me see that, but coming back made me put that belief into practice. I returned more open minded and receptive to the plights of other people. These experiences had a deep and lasting impact on how I engaged and interfaced with others.

Competitive Nature

My background in sports as an athlete and coach has had a profound impact on how I learned to be a social justice leader. Simply put, I'm competitive as hell and I absolutely hate losing! While my time in college and college sports increased my exposure to, receptivity of, and empathy for all people, my identity as an athlete and coach has had a different influence on my leadership for social justice. I will do everything in my ability to accomplish goals and be better than my perceived competition. As a principal, this drive hasn't changed.

Here's some perspective. My school is located in a rural and agrarian area. It's basically in the middle of nowhere, but within a 15-mile radius there are four other high schools. In reality, there probably should be a large county high school for all of these kids, but there is not. These other schools serve primarily middle- and upper-class students from the families that tend to own the farms and land in the area. Then, there is my school. It's overwhelmingly Hispanic where the children of the farm workers attend. It is absolutely crazy to see how different the demographics of a school literally five miles away from mine is, but that is the reality I face. These other schools won't admit students from my school for what they claim as

“academic issues”, but I see it very differently. I see it as institutionalized racism and their “us versus them” mentality comes across clearly. They continue to foster negative attitudes towards and prejudices against the Hispanic populations outside of their white pockets of privilege.

So, naturally, how have I approached this issue? Well, I’ve approached it by wanting to turn their stereotypes upside down. I make sure that my students have comparable academic opportunities to the students in these other schools. I make sure that my teachers come to school ready to teach, engage, and enhance the lives of our students. I treat it like a sporting event and I want to show these other schools that not only are they wrong in how they treat people, but they aren’t unique in their outcomes with students as well.

Moving Mentorship

So, I guess all of this is nice to talk about in a “I had transformational experiences and came out better because of it kind of way”, but you know what?! You know what really harnessed those experiences and made them into these talking points... tidbits of information that positioned me to lead in a socially just way... it was finding a leader and mentor that lived a vision of social justice and, subsequently, ended up getting me to fully commit to it as well.

Seven years ago I was the typical principal that simply managed the school. I thought everything was running smoothly and efficiently in my building. At that time, however, the elementary school in our district was on turn around [Mandated by the state to make annual yearly progress on state assessments in both math and reading or face being taken over and run, reorganized, or closed completely by the state]. That prompted my superintendent to really examine what it was that he was doing and his overall leadership for the entire district. He called a district wide meeting for all of the staff. I’m talking from the cafeteria workers, secretaries, and janitors to the assistant principals and principals where he articulated his vision going forward for ALL children to be successful. And that’s not what really changed me, because we have all heard that kind of



rhetoric before, but then he turned to the staff...every single person involved in the school in some capacity... and told them if they weren't on board, didn't want to do this, or didn't think this was possible, that maybe this school district wasn't the place for you! I mean he drew a line in the sand and encouraged people to leave if they went up for the challenges that lie ahead. It took him ten years as a superintendent to develop this vision. You know, really figure it out, but when he did he was fearless.

And at first, I was like "Whoa, what does this mean for me?" But once I got past the initial shock, I realized that this paradigm shift was necessary and that I was willing to change the way I led and engaged with students to provide the opportunities that these kids deserve. We needed to reorient around our students and realize the demographic we serve is in desperate need of fearless individuals willing to approach poverty, race, class, and other aspects that affect kids in ways that elevate and rejuvenate them rather than further marginalize them. So, that was huge for me! I started thinking in student-centric terms rather than a principal first, top-down mindset. I started opening our doors to engage students before and after school in a variety of initiatives to prepare them for the workforce or college. We immerse them in recreation opportunities and give them the ability to give back to their community through philanthropic events.

And you know what... graduation rates have sky rocketed. Postsecondary enrollment numbers and the amount of scholarship money offered has increased every single year. We have students going to trade schools, colleges, and into the military that would have previously dropped out. My kids are getting the same opportunities as students in the more affluent, white, and privileged communities that surround us! Are we perfect? No, no we aren't, but other schools are asking to come in and see our processes. See the way that we do things. That wouldn't have happened ten years ago. Now we are an example of how schools with challenging demographics can even the playing field and that feels good and is exactly what our kids deserve.

Discussion

The study's findings were analyzed through the lens of the ISLDN framework. The use of the framework was advantageous in many ways. Most prominently, the ISLDN positions the educational leader at the center among a number of interactive constructs that influence social justice leadership. Therefore, the researcher was able to analyze the fluid nature of influence between the practitioner and the constructs. Advantages of this approach include the ability to simultaneously interrogate the reciprocal relationship between school leader and the constructs, but also between the framework and practice *and* practice and the framework. The insight gathered on the various strata of influences that act on, with, between, and for the development of social justice leaders provided an intimate and personal look at the participant's experiences. However, the ISLDN framework provided a way to ground the radically subjective experience of Mr. Kelly to allow for comparisons between other individuals and across geographic and cultural boundaries.

The ways that Mr. Kelly learned how to become a social justice leader were primarily grounded within the micro context of the framework. Mr. Kelly was most directly impacted by relationships and experiences. His relationships with his parents, teammates, and mentor coupled with his experiences while away at college had the most influence of his mother:

I had to model my mother's example. Deep empathy. Sincere engagement. I don't check how I feel at the school door when I leave for the day. It's woven into the fabric of who I am at this point. I care. I care deeply about these kids.

Mr Kelly described his relationship with his mentor in an equally as powerful way:

You know what really harnessed those experiences and made them into these talking points... tidbits of information that positioned me to lead in a socially just way... it was finding a leader and mentor that lived a vision of social justice and, subsequently, ended up getting me to fully commit to it as well.



In short, his disposition to lead for social justice was most immediately grounded in and resonated from the core of his being, rather than from external influences.

Mr. Kelly was very aware and sensitive to racism, but his actions weren't solely focused on the relief or deconstruction of the systemic conditions that enabled and perpetuated its existence. He focused on what he could change for his students including expanding their opportunities to engage with the world in ways they otherwise wouldn't while in school. This idea was at the core of the following statement:

I started thinking in student-centric terms rather than a principal first, top-down mindset. I started opening our doors to engage students before and after school in a variety of initiatives to prepare them for the workforce or college. We immerse them in recreation opportunities and give them the ability to give back to their community through philanthropic events.

Conclusion and Future Research

Mr. Kelly's case suggested that he learned his journey to be a social justice leadership was informed by personally intimate and unique experiences. His orientation was not the result of societal forces or conditions, but a direct result of influential people and moments that he experienced over the course of his life. His path to becoming a social justice leader was also dependent on being placed in an environment that would allow him to harness what he had learned. The environment demanded that he lead in a socially just way to be successful and have longevity in his role. Also, the fact that he was hyper-aware of how the predominantly white and affluent communities that surrounded his district viewed the children in his school evoked his competitive nature. To win, he needed to provide equitable opportunities for his students as compared to those other districts. As cliché as it sounds, his temperament and general predisposition, coupled with the environment that he worked truly created a perfect storm for Mr. Kelly to lean upon his life experiences as he became a social justice leader.

Findings supported Bogotch's (2000) notion of social justice as an emergent phenomenon that becomes realized through specific actions intended to achieve a vision of a more just and equitable schooling experience. This study also reinforced the need to conceptualize context(s) as interwoven and interacting. In particular, the study showcased that context isn't simply the setting that social justice leaders are contrasted against; context is an important and influential factor that must be seriously taken into consideration so social justice leadership can be understood in a more meaningful way (Bettez & Hytten, 2013; Bogotch, 2000; DeMatthews, 2016; Hallinger, 2016).

Additionally, I'd suggest that the ISLDN framework should account for the robust and varied life histories of social justice leaders. When individuals describe how they came to be something or act in a certain way, they tend to describe concrete examples, relay transformational moments, or explain the importance of a relationship rather than trace the roots of their leadership to a complex relationship involving factors at various levels of context. ISLDN might consider adding depth and complexity at the very center of the model, the social justice leader themselves.

Future research in the area should examine the interplay between the micro-context and formal leadership preparation courses. Is social justice leadership something that can be taught within a prescribed curriculum or does it require an individual that innately values and prioritizes social justice on a basic level before they can enact it as a school leader? Furthermore, context needs to be continually interrogated in examinations of educational leadership and, specifically, social justice leadership. To better understand the "big picture" of social justice leadership, it is imperative to continue to examine, poke, prod, disturb, and otherwise snoop around these phenomena of interest in their specific context and, in turn, to properly contextualize them through our academic writing, conversations, discourse, and musings.



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Making Sense of It All: Values, Relationships and a Way Forward

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Introduction

Policy developments across the world continue to reinforce and intensify the importance of social justice underpinning philosophies and praxis in education. However, the enactment of these policies varies both within and across countries. One aspect that has been generally accepted as orthodoxy in whether schools perpetuate the status quo or contribute to reducing inequalities is the significant role of leadership in promoting social justice in schools.

This special issue set out to explore “Leadership Stories” and in particular *Unlocking the Path to Social Justice Leadership* in various countries around the world. All stories reported by the by the participants involved in the social justice strand of the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN), which defines social justice leadership as “a principal who is committed to reducing inequalities and makes this aim a high priority in leadership practice” (Angelle, 2017, p. 308). This Special Issue aimed to unpack how social justice leaders learned to become social justice leaders, the foundational aspects that influenced these leaders to work for a



socially just educational experience for all children. Synthesis of the various perspectives presented in the articles reveal two key themes that have emerged across all papers in this Special Issue, albeit in varying degrees; values and relationships. A central tenet emanating from all papers is the concept of values and awareness or self-awareness of one's values.

Values

Throughout the literature values are often used synonymously with the terms attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and for the purpose of this critique values will be used to represent these terms also (Gross & Shapiro, 2016; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Arguably all leadership is values driven (Goddard, 2017) based on personal or individual experiences throughout one's personal and professional life. These values influence actions, behaviours and decision making (Angelle, 2017). Of concern is how values and beliefs "masquerade as knowledge in the form of Brookfield's paradigmatic assumptions" which can be entrenched and therefore difficult to change even when informed by theory (Jackson & Burch, 2016, p. 515).

The degree to which people recognise their values is arguably different and this is reflected in Torrance and Forde's paper where they call for leadership development programmes to focus on exploring values or positionality. From one perspective this stands in accordance with the voluminous literature (Brown, 2006) which emphasizes the importance of all teachers from preservice level (Bond, 2011; King, 2017) to veteran educators participating in continuous professional learning (Forde, 2014) to ensure their values are in line with their enactment of practices. An example of this is provided by Ogden, in her paper, where Mary talked about having *poor awareness of internal or organizational cognitive maps* until embarking on her doctoral studies which provided her "*with the vocabulary and framework*" to articulate decisions and actions she had *already undertaken just because they were right.*"

From another perspective, being aware of whether or not their values and beliefs are limiting or liberating is also key (Jackson & Burch, 2016) as individuals can measure everything else against these beliefs as a norm (Lumby & Coleman, 2016). Becoming free of habits of mind and developing new assumptions can enhance problem solving approaches and decision making (Mezirow, 2000). This opportunity to reflect upon situations that had already occurred would help ensure Mary would continue to operate in this way, being able to verbalize decisions and to share with others.

This self-awareness was highlighted again by Angelle, in her paper, where she talked about the importance of authentic leaders *understanding their strengths and weaknesses and finding happiness through living their true self*. This is particularly important in a time where educational values are dominated by an increasing emphasis on high-stakes testing, standardisation, accountability, outcomes and supporting a knowledge economy. Happiness is often overlooked in the leadership literature, but so critically important to the health of the leader, and ultimately, the school (Cherkowski & Walker, 2014; Noddings, 2003; O'Brien, 2016). However, where multiple tensions exist it is not uncommon for people to lose sight of their values (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2015) resulting in frustration from being a 'living contradiction' (Whitehead, 1989). This was reflected by Ingrid, in Angelle's paper, where *she quickly learned that not being true to self was more difficult than socialization*.

While Flood also argued for a "*subjective positioning and understanding*" in his paper, Forde and Torrance call for a broader view of positionality than the other papers suggest, an awareness of not only one's own personal values but also an awareness of how these intersect with the professional and political contexts of the leader and how they are viewed by others. The awareness of this positionality aligned with the "*power and authority they derived from their role*" plays a pivotal part in leaders being able to enact social justice leadership. This is largely unexplored with the ISLDN network to date and may be worth considering as part of the journey



to further understand social justice leadership in the context of the social justice leader at the micro level.

Relationships

Arising from this is a second theme running throughout a number of the papers, relationships. Noteworthy is the fact that not many of the leaders aspired to become leaders, much less social justice leaders at the beginning of their careers. However, through relationships with others and resultant experiences, they felt they could make a difference if they became a social justice leader/principal. For example, the principal in Flood's paper believed in and valued social justice, but highlighted the influence of relationships with his parents, teammates in college, and his mentor all coalescing to result in him being committed to the practice of social justice leadership where all students had equal opportunities, the same opportunities "*as students in the more affluent, white, and privileged communities that surround us.*" This was also reflected in Forde and Torrance's paper where each of the four headteachers had different starting points. Their experiences and relationships with mentors, role models or tutors over the course of their career led them to being committed to making a difference as a headteacher.

The importance of both personal and professional experiences as being influential in developing social justice leaders was also highlighted by Ogden who argued strongly for social justice leaders to develop relationships with the communities that they serve, to understand the people and how they perceive the principal also, thus echoing the concept of positionality mentioned earlier and Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus', teacher habitus and student habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). This was reflected in Mary's awareness of her own cultural blind spots and her *willingness to learn their perspectives and an eagerness to bring their unique contributions to the school through parent evenings*, for example, a Hispanic food night. This demonstrated Mary's commitment to developing relational trust between school and communities and also reflects Lumby's (2013, p. 20) 'relational or

participatory justice' where everyone is empowered to engage in relationships and society.

This notion of developing relationships was also highlighted by Angelle who talked about authentic leadership that involves modelling social justice behaviours within the community and developing shared values with others. Life stories as a methodology are posited by Angelle as useful and enlightening for leaders in terms of how they as leaders arrived at these values, to practise authentic leadership, perhaps reflecting the idea of 'practical theorising' (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006) or reflecting on paradigmatic assumptions (Brookfield, 1995). These values are made explicit to others through relationships. *"Making visible the deeply held values inspires followers to know, understand, and, hopefully, embrace these same values, encouraging authenticity in the larger community"* (Angelle, 2017b).

Similarly, all three principals in Slater et al.'s paper saw the importance of developing relationships in their communities, from working with parents, empowering them to be involved in the school and community, to modelling social justice leadership in their own school communities and in other social projects in their districts. The above relationships arguably reflect Slater et al.'s (2017) use of Cribb and Gewirtz's (2003) conceptualisation of social justice: economic justice, cultural justice, and associational justice with cultural justice defined as *recognition of a person individually and as a member of an ethnic group* and associational justice *referring to encouraging the participation of all*.

The ongoing commitment to social justice leadership was also contingent upon relationships, for example, networks developed through ongoing professional learning focused on reflective learning or 'practical theorising' (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006) which in the words of one headteacher *"really sustained me because it's quite easy to go under"* (Forde & Torrance, 2017). Understanding one's values and the power relationships at the micro and meso level along with opportunities to exercise power and authority *"to exclude or limit*



opportunities for members of a school community” are essential aspects of such reflections. Exercising power can be met with remarkable resistance from within schools and the wider community as outlined by Forde and Torrance (2017) and Angelle (2017) with principals acting as ‘*boundary spanners*’ (Timperley, 2009) *working across boundaries grappling with these ‘critical externalities’ and ‘schooling internalities’* (Forde & Dickson, 2017).

A Way Forward

So what does this tell us about social justice leadership, and learning to become a social justice leader? “In many cases, while the ideas and practices of social justice may have developed from the ground up, the way to strategically move forward with a socially just school is through the leadership of the principal/headteacher” (Robinson, 2017, p.26). The importance of values and self-awareness of values along with relationships are central to understanding how to become a social justice leader. For Slater et al., these were based on the trials and tribulations of the three female leaders. Personal and professional experiences along with innate values and predispositions support leaders in their development of becoming social justice leaders. Flood calls this the ‘perfect storm’ for becoming a social justice leader.

However, the experiences of others were also highlighted by Forde and Torrance when they talked about positionality and how others perceive the leader and their associated power and authority to exercise social justice. Ogden further referenced this by advocating for principals to understand the cultural habitus of the people in their communities and how the people perceive the principal habitus.

Implications may include listening to the voices of others in the contexts of the social justice leaders already interviewed by those in the ISLDN network. These might include staff members, students, parents and people from the wider community. Social justice leadership is arguably not just about the social justice leader or

principal of the school and therefore this complexity at the micro level may need further unpacking to explicate how to develop social justice leaders. While Flood, and Torrance and Forde called for further examination of the micro contexts this commentary suggests some practical theorising to be carried out by members of the ISLDN perhaps by embracing a sociocultural perspective which endeavours to understand the complexity of contexts where students have equal opportunities for learning and development.

Adopting this stance challenges the deterministic view of ability, class, gender, race, socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Instead “...development is seen as emerging as a result of interactions within a cultural and historical context, rather than unfolding in a biologically-driven sequence” (De Valenzuela, 2014, p. 298). A sociocultural lens would allow for further analysis and synthesis of the relationships between individuals and their environments. While some members of the network have already explored social justice leadership from an ecological stance (King & Travers, 2017; Norberg, Arlestig, & Angelle, 2014), arguably this may need to be explored in more detail as well.

Critical theory might also be useful as a lens for explicating the voices of the marginalized groups and individuals within the school contexts (De Valenzuela, 2014). Leaders would gather data around in/equalities in how children, staff and parents experience the social justice ethos of the school (Lumby & Coleman, 2016) to further understand the complexity of social justice leadership in a time of increasing political agendas of high stakes testing and accountability agendas that may have adverse effects on those already marginalized within our schools and communities. This may help schools avoid perpetuating the status quo and reduce inequalities in a time when the latest EU report shows “inequality is at its highest level in 30 years in most European and OECD countries (European Commission, 2015). We hope that you enjoy this special issue and find it informative in terms of practice and guidance for theorizing social justice leadership.

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Book Review
**Comprehensive Internationalization: Institutional
Pathways to Success**

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Book Review

In the 21st century, internationalization in higher education has become a multi-directional notion with its steady consequences in terms of internationalization priorities and activities. Within this context, there is no doubt to say that throughout the every phase of the history, higher education has been considered as related to the other fields; in other words, it has been perceived as “multi-disciplinary”. When we think about the historical point, the notion of internationalization came out with the scholars traveling all around the world in order to pursue their studies on behalf of learning across the world. Nowadays, the internationalization concept, changing its shape with the improvement of technology, underlines the “Comprehensive Internationalization” in the recent studies. John K. Hudzik’s book, named “Comprehensive Internationalization: Institutional Pathways to Success” is one of the latest books of its serial. This serial edited by Elspeth Jones is about the internationalization of higher education institutions. It includes especially the discussions about what kind of a vision the higher education institutions have, which of them interest in internationalization improved about the teaching, learning, and research and servicing process.

From this point, it can be said that the purpose of this book is to contribute to the university leaders about what kind of a strategy they can build for a more comprehensive approach. One of the notable sides of the book is the emphasis on the necessity of the



integration of societies and their reflections “universities”, organizational structure, value and missions of internationalization.

The book consists of two parts. The first part investigates the theory of comprehensive internationalization and it analyses its meaning, strategies, motivations, expectations and the difficulties generated by the comprehensive approach towards internationalization. The second part of the book, however, focuses on practice and includes 10 different case studies of selected institutions all around the world: (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, The Nanyang Technological University, Queensland University, Swinburne University of Technology, Lund University and Blekinge Institute of Technology, University of Helsinki, Nottingham University, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Beloit College, Michigan State University).

The first part consists of seven chapters. It includes both the description of comprehensive internationalization, reformed strategies and applications, and it also explains the difficulties and expectations encountered during the process of generating the theoretical establishment comprehensively. In the first chapter, Hudzik discusses the historical background of internationalization and its development procedure as a notion. He examines the changing of 21st century's higher education institutions in terms of more comprehensive internationalization. On the other hand, he emphasizes that the mission of higher education institutions has been becoming more significant because of the latest concept of comprehensive internationalization. In the second chapter, he investigates the external change drivers included in the nature of higher education environment and comprehensive global social tendencies. He questions the organizational change in comprehensive internationalization. In the third chapter, he draws attention to how the internationalization visions, reasons and motivations become more complicated and it is pointed out to the motivation, reason and visions coming out in higher education institutions. In the fourth chapter, Hudzik moves from notion to action, pointing out that a

successful resource acquiring strategy may come true via campus support culture to a great extent and he links comprehensive internationalization and organizational change. Discussions include some possible effective strategies for the campus leaders as well. The fifth chapter continues with the theme of transition from notion to action, but particularly focuses on the examination of institutional common barriers against comprehensive internationalization. Hudzik, examining the impacts of comprehensive internationalization in the sixth chapter, deals with the results correlated with the accountability. The seventh chapter focuses on the resources of comprehensive internationalization.

In the second part, Hudzik combines theory with practice by presenting 10 case studies about the internationalization strategies of higher education institutions all around the world. The institutions were somewhat selected in order to reflect the majority generating higher education institution. There are both much experienced institutions and less experienced institutions in terms of internationalization.

In conclusion, the book makes the reader think about integrating theory with practice. In addition, it introduces extensive discussions about internationalization by using a very clear and accurate language. Lastly, this book has potential to guide the universities toward “comprehensive internationalization” which is a new form of the internationalization in higher education.

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