LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:
FROM ELUSIVE CONCEPTIONS TO ARRESTED DEVELOPMENTS

by

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Department of Theory and Policy Studies
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Abstract

The general question guiding this research is: how do equity minded administrators lead for social justice? The following specific questions are addressed in this study: How have participants become oriented to social justice? How do educational administrators conceptualize leadership for social justice? What are the barriers and supports that participants experienced in leading for social justice in diverse contexts? What are some (participant-identified) examples of how they lead for social justice?

From a critical perspective this study examines the experiences of educational administrators leading for social justice. Vital to this examination are analyses of power relations and the locatedness of participants within those relations. At the core of these power relations are participant experiences of social justice as contingent on the interconnectedness between their lived realities and the “doing” of social justice as espoused by and evidenced in their approaches to leadership for social justice. For this study I have interviewed ten administrators from Southern Ontario, who self-identify as being committed to and leading for social justice and have been in formal positions of leadership for at least five years. Interviewees were able to identify and articulate the
interconnected experiences of lived realities and their commitments to leadership for social justice; critical examples of social justice praxis; and facets of the educational systems which supported and, conversely, erected barriers to their leading for social justice.

Conclusions, implications and recommendations can be broadly organized as issues related to systemic and structural processes, support and accountability for the hiring, retention and promotion of diverse school personnel who have evidenced commitments to social justice, the retraining and retooling of educators and leaders through curriculum centred on social justice, the dramatic restructuring of educational administrative thought by practitioners and researchers, and the critical inclusion of the community, students, parents and trustees in roles that substantively impact the decision making power within the educational system (from the overall governance of the educational system to everyday activities).
Dedication

Jai Baba Balak Nath Ji  Jai Mata Chere Vali Ji  Jai Sat Guru Maharaj Bibi Satya Devi Ji

Mai Kidha Shakari Karan, Har Har Ek Sa Haga Thoda, Mai Kidha Shakri Karan…

It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child,
but I have learned that it takes a Guru, Her Blessings and Her satsang to heal a child.

This thesis, in its entirety, without a moment of hesitation belongs to you-- Sat Guru Maharaj Bibi Satya Devi Ji (Banga Walia, Punjab). Your lived example of integrity, humility and endless strength to heal and defend those whom have been left homeless and hopeless is beyond the realm of worldly expectations and understanding. You truly are rab’s avataar and I am indebted to the heavens above for sending You and uniting us. To your Bhagats & Sevadars---who continue to live within your ashivaar--- I am deeply moved by their commitment to endlessly serve All without distinction of caste, class or lineage.

Guru Maharaj Ji, lakh, lakh, lakh shukran thodha.

Language is limited in its capacity to articulate that which is beyond articulation.
For if love could be articulated by mere words,
the need for relationships, and
demonstrative integrity, trust and unwavering- will upon which love is contingent,
would not be required.

Noker & Das,
Harveen
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The PhD program calls into action one’s mental-emotional-and spiritual reservoirs during the strenuous process of writing the thesis. What quickly becomes imperative is the need for persistent nourishing of these reservoirs. I have been, well to say the least, too blessed to be stressed.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem

Demographic Trends

Canada’s increasing diversity cannot be denied. In the past several decades there has been an accelerating growth in the diversity of our racialized population. The proportion of Canadian residents who identified themselves as members of a visible minority\(^1\) grew from 4.7% in the 1981 census to 9%, or 2.5 million people, in 1991 and to 11% in 1996. By 2001 the figure was 13.4%, and by the 2006 census over 16%, or five million individuals. These figures clearly represent not just an increase, but an increasing rate of increase. This is a pattern mirrored in many relatively wealthy countries around the world – ethnic and cultural homogeneity is no longer the norm, and policies predicated on the assumption of homogeneity are no longer meaningful or appropriate.

Education Policy Fails to Respond

The implications of an ongoing growth in racial diversity have not been integrated into educational leadership practices, nor into the

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\(^1\) The term “visible minority” is actually a contested concept. In actual fact, “visible minority” populations are Global Majority populations. This distinction was first brought to my attention by community activist, leader and director of the Investing in Diversity Program Rosemary Campbell-Stephens.
foundational programming and operations of educational institutions (Dei, et al., 1997; Dantley, 1990; Ryan, 2006). What would this integration actually entail? Simply put, it would require mainstream educational institutions to integrate the lived realities of their students into their everyday practices, from pedagogy to curriculum design to professional development and educational leadership. Students' lived experiences must be acknowledged and responded to in their everyday schooling experience. The awakening ideal of social justice that characterises our era generally justifies itself on the basis of numbers and the rapid growth in “visible minority” populations. But difference, oppression and marginalization operate in myriad, complex ways and so must be examined as interlocking phenomena if they are to be subjected to social justice ideals. This is not to say that demographics are not significant; however, there are other reasons why leadership for social justice is essential.

In Canada the equity discourse has moved from a foundation in multiculturalism to one rooted in social justice (Dei et. al., 2002; Karumanchery, 2005; McCaskell, 2005). In more recent times the term “social justice” has been co-opted by the mainstream, and institutionalized in a movement similar to “multiculturalism”’s evolution. It can be argued that the legitimacy of a concept first proposed and embodied at the
grassroots level has become questionable-- that “social justice” has become a guise for neoliberal ends\(^2\). Often the discussion of diversity has focused on race and the need for a reflective educator workforce (Chacko and Nancoo, 1993; Stein, 1986). While a reflective workforce is a critical component to equity, it is not the sole component. Articulating race as the primary and salient identifier has expanded equity discourse in several significant ways. While important to analyses of issues concerned with equity, race is not necessarily the primary identifier in all circumstances.

Many other factors can come into play, including gender, class, caste and ability. Determinants of how they interact can be rooted in one or several interlocking oppressions. While the argument for social justice is amply supported by Canada’s changing demographics, there are other significant reasons to pursue social justice; above all, there are moral and ethical reasons. While great strides in human rights have been made, injustice and inequity persist. Affirming moral and ethical imperatives requires one to investigate whether social inequality is deeply rooted within our local and global realities. Much oppression, especially historical oppression and the persistent “isms”, have *not* been addressed by

\(^2\) I use the term neo-liberal in this instance to identify the co-opting of the term social justice. In this regard, social justice has been manipulated by educational institutions in the form of curriculum, policy and other programming that continues to privilege the mainstream, rather than champion the causes of the marginalized (Apple, 1999; Apple, 2004; Shaker and Heilman, 2008).
governments in a manner that has radically changed the lives of the marginalized. Much of the effort to engage oppressed groups has been tokenistic, minimalistic and conceived within frameworks dictated by those who have not experienced or understood the oppression from which they seek to liberate others.

The Problem Stated and Situated

Educational Leadership: Leading for a Purpose, Leading for Social Justice

This thesis examines educational administrators’ experiences of and commitment to leading for social justice. This necessitates a focus on educational administration and how administrators have become oriented to social justice, how they conceptualize social justice and what barriers and supports they experience and identify in leading for social justice. Implicit in these analyses is the examination of administrators’ capacities to lead - the possibilities for agency determined by power relations within the system. Leadership is not a sterile, technical role, nor do I assume that any educational administrator will find it easy to lead for social justice. Administration can be context dependent, focused on agency and the (re)sourcing and (re)tooling of faculty and students with the capacity to act.
Equally important is the administrator her/himself - what lens they bring to their role, and what their own demographics of class, ability, sex and race are, as these have implications as to how they navigate the educational system and how they lead for social justice. They can only lead insofar as they are able to navigate these differences.

I choose to use the term “navigate” to identify with those educational administrators who, by their very being, disrupt the status quo by impacting institutions’ personnel demographics, as well as those who intentionally focus on social justice. An array of hiring policies and campaigns has aimed to recruit diverse candidates from historically disadvantaged groups (Equity in Education; Ontario Public Service; The Future We Want). While a diverse group of candidates and recruits is much needed, so too are those with diverse understandings and critical notions of social justice. Merely hiring diverse bodies does not ensure a commitment to social justice either by the educational institution or by the candidate(s) being hired—and while the potential consequences of inert commitments to social justice are endured by educators and administrators alike, it is ultimately the students who suffer the brunt of these consequences (Dei et. al, 2002; Derman-Sparks & Brunson, 1997; Karumanchery, 2005). At the base of these inequitable consequences are the philosophical beliefs and the systemic practices
which champion *equal and limited* means and processes over equitable means and processes. Movement toward equitable means and processes necessitates an examination of social justice.

Traditional conceptions of social justice (Plato, 1963; Rawls, 1975) lack substantive examinations of race, but contemporary conceptions of social justice must take issues of race and its interlocking dimensions of inequality into account (Dei, 1996; Karumanchery, 2005; Ng, Staton & Scane, 1995; Trifonas, 2003; West, 1994). Equally: while racial and ethnic diversity are core to concerns of equity, they are not the *only* dimensions of equity. That is, if we are to responsibly integrate the implications of Canada’s demographic diversification, we must reflect on and account for the workings of interlocking dimensions of equity, including also gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, linguistics, age, and reliance on social services.

Educational institutions have the potential to be sites of radical change and liberation, given leadership that can re-centre them around a social justice framework. However, leadership for social justice is not the normative approach to education, and current approaches to leadership⁴

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⁴ When discussing “current approaches to leadership” I am referring to traditional approaches to leadership that have been categorized elsewhere as classical organizational approaches (scientific management and organizational theory (Taylor, 1914; Weber 1947) human relations approach (Lewin, 1939; Johnson, 1993), client centered approach; (Jago, 1982; Thorne, 1992; and Schell, 1984)); behavioral science approaches (Arygris,
have nurtured a looming crisis (Dantley, 1990; Rottmann (in press); Ryan, 2006) evidenced in school shootings and lockdowns, as well as student disengagement and apathy. While student disengagement continues to swell, mainstream educational institutions paradoxically continue to simply espouse empty commitments to equity, usually founded on conceptions of sameness and one size fits all (Dei et. al., 1997; Karumanchery, 2005; Portelli, Shields and Vibert, 2007).

The silenced crisis continues. And even as our under-served students' potential is unrealized and their lived realities unaccounted for, spectators distract us by scapegoating - laying responsibility for student disengagement on families, communities, and their diverse contexts (Dei et. al., 1997; Derman-Sparks and Phillips, 1997; Portelli, Shields and Vibert, 2007; Portelli et. al., 2002; Shahjahan, 2005). This purposeful distraction of responsibility from educational institutions enables these same institutions to retain their authoritative and omniscient image within society. Yet, as the range and scale of diversity continue to swell, the demands for social justice from parents and grass-roots organizations have become louder -

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1962) including effective leadership (Herzberg, 1966; Jago, 1982; Maslow, 1954; Vroom, 1964; Vroom and Yetton 1973) transformational leadership (Bass, 1998; Burns, 1978; Leithwood, Begley and Cousins, 1994; and Stewart, 2006); and post behavioural science era also referred to as critical perspectives of leadership (Foster, 1986) critical race analysis of leadership (Dantley 1990; Mclaren and Dantley, 1990) emancipatory leadership (Corson, 2000) and inclusive leadership (Ryan, 2006). For further discussion please refer to the literature review chapter two of this thesis.
and more complex. Even as our students endure continued discrimination their lives are further complicated by the struggle to reconcile media, educational and familial experiences. Educational institutions must ensure that the diverse needs of their student bodies are met and that their students are equipped with the tools and resources to analyse and act upon injustice. Many educational institutions have not heeded recommendations to substantively integrate equity into programming and policy. To this end, it is the responsibility of educational administrators to ensure that commitments to equity are accounted for and have been upheld. What remains to be determined is whether this is being done responsibly (Dantley, 1990; Zou and Trueba, 1998).

Equity and social justice are two sides of the same coin. While equity relates to the analysis of discrimination, social justice refers to the actions required to eradicate injustice. So, how do educational institutions mediate discrimination beyond policies and outreach? Critical to this discussion are educational administrators and their commitment to social justice. Scant research has been conducted on educational leaders and how they implement and enact social justice (e.g. policy, programming and other practices) in their daily professional lives. There has also been very little

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4 The term “social justice” is a contested concept. In the “Defining Social Justice”, I further examine this contestation.
research on the connections between leadership for social justice and the lived realities of educational administrators (Ryan, 2007; Ryan, Pollock, and Antonelli, 2007; Ryan, 2006). It is in this context that the experiences of administrators leading for social justice are critical. Much of the literature and theoretical conceptions of leadership do not take into account the lived realities, or the socio-economic, political and historical contexts in which educational administrators lead. In more recent times, the administrative climate has been driven by accountability measures and has confused narrow conceptions of accountability (e.g. standardized testing) with accounting for social justice imperatives. Furthermore, there exists much ambiguity about how leadership for social justice is defined – what leadership for social justice is, and how it is done. This research is focused on examining how equity minded educational administrators lead for social justice.

**Purpose of Study**

This study examines educational administrators who identify as leading for social justice, with a particular focus on the experiences of administrators and *how* they became oriented to social justice, how they conceptualize social justice and what barriers and supports they
experience and identify in leading for social justice. This study also examines how the personal identities of these administrators are critical to the examination of power relations and their implications for leading for social justice. Further, this study examines the relationship between leaders for social justice and their positions as power brokers in formal authority roles as administrators. The major research question for this study is: How do equity minded administrators lead for social justice? The sub-questions of this study examine several critical domains of leadership for social justice: (a) how did participants become oriented to social justice (b) how do educational administrators conceptualize leadership for social justice (c) what are the barriers and supports that participants experience in leading for social justice in diverse contexts, and (d) what are some (participant-identified) examples of how these administrators lead for social justice.

**Personal Experience**

*An Early Experience of the Possibilities of Social Justice in Mainstream Educational Institutions*

The educational system, for all its protocols, policies and regulatory processes, has failed to protect itself from ruptures; it was due to such ruptures that I learned about agency. Much of my lived experience in high school was chaotic and unfathomable to most of my educators; my lived
reality was disjointed from the curricula and I could not have cared less about how others constructed me. Schooling did not have much meaning until my encounter with Ranjit Khatkur. Khatkur, a strong South Asian woman from England teaching in the Peel Board, had received funding from the board for a summer project entitled “Shades of Brown”- a program bringing together 12 South Asian students from diverse countries, religions, castes, classes and experiences. I was chosen to be a part of this summer program and truthfully only decided to participate because each of us was paid $16 an hour for the work we did, and this was an opportunity that I was not going to pass up.

I began with no idea of the impact the program would have on my life trajectory, but Shades of Brown was a transformational experience. I learned of the complexity of the South Asian Diaspora, South Asian immigrant experiences in Canada, the Komagata Maru⁵ (Hugh, 1979; Kazimi, 2004), and began to examine issues of cultural conflict and assimilation. This was the first time that I was reflected in the curriculum, engaged and taking social action within the mainstream community. It was a transformative and empowering experience that I often think about in

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⁵ In 1914, the Komagata Maru, a ship carrying 376 immigrants from British India was turned away by Canada. South Asians on this ship, predominantly wealthy Sikhs, were discriminated against and attacked by the Royal Canadian Army (HMCS Rainbow). This racist historical event is often conveniently left out of the curriculum.
times of defeat. Interestingly enough, each participant in the Shades of Brown project went on to higher education and has a career in education. This episode had a profound influence on my decision to stay in school, graduate and go on to post secondary education. There is much I could share about this experience, suffice to say that my passion for learning was ignited by this small summer time project.

Shades of Brown was granted funding in the early 1990s. It was not until years later that I realized just how contingent the project and ultimately my transformative experience were on the socio-political context of the time. The New Democratic Party (NDP), known for its relatively progressive vision and its commitment to social justice, was in power in Ontario, and it was during this time that Harold Braithwaite was the director of the Peel Board. Harold was aggressive in ensuring that equity was mandated through policies and actualized through programming within the board and schools. It was his demonstrated commitment to equity that led Ranjit to develop the proposal for the Shades of Brown project.

Times have changed. The NDP are no longer in power and Harold Braithwaite has long since moved on. The educational climate drastically changed in 1995. Ontario elected Conservative Mike Harris and issues of equity became obsolete as equity branches at the Ministry were closed and
severe cuts were made to the education sector. The Harris government’s “Common Sense Revolution” drastically redirected the province’s focus to board amalgamations, standardization and privatization, while simultaneously reversing any progress the NDP government had made on issues on equity. Harris’ Common Sense Revolution was an aggressive and narrow form of the accountability that paralysed equity initiatives (Dei, James, James-Wilson, Karumanchery, Zine, 2002; Kerr, 2006).

**Personal Connections: Coming to Terms with Inequity: So social justice is now sexy?**

During the second year of my PhD I struggled with my decision to stay in a program that, while revered in many circles, often left me alienated and an island unto myself. There were too many inconsistencies, and my morals and ethics were always in tension with academia. On several occasions it was made clear to me that I could easily be rewarded for maintaining the status quo and severely penalized for disrupting it. I would often find myself reflecting on these tensions and walking a fine line between authenticity and selling out. Assuming that other marginalized students felt the same way, I decided to assist in the mentoring of the then-too-few racialized bodies in my department. On one such occasion I met a
new student. We were conversing about the struggles of marginalized students. His response to my insistence that the disenfranchised have been systemically oppressed was one that I will never forget: “You know what your problem is?...You don’t know how to make racism work for you.” His self-assured statement all but immobilized me. With rage swelling within me I continued to listen as he identified strategies that would make racism “work” for me …and what was even more appalling was his conviction that acting in these ways was a matter of social justice. His opportunistic and sly case for the need to make racism “work for me” left me in disgust. I questioned whether his reasoning was a result of ignorance, or whether this was the neoliberal interpretation society had imposed on the struggle for equity and social justice. This interaction gave me further insight into the lies and deceptive stories we tell ourselves in the name of social progress, equity and justice. Social Justice, and especially the doing of social justice, is not sexy. It is painful, unending and at times soul-destroying work. It is not a flavour of the month and should never be reduced to making oppression work for you.

In another instance I was the one being mentored, by a student near completion of his thesis. This mentor was an international and racialized student, and from an upper class family. While we would often share our
experiences of racism and eurocentrism in the academy, we did not see eye to eye on issues concerning class. It was on one such occasion that he insisted that poverty is part of the struggle. This struck me at the core; it shook me beyond my beliefs and values. My families, for generations and until today, have struggled too long and too hard for too little, and I took exception to my mentor’s insistence that my commitment to justice would lead me to continue to struggle with making ends meet. We spent hours discussing this one issue. I questioned whether I was a legitimate activist or a social justice-lite yuppie whining in the ivory tower while pouring over its canons of jargon-laden “knowledge”. I remember being so nauseated with my mentor's argument that the struggle for social justice entailed being in the trenches and continuing to experience hardship; later I was dismissive of his analysis. It was just too easy for him to embrace poverty as part of the struggle when he was not the sole provider for a family, did not have a debilitating sickness and had assurance that if he got into real trouble or hardship that he could simply call on his safety net for an immediate handout—options that do not exist for me and innumerable others. I am still in tension over this and have not come to a concrete answer as to the role of poverty in creating social justice. What I do know is that poverty creates intolerable conditions that make the work necessary for justice almost
impossible. I struggled with defining, articulating and making tangible the elusive goals of social justice. My upbringing has armed me with deeply entrenched morals and values, and my life experiences for survival and other circumstances have required me to live against the grain and in the name of social justice. My early struggles, where I made notable gains, were in the educational system, and this has brought me to the study of educational leadership for social justice.

My commitment to social justice is a visceral one. Being at the receiving end of progressive educational programming ignited my passion for learning. This passion was then manifested and harnessed in my experiences as a student leader, community activist, graduate student and most recently as an equity consultant. I am committed to education that eradicates ignorance and facilitates liberation of the marginalized. It is with this spirit that I have approached the study of equity-minded educational administrators who lead for social justice.

**Theoretical Approach to the Research Study**

*Theoretical Stance: Locating Myself*

My approach to this study has been informed by my life experiences as a South Asian female who was born and raised in Southern Ontario. These experiences included life within differing ontological perspectives, as
well as my interlocking experiences with the isms – in particular with the cultural conflicts and dualities in racism, sexism, and classism. Another pertinent component of my life experiences is my state of awareness and how I have come to use spirituality as fluid connectivity and oneness, as it is always continually evolving. For as long as I can remember I have had to constantly negotiate my identities in relation to Eastern and Western ontologies. This ongoing negotiation has demonstrated that the decisions I make and their resulting outcomes have been intricately connected to and contingent upon which ontology I chose to operate from and/or negate. So for me, issues were not only about being Black or White, but also about being Brown in the inevitable grey space. I believe that concrete validations, insights and lessons can be learned and extracted from this inevitable grey space that we all occupy.

In addition to academia my ontological perspective from the Eastern traditions of Sikhism and Hinduism has heavily influenced my approach to research. In no way could I ever sum up the lessons I have learned over the years or lives. However, I will attempt to point to some key teachings that come to bear on this thesis. I have learned that a person is a synergy of their material and non-material selves including mind, body, soul and their connections and reflections with God (Allah, Ram, Baba Jee, Lord
Krishna, Buddha - whatever ascription one may assign to the Higher Being or the Higher state of Being). I have also learned that to understand the human experience, one must embody the human experience and then detach from its bondages. Once we do so, we can reflect and learn from it, leading to growth and deeper understanding. I have also learned that insights, epiphanies and life changing revelations are presented to us on a daily basis and it is up to us to recognize, learn from and share these revelations (Graveline, 2004; Price, 2001; Shahjahan, 2005). These lessons are highly important to the entire development of this thesis, but especially to the methodological approaches as further examined in the methods section.

It is in light of these learned lessons that I qualitatively approached the participants of this study; I thus conducted interviews as discussions, rather than one-way question and answer sessions. The discussions focussed on the participants’ experiences of leadership for social justice (and their capacity to go against the grain).

Being Brown in the grey space has enriched my understanding that the experiences, successes and struggles of peoples are rich, multi-layered, intersecting and complex. It is for these reasons that positivistic approaches to research were not considered as the primary mode of
investigation. Many thinkers have criticized the positivistic claims of narrow scientific research methods by arguing that science is itself a social product, that scientists are socially situated by human nature with partial vision, and that no scientific method ensures access to an irrefutable “truth” (Chalmers, 1982; Haraway, 1989; Woolgar, 1988). While “irrefutable truths” are hotly contested, what this research study does is explore the experiences and perspectives of equity minded administrators who lead for social justice.

This research study uses qualitative research methods: it adopts “…a predisposition toward working with and through complexity rather than around or in spite of it” (Schram, 2003 p. 8). This approach to qualitative research allows for the examination of the complexities of “subcultures” and their realities. As Schram states, qualitative research allows:

…a means to think realistically and concretely about broader problems of cross-cultural adjustment, home-school relationships, and the like. This is not a claim to see the world in a grain of sand, but a characteristically qualitative acknowledgement that small aspects of experience, conveyed in depth and detail, can speak to large issues (Schram, 2003 p. 12)

This study is a testament to Schram’s description of the capabilities of
Rigid generalizations cannot be made of those who intentionally go against the grain. This revelation has dually informed my research methods and methodology. I approach this study of educational administrators leading for social justice from broad critical perspectives, in combination with an emancipatory paradigm that has been influenced by anti-racist (Dei, 1996) and black feminist praxis (hooks, 2000). Approaching this study from a perspective of critical pedagogy entails "explor[ing] alternative and oppositional forms of knowledge informed by their [participants] own histories and experiences" (Dei, 1996 p.34). The integrative equity perspective seeks the direct connections between knowledge, reality and being (ontology) (Shahjahan, 2007). It also presumes the inseparability of politics, ontology and epistemology. As well, the feminist standpoint problematizes the nature of relationships between ideas, experiences and social realities (hooks, 2000). Most importantly this approach examines issues from the viewpoint that marginalized people "speak their truth as it is situated in relation to forms of power that shape their lives; that they can exercise; and that constitute what counts as knowledge" (Holland & Ramazanoglu, 2002, p. 65). It is from this blended paradigm that the lives and voices of administrators leading for social justice are enabled and
illuminated\textsuperscript{6}. This form of the emancipatory paradigm is a solid approach in examining marginalized populations because it is fundamentally rooted in the fact that people live multiple realities shaped by social, political, cultural, economical, ethnic, gender and disability values (Mertens, 1998). This emancipatory approach to research embraces social justice in its epistemological groundings as well. Operating within the emancipatory paradigm, knowledge is deemed as socially constructed and historically situated. This situated knowledge is demonstratively incorporated in research via the creation of an interactive link between researcher and participants (Mertens, 1998).

The emancipatory paradigm calls for a shift in focus from an “array of differences” to a focus on “differences and equity”. The latter centers on challenging the status quo beyond entertaining differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and ability. It asks critical questions concerning how to conduct organizational development, programming, leadership, promotion, retention, and hiring differently. We must also \textit{critically ask and honestly answer} the question: Are we in need of leaders to continue to follow and uphold the current mandate of leadership in support of multiculturalism? Or, are we in need of leaders who are critically

\textsuperscript{6} For an articulation of this conceptual framework using Del’s antiracism and hooks’ Black feminism, please refer to the Conceptual Framework.
engaged in developing and sustaining new models of leadership that aim to change the status quo through social justice action? This study focuses on educational leaders and approaches to leadership that infuse social justice in practice.

**Detailing the Theoretical Framework**

**Integrative Anti-racism: Lived Experiences as Legitimate sites of Knowledge and Exploration**

George Sefa Dei’s contribution to equity through his integrative anti-racism framework allows for particularly critical insights into the operation of power and privilege. This framework has four tenets that are critical to the current research study on the lived experiences of educational administrators. They include (Dei, p. 62):

1. Unravelling the intersecting systems of oppression in order to be able to intellectually articulate and engage in meaningful and progressive action to address social injustice and oppression.

2. Examining how personal experiential knowledge and specific positions and identities affect our ways of creating knowledge.

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7 There is a distinct difference between multicultural approaches to leadership and social justice approaches. For a further examination of this distinction see appendices A and D.
3. Developing an understanding of how differential power and privilege work in society. The study of the dynamics of social difference is also a study of differential power relations. Power relations are embedded in social relations of difference, thus the understanding of the intersections of difference is more than a preparedness to hear each other out. It involves more than providing the means and opportunities for subordinated groups to empower themselves and find creative solutions to their own concerns. It is about ensuring that all social groups have decision-making power: safety provisions and equitable access to, and control over, the valued goods and services of society with which to attain human dignity and individual and collective survival.

4. The issues of concern relate to the saliency of race in an integrative anti-racism discourse. Integrative anti-racism is based on the understanding that race relations in society are actually interactions between raced, classed and gendered subjects.

While each of the tenets of an integrative anti-racism framework is critical, I take exception to the “saliency of race”. There is no mistaking, race and
racism exist. They are embedded in the pillars of this nation and routinely
exemplified through the policies, programming and organizing of our
institutions and our society. The experiences of subjugation, racialization
and racism are real and many have suffered traumatic experiences as a
result of discrimination, as exemplified in research and shared lived
experiences. However, I take exception to the notion of the primacy of race
and the intentional creation of a hierarchy of oppression that inevitably
attends examining race as the entry point for all discussions about equity.

While anti-racism theory has equipped me with the ability to examine
the intersecting and interlocking positions of the marginalized and the
workings of power and privilege therein, it is not a totalizing theoretical
perspective in the examination of equity. In particular, I have decided not to
solely use an anti-racist perspective as it does not accurately and
reflectively account for differences in ability. While ability, pre-disability and
disability are impacted and contextualized in experiences of subjugated
racialization and racism, I do not think that race is salient in these
circumstances. I agree with much of what Dei states but cannot reconcile
the idea that living in a dis-abling environment and having a physical
disability or severe illness is secondary to and trumps by issues of race
and racism. While the experiences and lived realities of racialization and
racism has become part of the mainstream conversation in the examination of (in)equity, the same cannot be necessarily said of those with differing inabilities. While I concur with Dei that race and racism have not been socially, politically or systemically engaged for equitable outcomes, I hesitate to state that issues of subjugated racialization and racism trump issues of subjugated disability and ableism. The interlocking experiences of a disabled body are also complex, and often such bodies do not have spaces or leverages of power or even the physical capacity to engage in resistance to discrimination. The human body, once read as defective due to differences in appearances and abilities, is often bastardized from society. This is evident in the lack of reflection of differently abled people in positions of power. From the perspective of ability/pre-disability, issues of access and civic engagement are primarily contingent on subjugated ability and not necessarily on race. This is not to suggest that race loses importance. Race continues to have serious implications for interactions at organizational, programming, personnel and personal levels. This is to simply state that we must be attentive to systemic oppression, its complex nature due to fragmentation, and when and how (if ever) a hierarchal approach to (in)equity should be considered viable.
“Women interested in revolutionary change were quick to label the exercise of power a negative trait, without distinguishing between power as domination and control over others and power that is creative and life-affirming” (hooks, p. 85)

Another critical component to an integrative equity approach is the explicit examination of power and power relations. In Canada we are hypersensitive to issues of representation in our workplace. We want to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Charter of Rights and requisites for programs such as affirmative action. This sometimes results in an array of different races, ethnicities and even abilities working in the same location. But is this all we want, an array of differences working in the same location? What is the purpose of this hyper-sensitivity concerning “united” differences? We are so concerned with the appearances of equity and ensuring that we have representatives from marginalized groups represented in the education workforce, but to what end? And, what are the experiences of those labelled different in the workplace? While the united differences approach was a strong multicultural movement in Canada, it
was not a movement that centred on the much needed dialogues of interlocking oppressions, differences and their implications for equity.

As previously stated, what is needed is a fundamental shift, from a focus on an array of differences to a focus on differences and equity, which would centre on challenging the status quo beyond entertaining differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and ability. It would ask critical questions concerning how to conduct organizational development, programming, leadership, promotion, retention, and hiring differently. We must also critically ask and honestly answer: Are we in need of leaders who continue to reiterate the current mandate of leadership in support of multiculturalism? Or, are we in need of leaders who are critically engaged in developing and sustaining new models of leadership that are committed to social justice? To the end of answering the latter, this research study is seeking to challenge current approaches to leadership. In particular, it is focused on educational leaders and approaches to leadership that infuse social justice in practice.

Answers to the above mentioned questions are critical in the struggle for social justice for marginalized groups. While these questions can be answered by anyone, it is especially critical that leaders themselves take responsibility to answer these questions and infuse their practice with
equity. In all organizations, where the power is organized in a hierarchal form of leadership, leaders and administrators are deemed to be “endowed” with the capabilities to lead, establish mission statements and grandiose visions, to organize and dictate programming and practices all with the assumed stance (and often correct in their assumption) that there will be no resistance from those in positions below them. Hierarchies are intentionally formed so that challenging the status quo carries many more risks and negligible rewards. In acknowledging this rigid structure, it is also critical to understand that leaders are gatekeepers with great power and in many ways dictate the manners and limits of interaction with those within the organization, as well as outside (community members and other critical stakeholders) of it.

Yet, power does not exist solely in manmade institutions; these institutions are merely the playground of his thought. The power structures in organizations have continued to mirror white male elitism as embedded within a capitalist system of operation. In her book Black Feminism, hooks examines the feminists’ struggle to have power in society⁸. She problematizes how feminists, in their attempts to gain power in society,

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⁸ While I focus on Black feminism as articulated by hooks, I am aware that there are several conceptions of Black Feminism in the literature. I have intentionally chosen hooks’ conception of feminist theory as it centres on and is explicit about reconceptualizing power relations.
actually sought to have equal status with men within the current organization of power and social structures without *reconceptualizing* power. As a consequence of this poor reflection and lack of reconceptualization, women equated the power they sought to that same power conceived of by men, which was and continues to be the domination of others. hooks calls for a reconceptualization of power. hooks does not villainize power itself, rather she draws our attention to the theoretical underpinnings that have led the powerful to villainize. In this process she reminds us that *power* in and of itself is not the problem; what is of issue is the *way* in which power is used. It is in this regard that I have included seven of her invaluable and critical insights into the examination of power.

These insights on the “changing perspectives on power” have significant impact on the reconceiving of power as it operates in educational leadership for social justice. This reconceptualization must begin with critical reflection on the following (hooks, Feminist Theory):

1. **The exercise of power is to end domination.**

2. **The interrogation of the “basic dilemma”.** This is the commonly held tension that women face in gaining power within the current milieu of hierarchies: how can women gain enough money and power to literally change the world without being corrupted, co-opted, and incorporated on
the way by the very value systems that must change? Here is the assumption or the common dilemma that in order to make social change, women must first obtain money and power in the current system so as to work more effectively for liberation. hooks discusses how this approach had little appeal for poor, non-white women because they did not have access to the means of participation in the ruling system. This approach, however, had tremendous appeal for ruling groups of white males who were not threatened by the women in the feminist movement who adopted it. This approach basically supported women who were satisfied with mimicking white males’ approach to power, and as long as white women were rewarded equally for their mimicry they did not resist the process, nor consider the rights of non-white women in the ruling system. White males in positions of power were not especially perturbed by this approach, since the “basic dilemma” served to validate the existing status quo, as opposed to disrupting it and establishing a new order. (p.86)

3. The basic expression of power that is validated from our childhood is that effective power is demonstrated by dominating and controlling others.

4. The value system that supported male white power has never changed and has mostly gone unchallenged by those who reap the
benefits of its hierarchal power structures. What has occurred instead is
women seeking approval and equal treatment in the existing value system,
as opposed to developing a new value system that would serve as a new
foundation for the workings of power and would require society to be
organized differently from how it was under the male dominated model. “If
they had a different value system then men they would not endorse
domination and control over others under any circumstances, they would
not accept that “might makes right”. (p.87)

5. Women’s attempts to “reconceptualize power” have not been
successful. Women had understood power consciously or unconsciously
through the class and race hierarchies that exist in the larger society. hooks
explores how this resulted in a shift from working to eliminate sexist
oppression to focusing attention on gaining as much power and privilege as
women could within the existing social structure.

In the absence of critically reflecting on the underpinnings of power
and how power operates, what occurred was that feminist activists
assumed that women 1) were opposed to maintaining the status quo, 2)
had a different value system to that of men, and 3) would exercise power in
the interests of feminist movement. Yet, all this was not necessarily so; the
ruling groups were pleased to endorse equal rights only if it was clear that
the women who entered spheres of power would work to uphold and maintain the status quo. The feminists’ unexamined assumptions led them to pay no significant attention to creating alternative value systems that would include new visions and definitions of power.

What needs to occur in leadership is an intentional choosing to reconceptualize power and leadership so that they serve to liberate and empower marginalized populations from the oppressive conditions of class and race hierarchies and other oppressive structures in society. hooks identifies several movements that attempted to redefine power positively with new organizational strategies: rotating tasks, consensus, and an emphasis on internal democracy. Such approaches resonate with certain elements of emancipatory leadership. However, there was no mainstream uptake of these feminist ideals in any real way.

6. **We must examine the current power relations within organizations and beyond, and how they erect barriers to reconceptualizing power.** In particular, current power relations can only continue to offer the examination of the operation of power as it is constituted by existing practices. This draws our attention to how current power relations are ultimately interconnected and interdependent on existing societal terms and conditions, discouraging change and a rethink
of power toward equity and equitable relations. hooks quotes Grace Lee Boggs and James Boggs in their book Revolution in the Twentieth Century at length, and I think it is appropriate to also quote them here for further emphasis on the significance of re-conceptualizing power:

The labour movement in the ‘30s, and all the movements of the ‘50s and ‘60s, the black movement, the youth movement, and the women’s movement, began by struggling for their own interests, but derived their momentum from the fact that their interests coincided with those of society as a whole… In the end, each has become an interest group, concerned only with itself. While each may talk about separation of powers, “a piece of the action.” None is talking about real power, which involves the reconstruction of the entire society for the benefit of the great majority and for the advancement of humanity.

As articulated by hooks, what must happen in order to reconstruct society is a conceptual shift in defining the purposes of power. We must reject the notion that obtaining power in the existing social structure and social order will advance feminist or marginalized people’s struggles and end oppression. Just because marginalized people gain entry into the power structure, it does not mean that an organization is working toward equity or that equity has been achieved, and/or there has been an end to
injustice. Those in positions of power must also act, plan, program and lead for social justice. This is true of current educational administration. Due to many constraints, and especially the move toward accountability discourse, educational administrators find themselves in reactive positions and in tenuous circumstances, having to act without foresight, supports or guidance. Due to the lack of foresight and preparation, educational administrators are often forced to rely on traditional paradigms of leadership and conflict resolution. The field of educational administration serves as fertile ground for the discussion on how differences and (in)equitable power formations interlock.

7. **We are called to accountability:** hooks explicitly states that there IS a choice in denying and defying the subjugated conditions of the marginalized. hooks commands attention when she articulates that women need to know that they can reject the powerful’s definition of their reality – that they can do so even if they are poor, exploited, or trapped in oppressive circumstances. hooks calls our attention to the need to empower women who “need to know that the exercise of this basic personal power is an act of resistance and strength. Many poor and exploited women, especially non-white women, would have been unable to develop positive self-concepts if they had not exercised their power to
reject the powerful’s definition of their reality.”

As long as Canada is an imperialist, capitalist, patriarchal society, no large or diverse majority of people focused on social justice can rise in the existing ranks of the powerful hierarchies. Social justice cannot be advanced if those who are marginalized cannot see themselves in positions of power leading for change. The forms of power that leaders must exemplify are those that “will enable them [in powerful positions] to resist exploitation and oppression and free them to work at transforming society so that political and economic structures will exist that benefit women and men equally”. hooks’ black feminist approach to reconceptualizing power has major implications for educational leadership for social justice. Her insights facilitate new ways of thinking of leadership for and by the marginalized. While her focus is primarily on the condition of women, these tenets can easily be applied to all marginalized populations that are impacted or are in positions of power to lead for equity.

Combining Dei’s tenets of integrative antiracism and hooks’ reconceptualization of power creates a strong theoretical framework from which to examine administrators who are equity minded and self identify as leading for social justice. By combining anti-racism and Black Feminism, this framework examines the lived realities of administrators leading for
social justice from their reference points as individuals, administrators and leaders. This framework presupposes an insightful and reflective approach to examining the lived realities of those, especially non-white males, in leadership positions. Such insights will have a profound impact on the reconceptualization of power and leadership for social justice.

**Significance of this Study**

This research study contributes to the emerging literature on leadership for social justice in several ways. First, it contributes to the limited but growing examination of how administrators lead for social justice. Second, this study expands current theoretical conceptions of social justice into: issues of praxis; the applicability of social justice to popular conceptions of educational leadership; and the realities of administrators committed to social justice amidst rapidly changing and diverse contexts. Third, this study contributes to the scant research on the interwoven experiences and lived realities that have committed educational administrators to leading for social justice. Finally, this research study adds to an emerging literature devoted to the examination of leadership in diverse contexts defined by rapidly changing demographics.
Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into ten chapters, plus the appendices and references. Chapter two is the Literature Review. Specifically chapter two elaborates my definition of leadership for social justice. It also includes a critical examination of the leadership literature from traditional to critical perspectives in educational leadership thought. This chapter also includes the conceptual framework from which I am approaching this study of administrators leading for social justice. Chapter three is the Research Methodology and Methods Chapter. In this chapter I explain the research methodology used, along with the ethical considerations attendant to my position as researcher and the technical aspects of the research methods in identifying the participants, interviewing and storing the data. And finally chapters four to eight present the research data. It was vital for me that the participants’ voices, their perspectives and their experiences come through in my thesis and on this basis I have, in some cases, used longer quotes. In chapter four I present the participants’ data as it relates to their “interconnectedness between their lived realities… and the ‘doing’ of social justice”. In chapter five I present the participants’ data as it relates to their conceptions of leadership for social justice. Chapter six features the participants’ data as it relates to their self-identified examples of leadership
for social justice and praxis. In chapter seven I present the participants’
data as it illustrates experienced barriers to leadership for social justice. In
chapter eight I present the participants’ data as it relates to phenomena that
support leadership for social justice. In chapter nine I critically discuss the
data as a whole. In chapter ten, the final chapter, I present my conclusions
and their implications, and recommendations. Chapter ten is followed by
Appendices A,B, and C as well as the references.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter I review several central developments in administrative thought, with particular regard to leadership theory. Given that the purpose of this research study is to examine *how equity minded administrators lead for social justice*, I intentionally focussed the literature review on how traditional and contemporary leadership theories engaged difference, marginalization and social justice. In other words, given the focus of this thesis, it is crucial to critically examine the central developments in leadership theory with a view to interrogating to what extent such developments have engaged with issues of equity, difference, marginalization and social justice. While this literature review was intentional, it was also timely within the Canadian climate. With the swiftly changing demographics in Canada's major urban centres, there has been a renewed interest in examining educational leadership. Specifically, the changing demographics of student populations, along with mandated agendas steeped in discourses of accountability, have prompted practitioners, educators and scholars working from critical perspectives to examine the role of leadership and specifically ask the questions:
leadership for what purpose?’ and ‘leadership for whom?’. Emerging literature on educational leadership has begun to critically examine issues related to social justice (Capper, 1993; Dantley, 1990; McLaren and Dantley, 1990; Ryan, 2006).

This literature review investigates leadership theories and frameworks with a specific emphasis on the connections between leadership and the educational institutions’ situated contexts. The examination of educational administration literature in regards to leadership in diverse contexts is relatively new. There have been several key educational leadership literature reviews that have begun to map approaches to educational administration (e.g. Heck and Hallinger 1999, Johnson, 1993; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003); however, these reviews have not substantially focussed on issues related to diverse contexts, or on social justice and its implications for leadership. More recently, there has been a movement toward focussing on leadership in diverse contexts, inclusion and social justice imperatives (Rottmann, in press; Ryan, 2006). While significant in their contributions to leadership discourse, these reviews have not substantively focused on – or made connections with – the personal experiences of leaders with specific regard to their locations of power and privilege, and the complexity of the high-stakes and often
politicised positions of those from the margins in leadership posts. This literature review examines select leadership texts from classical organizational theories; the human relations approach; behavioural science approaches; and the post-behavioural science era with a critical examination of how difference, marginalization and social justice are conceptualized and/or operationalized.

A Review of Administrative Thought: Toward Articulating Leadership for Social Justice

This section is focused on a review of administrative thought. In particular this review articulates the gaps in administrative thought with regard to the social justice imperatives (including formulating the roles, responsibilities, and duties) of educational leadership. I have organized the literature using Lunenburg’s table as noted in the National Council of Professors in Educational Administration 2003 yearbook, Paradigm Shifts in Educational Administration: A View from the Editor’s Desk. In adopting Lunenburg’s approach, I present a quasi-chronological order of administrative thought from a collection of perspectives including classical organizational theory, human relation approaches, behavioural science
approaches and post-behavioural science era.

While the discussion is in a quasi-chronological order, this does not mean that educational administration, its processes and practices have evolved. Rather, there is simply evidence that all the above perspectives are currently practiced in the educational administration. Thus the imposed organization of the educational administration literature is a disingenuous one. Furthermore, I acknowledge that leadership is a responsibility that implicitly interacts with the historical, social, political and global dimensions of an institution’s situated context and thus cannot be understood in its entirety in this medium. The purpose of this review of administrative thought is to situate this study (of equity minded administrators leading for social justice) within current administrative literature.

**Classical Organizational Theory: Foundations of Traditional School Leadership**

In this section I review two major classical organizational theories, namely, Scientific Management and Weberian Typology of Authority. These theories have been considered due to their foundational implications in organizational leadership, philosophy and practices. While both Scientific
Management and Weberian Typology of Authority emphasize functions with an aim for efficiency, each approach varies in its foci and mechanisms to achieve these ends.

**Scientific Management**

Educational administration theory can be traced to the history of scientific management and organizational theory that defined school efficiency and management in cause and effect formulations. In most educational administration literature reviews, Taylor’s (1914) work is noted as a major influence on early scholarship of leadership theories and practices (Taylor - electronic resource, 2003). In particular, Taylor’s work is responsible for formally introducing notions of scientific management to the business and industrial world. The primary objective of Taylor’s ideas was to direct industry and organizations to work more efficiently and cost effectively by operating under specific assumptions about the division of labour and management and the (limited) capacities of its workers. Taylor’s work was grounded in positivist, rational, quantifiable rationales for making administrative decisions. According to his work, those in non-managerial positions were required to be monitored constantly by their superiors and could be taught to perform *simple* step by step tasks at a rate and quality
that ensured effective productivity and profit for the organizations. This approach by Taylor was termed “scientific management”. Scientific management emphasized logic and organization in production processes.

**Bureaucratic Model: Weberian Typology of Authority, Functions Served and Mechanisms Used**

Max Weber’s typology of authority (1978) has had an immense impact on organizational leadership. Weber examines a tripartite of models of authority including the Bureaucratic model, Patrimonial model and the Charismatic model. While Weber is often noted for his conceptualization of and high regard for the Bureaucratic model, he also distinguishes the functions served and the mechanisms used in all three analytical models, including also the Patrimonial and Charismatic models.

Among the bureaucratic constructs used to describe the administrative workings of formal organizations, Weber emphasised the pursuit of goals by organizations, the growth of specialization, and the hierarchical ordering of a *legitimate* chain of command. Within the organization, the functions served by the Bureaucratic model included addressing collective challenges and carrying out financial and management functions. The mechanisms that operationalized these
functions were technical expertise, a reliance on power relations that were hierarchical and arranged through segregated offices, and the establishment of communication that limited interaction between personnel and offices so as to ensure that relationships within an organization remained impersonal. In the Patrimonial model, the functions served in an organization included the establishment of a power base for leadership, the incorporation of diverging interests into the system, and the easing of the rigidity of bureaucracy. These functions were operationalized by the distribution and appointment of top leadership. In the Charismatic model, the function served is to articulate an ideological vision and enhance the public’s confidence in the organization. The mechanism used to operationalize this function is that of the office of the leadership, an office of charisma – reliant on the personal qualities of those in such an office. It is important to note that within Weber’s typology of authority, personal and personnel detachment is necessary for efficiency in governing administrative and organizational decisions (Wong and Sunderman, 2001).

**How do Scientific Management and Weberian Typology of Authority Engage Difference and Social Justice?**

While Scientific Management and the Weberian Typology of Authority
differ in their foci and practices, both approaches to leadership emphasize that their respective positions will lead to organizational efficiency. It is through this lens of efficiency that I formulate the following critique of these classical organizational theories with respect to social justice.

It quickly became evident that the approaches of scientific management and the Weberian typology of authority operated as oppressive forces within administrative thought. In particular, these approaches both impose a hierarchy of power in which administrative positions of leadership must be created in order to manage employees and their tasks. Essentially, this theory affords management a position in which they can yield their power to systemically and systematically eliminate the tradition of depending on the knowledge or craft of workers, by stressing to the workers that the operation of an industry and/or organization depends upon the decisions of those in charge. The assumption underpinning this scheme is that efficiency can be scientifically tabulated into a set of procedural practices that yield tremendous profits. A further assumption is that organizational objectives can be rationally pursued (Wong and Sunderman, 2001) using the standards, processes and directions dictated by those in charge. The beliefs and practices associated with tabulating efficiency and rationally pursuing organizational objectives further validate,
legitimate and normalize the characteristics and behaviours of those within the hierarchical chain of command. thus creating rigid boundaries of separation among those from differing positions.

Unfortunately, these approaches to administrative thought were also mirrored in classical organizational theory in educational administration leadership thinking and practices. This is most evident in the managerial and technical approaches to educational leadership. The scientific management and bureaucratic approaches were exclusive processes that reduced leadership to a cause and effect structure. This structure presupposes several things. The first assumption is that educational leadership is a task oriented profession where a leader is chosen based on narrow criteria of legitimate credentials. Another assumption is that the highest position in the hierarchy bestowed unto the leader the authority to separate themselves from the worker, and that from this separated position, the leader was in a position to influence their followers. Here leadership is approached from a top-down perspective, wherein leadership occurs in a formal system committed to structure. In this system, the formal leader is deemed the authority and dictates the agenda. The leader is authoritative, reigning over the organization and as such enforcing rules and protocol, even to coercion as a means to meet their mandate. A further assumption
is that the organization operates as a machine, where the leader decides
the inputs; the individual worker produces the good(s) as the good(s) are
pre-determined by the leader and; the output is quantifiable through
processes that were ‘natural’ and anticipated consequences by the
administrator. In this system, employees are seen as working for and
motivated by primarily economic rewards. (Fayol, 1949; Taylor, 1947; Taylor
and Francis, 2003). Using this model, factories increased production,
lowered costs and used fewer workers, a business model that whets most
business moguls’ appetites. Taylor’s formula was to find the expert and
have the expert problem solve until the company was at peak efficiency, so
that effective human resource management was the result of expert
leadership. Merelen Johnson rightfully concludes that this approach
equates expert with leader. Taylorism is still very visible in organizational
theory and leadership; this is evident in the recent revival of standardized
tests, and a focus on efficacy and efficient leadership models. The scientific
management approach also assumes the world is orderly and rational, and
that certain laws can be identified as cause/effect relationships directly
resulting from the actions of leaders (Johnson, 1993). With regard to the
notions of efficiency and diverse populations, Dantley was insightful in
making the following connections:
The ideas of efficiency and effectiveness are grounded in traditions that are somewhat alien to those persons who do most of the following so that the thinking regarding administrative decisions and standards are defined by the superior without engaging the subordinate in the decision making process (Dantley p.588).

In educational administration the above is often demonstrated in the goal setting and vision making of the institution and the benign regard for community (especially those considered ‘subordinates’) involvement in the processes and procedures required to establish, meet and exceed such goals and visions. This is also evident in the post-secondary realm, wherein the work done by professors and researchers in the ivory towers espouses the need for community capacity building in education, but where these same professors and researchers do not practice (or rather praxis) what they preach in their own work. The scientific and bureaucratic approaches to educational leadership rely on a eurocentric perspective that does not require leaders to engage with issues of equity, rendering the ever-growing body of literature on the lived realities of others and the socio-political
realities of changing demographics illegitimate. Nor does this approach take into account the situated context of the educational institution. This deliberate displacement of power from the informed worker to the supposed omniscient manager creates deep, penetrating divisions of labour that are also reflected across the interconnected divisions of race, class, gender, sexualities and ability and so forth. This approach inhibits social analyses, critique, and action; it does not acknowledge the role and impact of social, political, historical movements.

This approach to leadership puts a stranglehold on diversity and equity by situating the leader as the authority in a hierarchical structure. The assumption here is that the leader is omniscient in all matters that pertain to her/his organizational agenda. This bestowal of hierarchal authority creates a perverse power differential which forbids any attempts at engagement from any level, ensuring the death of all seeds sowed for engagement within the very leadership framework from which it operates. This approach to leadership marginalizes all bodies and voices in positions ‘below’ the top position in the organization. It continues to keep the historically marginalized and disadvantaged at the margins and does not even allow for cursory acknowledgment of their lived realities. Ultimately the major problem with the scientific approach is that it is exclusively
procedural and leaves no room to raise issues of diversity and equity, let alone to integrate them as central to justice in leadership.

**Humanistic Approaches**

In this section I include three approaches that Lunenburg (2003) has noted as the Humanistic Approaches. These include Kurt Lewin’s contribution of “life value”; Landsberger’s “Hawthorne Effect”, and Carl Rogers’ “Client Centred Therapy”. These three humanistic approaches have been selected based on their common underpinnings with regard to the employee’s role in organizational efficiency and productivity. Each of these three approaches emphasizes the need for leadership and management to not only monitor productivity, but also to monitor and implement necessary changes in terms of employee work motivation. With an intentional focus on increasing employees’ work motivation, the humanistic approaches espouse increased productivity and work efficiency. While critical to the development of administrative thought, humanistic approaches are not without their limitations. A critique of these three humanistic approaches is offered after a review of their salient features.
The Human Relations Approach

Kurt Lewin is often referenced for his contribution of the humanistic dimension of “life value” to administration literature. Lewin is said to have planted “the seed of …behavioural components” in organizational theory (Johnson, 1993). He posited that each worker is a person who needs meaning from their work, in that as humans, we are always in need of resolving our “psychic tension” (as quoted in Johnson, 1993). In this way, Lewin implanted the concept of the ‘whole’ person in educational theory (Lewin, 1939). Thus the leader was now responsible for much more than organizational efficiency; rather, the leader was responsible for allowing followers to achieve meaning from the work. This was accomplished by shaping the behaviour of the workers by controlling the consequences associated with each specific follower action.

Lewin’s work was considered seminal in the human relations approach, as it was one of the earliest theorizations that pointed out the difficulty in integrating the individual (and meeting/acknowledging their needs) into the organization. More specifically, Lewin, Lippett and White’s (1939) leadership studies provided empirical evidence of the effects of different leadership styles – namely authoritative, democratic and laissez-faire approaches. Their leadership studies concluded that democratic
approaches to leadership resulted in followers having high morale, friendly interactions among one another and, as group participants, producing a superior quality of work as opposed to those working under authoritative and laissez-faire approaches (Lewin et. al 1939).

The “Hawthorne Effect”

Another seminal piece to the human relations approach to leadership relates to the Hawthorne Effect. In the 1920s, Elton Mayo and Fritz J. Roethlisberger led a nine year study on worker behaviour in the Hawthorne Works plant outside of Chicago, namesake of the “Effect”. This experiment involved the study of thousands of employees. It was hailed as a milestone study as it signalled the movement of leadership and management from a scientific approach to a disciplinary one, wherein the relationship between the needs and motivations of the employees proved critical to increasing organizational productivity (Sonnenfeld, 1985).

Upon reviewing the findings of the nine year study, Roethlisberger and Dickson initially described the “Hawthorne Effect” as the phenomenon whereby subjects in behavioural studies changed their performance due to the fact that they were being observed. Later the Hawthorne Effect was further examined by Henry A. Landsberger (1970), who was responsible for
naming it after the Chicago factory. Landsberger based his analyses on older experiments at the Hawthorne Works company (1924-1932). Landsberger defined HE as the short-term improvement caused by observing worker performance. Researchers concluded that the short-term improvement was a result of employees seeing themselves as part of a group. The conclusion here was that people are more productive when appreciated and/or watched.

Client Centred Approach

Another extension of the humanist approach is the client-centred approach. The humanist psychologist Carl Rogers developed client-centred therapy. The essential components of this therapeutic approach to human relations include: congruence (genuineness), empathy, and unconditional positive regard toward the client (Thorne, 1992). With regard to leadership, the assumption is that the leader would possess specific characteristics, traits and behaviours, enabling them to assist employees to find meaning, growth and come to terms with issues in a non-directive authoritarian approach. Rather, the leader in this approach would institute processes to solicit information formally or informally and encourage employees to express their concerns without addressing issues of how the employee
perceives the issue(s) or may seek to change or offer an alternative understanding of the conditions and the issue(s) they are facing. In organizational behavioural approaches, experiential learning included methods where participants were placed in (fictional) dilemmas and were then required to make decisions and to analyse their decisions as well as their experiences in the decision making process (Schell, 1984).

Perception is another key aspect to Rogers’ client-centred therapy. To this end, the leader also discloses feelings and experiences to the employee(s); the employee’s perception of the congruence (genuineness) of the leader’s disclosure is of the utmost importance. If the employee does not perceive the leader to be genuine, the leader risks not being deemed capable since s/he is unable to assist employees in finding meaning or growth, nor in the process coming to terms with issues (Thorne, 1992).

**How do the Humanistic Approaches to Leadership Engage Difference and Social Justice?**

With the growing rejection of classical theoretical approaches to educational administration, the human relations approach took a step toward less positivistic ways of looking at leadership. Within the humanistic relations approach, leadership involved the identification of employee
behaviours and motivations that increased follower performance and/or satisfaction. In particular this included the means of enhancing employee psychological states that resulted in increased motivation or increased needs satisfaction (Jago, 1982 p. 325). Thus the leadership role was reduced to identifying, motivating, and shaping the behaviours of the employee by controlling the consequences associated with each specific action.

There are several critical assumptions that undergird the human relations approach. Firstly, while there is a divide between the leader and workers, leadership is deemed as occurring in all directions with formal or informal processes in place to direct information upwards and/or downwards in the institutional hierarchy. Secondly, the organization is seen as an organism wherein the leader is focussed on the feelings and needs of the followers with the purpose of attending to these in order to increase effectiveness and productivity. In this way leaders are acknowledged as significant to the operation of the organism. Thirdly, the organization is deemed as having a culture with group norms as constituted by the interactions of the employees. Another characteristic of the human relations perspective is that work is seen as a group oriented process with unanticipated consequences. That is, the leader does not anticipate or
dictate the culture, practices and/or participatory involvement of its employees. And finally, in the human relations approach to leadership, employees are seen as motivated by social and psychological rewards. There seems to be an undertone of Marxism; however, this approach does not go far enough to examine or critique the power relations existent in structures.

While this approach is certainly represents progress toward equity in comparison with the classical theory approaches, it has its limitations as well. Amongst the limitations is the disregard for the role played by the hierarchical ordering of power relations and their influence on an employee’s relationship to work. The human relations approach does not take into consideration the gross power imbalances between those in leadership positions and the workers employed. Further, this approach does not take into account the socio-political contexts as critical factors in the leadership processes wherein work culture comes alive within the organization as a living organism influenced by employees in multiple positions. It fails to examine the marginalizing aspects of workers’ identities and how these have critical implications for their capacity to engage in the workplace and contribute to the culture and operation of the workplace as an organism. In such an environment (especially) those from traditionally
marginalized populations lack the capacity to impact the culture of an organization at its roots, leading to the privileging of some voices over others. Also, the human relations approach is focused on the culture, traditions and norms of an organization. Owing to this, when there is a voice or body of dissent it is not actively engaged, since doing this would mean legitimizing counter-cultures, norms and traditions.

The human relations approach with its emphasis on management’s role in identifying and meeting employees’ needs can be likened to the cliché of “perception is reality”. This notion of perception as reality is problematic because it does not take into account the lenses from which we operate or how these lenses are constructed; nor does it take into account how people’s lenses are informed differently. For example, the privileged eurocentric lens in Canada is a powerful lens that is closely tied to societal rewards. If one operates from a counter-lens – that is, one motivated by a moral imperative counter to a eurocentric lens – they are not equally rewarded. This in turn means that the differences in one’s perception of reality has consequent rewards depending on the power differentials of one’s lens. This makes interpretations and the purposes of leadership a hotly contested arena laden with privilege, power, and politics – an arena quickly complicated by equity dimensions.
Behavioural Science Approach

The behavioural science approach to leadership is centred on a symbiotic relationship between leader and follower. In this approach, the leader possesses certain characteristics that qualify him or her as an effective leader. These characteristics include traits and behaviours such as alertness, originality, personal integrity and self confidence. Argyris recognized that organizational effectiveness is influenced by the nature of the relations among groups in the workplace (Argyris, 1962). Acknowledging these relations, Argyris focused on the importance of integrating the individual into the organization. His work was considered significant because it challenged the belief that decentralization of power would automatically result in organizational effectiveness. He suggested that leaders and the members of an organization should be primarily judged on their capacity to influence others. That is to say, a person with the ability to influence others would be deemed more effective, and thus a better leader, than those who did not have the ‘ability’ to influence others. Thus if an individual has been identified as having these pre-defined and pre-articulated traits, characteristics and behaviours, that individual is noted as an influential and effective leader. The remnants of the individual as an effective leader based on particular traits, characteristics and behaviours...
still echoes in popular leadership approaches today; “Perception is reality” – thus if the leader is perceived as influential then they are also deemed efficient (Lezotte and Jacoby, 1990).

The behavioural science approach also identifies effective leadership as the ability to meet the needs of employees. From this perspective “…effective leadership is thought to involve behaviors that increase follower performance and/or satisfaction by means of enhancing those psychological states that result in increased motivation or need satisfaction” (Herzberg, 1966; Jago, 1982; Maslow, 1954; Vroom, 1964; Vroom and Yetton 1973). Thus the leader’s role is to motivate and shape the behaviour of the followers by controlling the consequences of each specific follower action.

This approach should be credited for its beginnings in identifying context as a factor to consider in thinking about leadership. The acknowledgement that organizations are not closed, rational systems was made evident in Fiedler’s (1967) “Contingency Model of Effectiveness”. Although this model is limited, it was one of the first models to recognize environmental factors and allow for the consideration of specific situations and their impact on leadership; this effect had not been considered by predecessors. In this model Fiedler attempted to demonstrate how effective leadership is
contingent upon the favourableness of the group-task situation. The favourableness of the situation was determined by: 1) the affective relationship between leaders and followers, 2) the power inherent in the leadership position, and 3) the degree to which the situation was structured. Fiedler’s model demonstrated how situational factors intervened, making certain personality traits, characteristics, and behaviours more effective under different situations. While the work of Fiedler focused on favourable conditions to create productive group task oriented situations, Vroom and Yetton (1973) concentrated on the behaviours of formally designated leaders and the decisions that the leader encountered. The model of leadership proposed by Vroom and Yetton suggested the conditions under which directive versus participatory leadership is most effective. Decisions as to who should participate in the decision making processes and when are at the discretion of the leader, which begs us to ask the rhetorical question – can participatory leadership really be participatory if it is at the discretion of those in charge?

Another notable development in administrative thought and leadership theory in the behavioural science approach is that of transactional and transformational approaches to leadership. According to Burns (1978), leadership must be aligned with a collective purpose and
effective leaders must be judged by their ability to make social changes. He suggests that the roles of the leader and follower be united conceptually, and that the process of leadership be concerned with the interplay of conflict and power. Burns was the first theoretician to define and concretely conceptualize the terms ‘transactional leadership’ and ‘transformational leadership’. In his model, transactional leaders are considered as approaching workers with the intent of exchanging one thing for another. This is in contrast to the “transformational” leader who seeks out the needs (and thus the motives) of their followers and then, by responding to the motives of the follower, engages the “full” person (Burns, 1978). It is assumed that this leadership would lead to a mutual relationship that converts followers to leaders and leaders into ‘moral agents’ so that these moral agents demonstrate their moral responsibility by satisfying the needs of their followers (Burns, 1978; Stewart, 2006).

While I agree with Burns’ argument that we have relied on a “faulty and overemphasized role of power”, his conception of power is too narrow. Burns urges us not to see power and leadership as isolated events, but rather as relationships. He defines leadership as “leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations – of both leaders
Transformational leadership states that workers who engage with each other increase their levels of motivation and morality, so that the employee base mutually supports a common purpose (this purpose often being increased productivity and profits). In this way, transformational leadership seeks to “raise the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (Burns, 1978, p.20; Stewart, 2006).

In his book, Transformational Leadership (1998), Bass examines the research findings primarily from his studies on military organizations (U.S. Army officers), and secondarily on business and educational organizations. Burns’ conception of transformational leadership was furthered by Bass’ research findings that transformational leadership was highly effective. Not only did military organizations successfully operate from transactional and transformational relationship exchanges, but Bass also found that the behaviour of the leader impacted the organizational commitment level from its followers. Using a questionnaire administered to U.S. Army officers rating their superiors’ behaviours, Bass developed the following four elements to transformational leadership:
1. **Charismatic Leadership, or Idealized Influence.** Transformational leaders are role models; they are respected and admired by their followers. Followers identify with leaders and want to emulate them. Leaders have a clear vision and sense of purpose and they are willing to take risks.

2. **Inspirational Motivation.** Transformational leaders behave in ways that motivate others, generate enthusiasm and challenge people. These leaders clearly communicate expectations and they demonstrate a commitment to goals and a shared vision.

3. **Intellectual Stimulation.** Transformational leaders actively solicit new ideas and new ways of doing things. They stimulate others to be creative and they never publicly correct or criticize others.

4. **Individualized Consideration.** Transformational leaders pay attention to the needs and the potential for developing others. These leaders establish a supportive climate where individual differences are respected. Interactions with followers are encouraged and the leaders are aware of individual concerns (Bass, 1998).

More recently (within the last two decades), there has been evident movement toward and reliance on transformational accountability.
discourses. Such discourses have been resurrected and institutionalized within the educational landscape in particular. Educational accountability has become the predictor of, and the measuring stick by which to evaluate, student performance. Sadly, in the current era this translates into a narrow and skewed definition of student success, so that a student’s educational mobility and attainment are rewarded based only on their ability to “successfully” perform on standardized tests. Such tests have been hotly debated and rejected by critical scholars and educators alike as unethical or inaccurate ways of measuring learning or student success. The implementation of accountability in the form of high stakes testing is easily visible within large-scale reform by Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach (2002). These accountability-focused reforms and measures have placed insurmountable pressures upon the school principals to improve student achievement, in turn cheapened and translated into increasing student test scores. In his article, Leading Educational Change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership (2003), Hallinger states that by the 1990s researchers mirrored the changing landscape and focused their attention onto leadership models that reflected and could implement accountability measures. As a result, transformational leadership gained popularity. (Avolio 1999; Bass 1997, 1998; Bass &

Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1994) define transformational leadership: “…we consider the central purpose of transformational leadership to be the enhancement of the individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement (p. 7). Leithwood and others (2002) identify seven dimensions of transformational leadership: “building school vision and establishing school goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; modelling best practices and important organizational values; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a productive school culture; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions” (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood et al., cited in Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000 p. 114). Leithwood states that past conceptions of transformational leadership neglected transactional elements critical to the stability of the institution including: staffing, instructional support, monitoring school activities, and community focus. Leithwood conceptualizes transformational leadership as a shared responsibility focused on providing individual support, intellectual stimulation, and personal vision. In this approach, the leader is focused on helping staff
develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture, fostering teacher development, and helping teachers solve problems together more effectively.

**How does the Behavioural Science Approach engage difference and social justice?**

Similar to the classical organizational and human relations approaches, the behavioural science approach to leadership is efficiency and productivity driven. This model concentrates on the relationship between the leader and follower and is severely limited in its engagement of difference and social justice. In the behavioural science approach, the focus is on meeting the needs of employees with the understanding that in having their needs met, they would increase their productivity. Another key element is the shift from a focus on individual to group productivity. As noted above, the literature details human behaviour as a science. As a result, research ranges from creating favourable work conditions for group task oriented work to the analysis of existing workplace conditions by the leader and then the choice of a leadership approach to best match workplace conditions. These approaches to leadership are similar to classical organizational and human relation approaches, where the primary purpose is to increase organizational productivity and efficiency. Thus the
critiques are the same too, with the exception of behavioural science’s acknowledgement of context. Yet, this context is focused on a contrived set of relations that are important only in relation to profits and to an artificial sense of worker well-being. This approach is top down and does not begin to engage any of the workers’ differences in any significant way.

Furthermore, while the work on transformational leadership has garnered a fair bit of attention, this model is limited in its capacity to engage differences and social justice. This model uses the language of “understanding the interplay between power and conflict” but does not thoroughly examine what is meant by this. Specifically, transformational leadership does not examine any dimensions of equity in a substantive manner. This approach, like the previous approaches discussed, keeps hierarchy rigidly intact and supposes that the leader is endowed with some heightened ability to guide their followers without the employees’ direct input as to direction, programming or practice. Instead, this approach to leadership requires and assumes that the leader understands and knows the strategies to meet the needs of employees. Yet, this model does not articulate what specifically these needs are; nor does it articulate that needs can vary considerably from employee to employee, or how varying dimensions of equity – in relation to power and privilege – will be acutely
different from one employee or groups of employees to another. In addition, the assumption that the leader will have the sole capacity and ability to examine a population, and identify and meet its needs to the extent that employees become motivated and loyal to the organization is simply absurd. This approach does not take into account the lived realities of the leader or their “followers”. It is still very much focused on the individual leaders and their abilities to motivate others, generate enthusiasm and challenge employees to be engaged. But how does this assist those traditionally disenfranchised? This approach does not critically examine power differentials, or the multiple interlocking dimensions of equity and their impact on all those in the school – from administration, teachers, support staff, and most importantly, students.

The transformational model's approach to leadership is problematic as it fails to take into account the situated contexts of the leaders, workers and students. While difference can lead to innovative practices and an enriched learning experience for all, it is not without its tensions. These tensions are alive and well in our organizations, and they result in and manifest as systemic and systematic oppressions such as sexism, racism, ableism, spiritualism, eurocentrism and so forth. Where there is difference there will, inevitably, be tension. But we are not to avoid or skirt around
these tensions… rather it is these tensions that we must seek, embrace and procreate from.

And what are we asking to procreate? In the transformational model there are no articulated visions of social justice. This model espouses leadership for “social change” but does not go into what type of social change, what vehicles to be used, or how change will be gauged, monitored and sustained. Most abhorrently, this leadership model’s sole focus is on the leader and the followers, with only a cursory mention of students and no examination at all of the students’ situated contexts and lived realities. Thus it is severely limited and irrelevant to leadership for social justice.

**Post Behavioural Science Era**

In this section I review several critical perspectives on leadership. While Lunenburg (2003) outlines an extensive list of contributors and concepts from the post behavioural science era, his listing is exhaustive and not all contributors and concepts have a direct link to this research study. Instead, I have intentionally focused this section on several *critical perspectives on leadership*. This particular focus directly connects to the research question this study explores, *how do equity minded administrators
lead for social justice? In this section I spotlight several critical perspectives of leadership, namely: critical practice of leadership (Foster, 1986); an overview of critical perspectives of leadership (Dantley, 1990) & leadership and a critical pedagogy of race (Mclaren and Dantley, 1990); emancipatory leadership (Corson, 2000); inclusive leadership (Ryan, 2006); social justice and leadership of place (Furman and Gruenwald, 2004); social justice and a transformative framework and andragogy (Brown, 2004); social justice and the preparation of leaders (Capper, Theoharis and Sebastian, 2006); and Michael Dantley’s notions of African American spirituality in educational leadership (Dantley, 2005a; Dantley, 2005b). Along with reviewing their critical approaches to leadership, I also critique and examine their limitations.

Critical Practice of Leadership

It is important to delineate what is meant by the term critical in the examination of educational leadership theories. A critical approach to leadership is usually defined by a democratic vision of sorts; often theorists and researchers alike will make grand declarations of their visions of a democratic society, but rarely do they let you in on what they actually envision, nor do they identify the intermediating steps or actions required to
bring about this democratic society. The contemporary approaches toward critical leadership are often rehashed versions of earlier attempts to distinguish democratic approaches to leadership from traditional neo-liberal ones. For example, in John Smyth’s edited collection *Critical Perspectives on Educational Leadership* (1989), William Foster (1986) states:

This is why leadership has become both so rare and so crucial in different world communities. Indeed, where people gather to conduct commerce, to educate each other, to watch each other’s performances, to evaluate each other’s artistic abilities, to gather friendship or debate, there is a need for a leadership conscious of civic responsibility. We live in an age of instrumentalities, where people themselves become instruments for the achievement of organizational goals; where people are driven by the need to achieve, with achievement defined by economics; and where the individual, rootless and guide-less, strives for a sense of identity and meaning. If we are to climb out of this valley of depression, then we certainly do need leaders, but leaders who are not managers, leaders who can see beyond the immediate needs of the organization, and leaders who can provide ‘genuine narrative’ for our lives. (Foster, quoted in Smyth, 1989, p.59)
It is evident that Foster was a visionary in his time, especially with regard to making cursory connections between leadership and world communities. He maintains that there are two major issues in achieving democracy, namely size and values. Foster sees the growing size of institutions resulting in an impossible task of administrators having a major influence over school processes that may be desired; this is further exacerbated by the move towards compartmentalizing schooling. In his second identified issue of values Foster states:

…a democratic regime depends on the inculcation of various values which are ethical in degree and which depend often on religious belief. Public schools, however, cannot be overly dependent on the presence of private values in their students; they must to some degree be neutral in their acceptance of various values, treating each as equally worthy (Smyth, p.60-61, bold added).

Here Foster centres his approach to values on Strike’s liberal conception (as articulated in Smyth, 1989) of private and public values and, although he argues he does not claim that values are in themselves neutral, he nonetheless stresses that public schools must to some degree be neutral in front of various values so that these values are weighted equally. Foster goes on to offer solutions to this dilemma of public schools having to “to
some degree be neutral in their acceptance of various values, treating each as equally worthy”:

...leadership is concerned with the transformation of values, and here school leaders can address basic social end values such as democracy, justice and liberty. These are, indeed, public values in the sense that a society will depend on their formulation for its success as a caring society (Smyth, p.61).

The values of democracy, justice and liberty are undeniable; unfortunately, Foster’s discussion remains mostly at an abstract level. His cursory and careful discussion of values precludes the examination of the complexity of identities, marginalization and student success. His discussion of values leaves no room for the complexity of identities, marginalization and difference. While all people must be treated equally, one needs to emphasize that people’s identities and lived realities are contingent on their social-political and historical locatedness and context. Their location and context includes their individual, communal, familial and spiritual identities as they are interdependent and connected to their race, gender, ability and sexuality. Foster’s analysis of values does not consider what Dantley (1990) refers to as the “messy perspective” on leadership… (p.587) which is further discussed below.
Dantley was progressive in his “messy” conceptualization of a critical approach to leadership, which includes the notion that schools are vehicles for social and political reconstruction (Dantley, 1990). He outlines a “mindset” based on belief and subscription to the following notions that form the foundation of his critical leadership of schools:

- Schools are arenas for critical thought and reflection
- Schools are characterized by a persistent dialogue between the teacher and student as they synergistically explore, form and shape knowledge
- The critical pedagogy of schools causes students to become critically reflexive citizens
- Schools are the bastions of democratic policies and practices
- Schools serve as the preparatory arenas for the makers of political and social change
- Pedagogy centred around a project rather than a vacuous learning and stock piling of skills characterizes life in schools

While Dantley is progressive in his ideas of the critical workings of difference in school and schooling as vehicles for social and political reconstruction, he does not substantially address the responsibility that leaders have to students, and especially to marginalized students.
In his later work on “Leadership and a Critical Pedagogy of Race: Cornel West, Stuart Hall, and Prophetic Tradition” (1990), McLaren and Dantley conduct a thorough and respectable examination of race. In particular, their discussion on the dismantling of White Supremacist Logic is insightful as it traces white supremacy through the ages. It moves from Judeo-Christian racist logic, through to Cartesian notions of the primacy of the subject, to Eurocentric aesthetic and cultural norms (McLaren and Dantley, 1990 p.33-35). McLaren and Dantley argue for “the acceptance of a critical pedagogy of race as a form of discursive production whose purpose is to drive emancipating knowledge into the realm of the possible and to replace despair with “radical hope” ” (McLaren and Dantley, 1990 p.41). In working toward the goal of “radical hope”, we must understand the rootedness and the embeddedness of what we are going against – to this end McLaren and Dantley are thorough in their analysis of racism and white supremacy. Their tracing of white supremacy as contextualized in the production of racist subjects and the need to “decenter the canon” is critical to understanding how race is operationalized. If we do not know the historical and socio-political nature of these issues, then how will we understand our locatedness and responsibility for them and other aberrations of democracy? Yet this “messy “approach to critical
perspectives on leadership is not without its own failings; as with Foster’s approach, McLaren and Dantley do not take a critical approach to multiple issues of equity. While thorough in their analysis and dramatic at times in their writing, McLaren and Dantley begin to discuss issues of race in a binary form that is particular only to the Black and White racialization of subjects in the United States. In this article McLaren and Dantley⁹ offer only a cursory discussion of marginalization beyond issues of race.

Emancipatory Leadership

Making some connections to the notion of “emancipatory knowledge and radical hope” is David Corson’s work on emancipatory leadership (Corson, 2000). Corson claims that his discourse analysis goes beyond other forms of analysis because of its direct focus on “macro and micro power factors that operate in a given discursive contexts” (p.99). Corson goes on to outline the distinctiveness of his critical discourse analysis as it involves the following:

- An interest in uncovering inequality, power relationships, injustices, discrimination, bias etc.

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⁹ Since 1990 Dantley has conducted ground breaking work in the area of leadership and spirituality (Dantley, 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; 2005d; Dantley, 2003a; 2003b). While insightful and prophetic in vision, Dantley’s work has not been included in this leadership review as it goes beyond the focus of this research study.
• An investigation of language behaviour in natural language situations of social and cultural relevance (public institutions, media, political discourse etc.)

• Interdisciplinary research addressing things too complex to deal with inside the boundaries of a single field of study

• Inclusion of an historical perspective on the research study

• Researchers who take sides in order to improve the lives of people in some way, and

• Research that changes social practices and emancipates people.

Corson goes on to “typify” the style of emancipatory leadership as emancipatory leaders:

• Know when they are out of their depth in complex sociocultural areas

• Can tell when they need to extend the circle of decision makers to include others

• Try to make their own presence matter of small importance in the context of debate and decision making

• Remove the effects of their own power from the process of
decision making

- Agree to leave the implementation of a decision in the hands of those chosen for that task by the group

While the above mentioned “discourse analysis” and “features of emancipatory leaders” are foundational to democratic processes in administration and leadership, they do not identify the definition of nor the necessary processes for emancipation. Corson fails to discuss just what exactly we are emancipating ourselves, schools, students and communities from. Corson does not identify any issues as they relate to equity or the isms, rather he identifies such issues as “concerns for diversity”. He does not describe or take issue with what is meant by “concerns for equity”. His approach to emancipatory leadership is cursory at best.

Inclusive Leadership

In the field of education there has recently been a heightened interest in ‘inclusive’ leadership. To date, inclusive leadership has been conceptualized primarily in terms of ability (Capper 1993), race and ethnicity (Dantley, 1990; Ryan, 2006). In this regard, Ryan’s research on Leading Diverse Schools (2003) is a hallmark Canadian study of educational administrators in Ontario. In this study Ryan focuses on how
ethnicity and the promotion of school-community relationships serve as critical foundations to the empirical examination of inclusion and inclusive leadership. In his later work, Ryan outlines his conception of inclusive leadership (Ryan, 2006). It includes the recognition of how multiple oppressions obstruct and prevent the inclusion of those from marginalized groups with particular emphasis on poverty, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. Ryan defines leadership as “... a collective process of social influence that is aimed at a particular end” (Ryan 2006, p.16-17). He goes on to describe three key elements of his definition of leadership (Ryan 2006, p. 17-18):

- First: Leadership implies influence by which “people exert influence and are influenced in turn…ideally, inclusive leadership provides everyone with a fair chance to influence decisions, practices and policies. Advocates of inclusive leadership also trust that their deliberations will influence what happens in the school community and beyond.”

- Second: Inclusive Leadership is “an array of practices, procedures, understandings, and values that persist over time. Inclusive leadership does not associate leadership with dominant or central individuals who are expected to do great things by virtue of their
personalities, their skills or the positions they hold...inclusive leadership relies on many different individuals who contribute in their own often humble ways to a clearly established process...this means that the process will be able to stand the departure of any individual or group of individuals.”

- Third: “Inclusive leadership is organized to achieve particular ends...a very definitive end: inclusion. Inclusive leadership aims to achieve inclusion in all aspects of schooling and beyond the school to the local and global community, and it does so through a process that is itself inclusive.

These three key elements of inclusive leadership begin to highlight the critical importance of multiple and diverse representation, collaborative decision making and community involvement. This approach also challenges classical and behavioural approaches to leadership.

Ryan’s contribution of inclusive leadership has been a notable gain in educational administration literature. A key moment in his conception of community is his reference to community involvement. This assumes that community, especially those from the margins, are organized, when in fact those from the margins may not be organized or able to articulate their needs and expectations from the educational system. In addition, school
personnel (teachers, administrators and staff), along with their histories and socio-political identities, are not substantially considered as potentially constituted as high-stakes political players within the processes related to inclusive leadership. In particular, there remains to be more substantiated analysis made of the often contested identities of traditionally disenfranchised populations now in administrative positions. There also remains to be more substantive discussion of the institutional oppression that leaders experience and must deal with in order to be “effective”. While Ryan’s focus on relationships and relationship building points to a critical component of leadership, it does not meaningfully question or examine the complicated power relations as related to contested identities in positions of leadership, nor how such relations represent challenges and/or opportunities for further critical relationship building.

The inclusive leadership approach lacks a substantive and in-depth analysis of power relations, its mechanisms, challenges, implications and strategies for those from the margins as they negotiate boundaries of power and privilege. In particular, a further critical analysis of the Canadian educational climate and marginalization must ask how marginalization serves the dominant culture, and how internalized domination and oppression operate in educational contexts. A thorough examination of the
gapping systemic and systematic power differentials would assist in contextualizing inclusive leadership within the Canadian context. While a significant contribution to administrative thought, inclusive leadership is still in its infancy stages and requires further conceptualization and application through empirical research. Such research is needed in order to further articulate and demonstrate the processes required for (with particular emphasis on the implications for those from the margins) Ryan’s’ definitive end of inclusion.

Social Justice and Leadership

The recent movement in administrative thought to critically engage social justice in leadership conceptions and frameworks is long overdue. While social justice is not a new idea or imperative, it is a contested terrain (Larson and Murtadha, 2007; North, 2006). I had first approached the literature with caution and suspicion. For me, the term social justice has long been associated with and embodied by those engaged in revolutionary struggles. The very term invokes visions of civil rights, protests and the remembrance of battles hard won and the grave loss of loved ones committed to such ideals. It was difficult for me at first to reconcile such germane and grassroots definitions of social justice with and within
mainstream institutions like schools. However, I quickly realized that such a movement could potentially be the impetus for ameliorating the dehumanizing conditions that the marginalized endure within education and society in general. As such, critical scholars, educators, leaders, students and their communities have embraced and/or situated social justice as a necessary imperative in and of an educational experience. While embracing social justice demonstrates a concerted effort to commit to social change and action, what is more challenging is defining and articulating what social justice is and how it accounts for difference; intersecting and compounding dimensions of marginalization; as well as multiple and even competing realities (including cultural and spiritual dimensions).

The literature on social justice leadership offers various examples of social justice definitions (Bogotch, 2002; Furman and Gruenwald, 2004; Gerwitz, 1998; Goldfarb and Grinberg, 2002; Theoharis, 2007). These examples vary widely, but most focus on issues broadly related to marginalization. Gewirtz’s examination of social justice focuses on disrupting and navigating systems and processes that marginalize and exclude others; implicit in leadership for social justice is an ethic of critical care that requires leaders to be aware of and responsive to oppressive
conditions. As quoted in Theoharis (2007), Goldfarb and Grinberg define social justice as the “exercise of altering these [institutional and organizational] arrangements by actively engaging in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining, and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, and personal dimensions” (Theoharis 2007, p.223). Bogotch, on the other hand, asserts that social justice is a social construction and that “there are no fixed or predictable meanings of social justice prior to actually engaging in educational leadership practices” (Theoharis 2007, p. 152). These and other various definitions of social justice demonstrate the gapping differences in conceptualizations and practices of leadership for social justice.

Keeping these challenges at the forefront, the literature review below engages this study’s research question: how do equity minded administrators lead for social justice? The review is divided into the following sections: Social justice and leadership of place; Social justice and transformative framework and androgyny; Social justice and preparation of leaders; and Anchoring Spirituality: Examining Michael Dantley’s notions of African American spirituality in educational leadership. Lastly, I would like to assert that I do not believe that there is a substantive
difference between the terms “equity” and “social justice”. For me, equity and social justice are part and parcel. At the end of this literature review I detail my perspectives on leadership and social justice in Personal Reflections and Positioning: Defining Leadership for Social Justice.

**Social Justice and Leadership of Place**

Furman and Gruenewald (2009) articulate a framework of social justice leadership centred on “leadership of place”. Their approach is comprehensive and the most integrative of approaches to leading for social justice. They integrate social justice and ecology with the intention of “…invit[ing] a deepening of understanding of this concept [social justice] to include its embeddedness in a larger ecological framework…social justice cannot be achieved without an expanded, ecological viewpoint that takes seriously the cultural and ecological conflicts inherent in preparing youth to enter the global economy.” (Furman and Gruenewald, 2004 p. 54-55).

Furman and Gruenewald’s framework is set within five parameters (Furman and Gruenewald, 2004, p.64-69). These parameters, which are not rigidly constructed and are meant to be permeable, are: (1) integrating the assumptions and practices of “socioecological justice and a critical pedagogy of place”, which values diversity and sees the exploitation of
environment and people as inextricably linked; (2) stressing the necessity of an inclusive and proactive conception of pedagogy, which includes adults, student and local communities; (3) adopting and internalizing by would-be leaders of a commitment to a moral, transformative and communal perspective on leadership in schools; (4) linking of social justice leadership to action, which recognises that critique of western society is a political act, one which if it is to transform pedagogy, requires a commitment to work for fundamental changes in schooling from a transformative stance toward leadership; (5) committing to a communal approach to leadership, constructed from multiple positions within a social structure. The fact that individuals occupy particular roles, and must act from within them, should not deter the search for a collective approach to transforming institutions. The most important recommendation Furman and Gruenewald offer is for leaders to participate in the educative processes of critical place-based pedagogies, to encourage the participation of leaders, teachers, and learners and, through such participation and support, to further develop a socioecological analysis of culture and education. This requires leaders to build alliances both in and outside of schools with other leaders who are ready to act on the moral commitments expressed by socioecological justice.
This framework, while it states that socioecological justice is critical to leadership, does not expand on what this entails and what challenges it may pose. In particular, this model does not articulate the reality that educational leadership is substantively conceived out of a eurocentric process, and that it responds from a eurocentric foundation, embracing norms, traditions and practices that disenfranchise marginalized populations (Price, 2001). This model does not take into consideration who can access the rigid hierarchy of power. Understanding and accessing the hierarchy is vital to the engagement of the marginalized in educational leadership processes, for it is only those who have access to the knowledge of how to navigate the system and the opportunities to do so, who potentially will. But navigation cannot be a means to an end; leadership for social justice entails a real shift in the power relations such that stakeholders, community bodies, and students have determinant power in educational leadership.

Social Justice and a Transformative Framework and Andragogy

pedagogy. The three theoretical perspectives of Adult Learning Theory, Transformative Learning Theory, and Critical Social Theory are interwoven with the three pedagogical strategies of critical reflection, rational discourse and policy praxis with the aim of increasing awareness, acknowledgement and action within preparation programs.

Brown makes little reference to the personhood\textsuperscript{10} and responsibility of educational leaders in her conceptualization of leadership for social justice. Brown’s conception of personhood is limited and only addresses the personhood of the administrator as key in the preparation of leaders, urging them to keep “open minds and explore their self-understandings that are systematically embedded in mindsets, world views, values and experiences…preparation programs foster such critical 'capacity building' through critical reflection, rational discourse and policy praxis.” (Brown, 2004 p. 87-88).

Brown’s approach, while practical and process oriented, it is not complete. Firstly, Brown does not offer a definition of social justice. She states that she is working from a critical perspective using critical and transformative theories, however her attachments to these theories do not qualify as a definition of social justice. Secondly, Brown’s framework

\textsuperscript{10} I use personhood to connect identity, background, and lived experiences.
focuses on students’ learning of social justice without examining other critical players such as educators, administrators and staff. While students’ learning is critical, her framework is primarily centred on orienting the student to social justice without an examination of the implications of the student’s personhood in maintaining, navigating or disrupting the status quo. Furthermore, this framework does not embed any (pre)requisite for leaders and educators to be oriented to social justice, nor does this framework examine the implications for their personhood.

Social Justice and the Preparation of Leaders

In their article “Toward a framework for preparing leaders for social justice” (2009), Capper, Theoharis and Sebastian develop a framework for conceptualizing the development of leaders for social justice. The authors’ approach is guided by three central questions: “What are the common themes in the literature and research on preparing leaders for social justice?”; “How can a framework for preparing future leaders serve as a guide for developing a course, set of courses, or an entire program toward preparing leaders to lead socially just schools?” and; “How can educational administration literature inform future scholarship in administrator preparation?” (p.210). The authors conducted an extensive review of
literature related to leadership for social justice, and identified three central components: critical consciousness, knowledge, and practical skills focused on social justice, along with three mechanisms to achieve these ends: curriculum, pedagogy and assessment oriented toward social justice. The authors suggest using this framework to guide the review and development of administration preparation programs aimed at emerging social justice-oriented leaders.

While Capper, Theoharis and Sebastian (2006) claim to offer leaders a comprehensive framework for social justice leadership, their emphasis quickly turns to the orientation of students to social justice, without a critical examination of who the leaders are or the implications of their personhoods in leading for social justice. The authors focus on developing opportunities and practices for social justice using the vehicles of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Let there be no mistake, students’ learning of social justice is critical, but focusing on the students’ need for orientation toward social justice, without a thorough examination of the leaders’ or teachers’ dispositions and knowledge base(s) of social justice, is misguided. The authors rightfully emphasize the need for preparing leaders “…to embody a social justice consciousness with their belief systems or values”. But the assumption that leaders are – or could ever be – completely oriented to
social justice is an overly optimistic assumption that needs to be further examined.

**Anchoring Spirituality: Examining Michael Dantley’s Notions of African American Spirituality in Educational Leadership**

In *African American Spirituality and Cornel West’s Notions of Prophetic Pragmatism: Restructuring Educational Leadership in American Urban Schools* (2005), Michael Dantley proposes a theoretical base for reforming educational leadership with respect to the changing demographics in public schools in the United States of America. Using critical theory and antifoundational tenets of pragmatic thinking and post-modern thought, Dantley interrogates and opposes the traditional canon of educational administration and leadership and its dissonance with the African American lived reality. Alternatively to the traditional approaches to educational administration and leadership, Dantley applies Cornel West’s notions of ‘prophetic pragmatism’ along with tenets of African American spirituality to serve as the foundation for a progressive, spirit centred and engaged approach to restructuring educational leadership.

Dantley’s approach to restructuring educational leadership is rooted in three primary propositions. First, the increasing demographic changes in
schools require new leadership approaches. Second, since many of the educational demands are shaped by ongoing social and cultural issues around addressing needs of African American students, perhaps the answer to educational leadership reforms are rooted in African American culture. And lastly, the application of African American spirituality to community issues of social change and social justice may provide a much needed direction for educational leadership (Dantley, 2005 p. 651). Further in this article, Dantley poignantly proposes that schools in urban centres that are predominantly African American could prosper with leadership grounded in African Spirituality and Cornel West’s notions of prophetic pragmatism.

Dantley articulates African American spirituality as a functional phenomenon in schools. In particular, he asserts that spirituality in the Black community “…has been the effectual foundation on which many African Americans had built projects of resistance. Projects of resistance include reconstructing the dehumanizing forms and oppressive rituals committed by those who wield economic and political power” (Dantley, 2005 p. 654). According to Dantley there are two major components to a spiritual African American experience namely, critical reflection and performative creativity (Dantley, 2005). Dantley asserts that spirituality has
provided African Americans:

…inner strength to critically reflect upon the rituals and forms of life in the United States that are often grounded in racism, classism, and sexism. African American spirituality is an amalgam of creativity, reflection, resistance and reconstruction that has guarded people of color against the potential bondage of embracing feelings of self-degradation, hopelessness, and bitterness… critically creative in that it allows for Black citizens in the United States to envision life as it might be (Dantley, 2005 p. 655).

In accordance with Dantley’s definition, critical reflection includes the necessity to examine the historicized and politicized realities of African Americans and thus the rootedness of their oppression and marginalization as well as their capacity to progress and triumph against overwhelming odds.

The second major dimension to Dantley’s scheme is that of performative creativity “in that spirituality prods many African Americans to not only dream but to also strategize.” According to Dantley, “… dreaming and visioning is a spiritual matter that demands courage and great faith. To
dream is courageous enough, but to blend dreaming with an agenda of expected change moves into the realm of a kind of active or militant faith” (Dantley, 2005 p. 655). Dantley’s emphasis on African Americans’ spiritual ability to strategize against oppression and marginalization and toward social justice is insightful. Here Dantley articulates the vital importance of those from the margins dreaming and envisioning a reality that has yet to be fully manifested. Dantley reminds us of the power of dreaming and visioning along with their capacity to – if only partially – unbind us from the constraints and forces of oppression with the expectation that our dreams and visions will be realized. This detailed and graphic approach to situating leadership in both social justice and spiritual realms is ground breaking and even revolutionary in educational administration and leadership.

Dantley adamantly makes a case for merging African American Spirituality with Cornel West’s prophetic pragmatism. Advancing prophetic pragmatism in school leadership, Dantley articulates prophetic pragmatism as …a form of thinking and seeing the world centred on democratic practices…an intellectual process built on the premise of existential democracy and [it] requires one to be self-critical and self-corrective (Dantley, 2005 p. 662). Dantley acknowledges both Dewey’s perspectives and Christianity as heavily influencing Cornel West’s work, and
acknowledges that West’s assertion that the “…basic contribution of prophetic Christianity… is that individuals, regardless of race, class and gender, must have opportunities to fulfil their potentialities” (Dantley, 2005 p. 662) as critical to informing prophetic pragmatism. In this way, the individual is able to simultaneously establish their own identity as well as influence the community’s identity.

In marrying African American spirituality and Cornel West’s prophetic pragmatism, Dantley champions a radical reconstruction of school leadership. This reconstruction enables educational leaders who ascribe to prophetic pragmatism and who engage in West’s notions of cultural politics of difference to perceive themselves as radical intellectuals so that:

…he or she understands that the role of the intellectual practitioner is to make relevant his or her intellectual pursuits. This means that intellectual activity is not divorced from political action. In fact, academic achievement becomes a subversive tool for the radical reconstruction of students’ and the broader community’s lives. In this way…schools have a more comprehensive meaning than merely the acquisition of inane facts and figures, disjointed theorems, and postulates that have no application to the people’s struggle for democracy and social justice (Dantley, 2005 p. 667).
As radical intellectuals, school leaders would be responsible for explicitly linking their leadership approaches and agendas to the lived realities of students, their communities and other critical dimensions of the school context.

Dantley continues to think African American spirituality together with Cornel West’s identification of three leadership types. These types are “race-effacing managerial leaders,” “race identifying protest leaders,” or “race transcending prophetic leaders.” Dantley goes on to assert the need for an amalgam of race-identifying and race transcending leadership behaviours so that “[b]oth… of these emanate from a spiritual epicenter, that provides the impetus for critical reflection, strategies of resistance, and, ultimately, projects of reconstruction” (Dantley, 2005 p.668). Dantley clearly states that this approach to leadership does not come at the cost of reducing student achievement, but that it in fact requires educational leaders to “realize that academic exercises must have a utilitarian dimension”. Dantley is most precise and eloquent when he states that the goal “…is not solely to craft schools that will infuse greater numbers of urban residents into the existing economic and social status quo. The goal is to see an inclusion of those who have been relegated as ‘the other’ into mainstream society while adopting a commitment to see the
dismemberment of the structures and rites of exclusion that are currently prevalent in most U.S. schools” (Dantley, 2005 p. 670). Here Dantley turns our attention to the much needed ‘dismemberment’ of processes and practices that exclude others.

Dantley’s convergence of African American spirituality with notions of Cornel West’s prophetic pragmatism is perceptive. Here leaders are required to critically reflect on the situated context in which they lead. More specifically, it demands that leaders critically reflect on the historical rootedness, contemporary operation of and the socio-political nature of oppression and marginalization in the United States. Further, leaders are required to use this understanding of their contexts to inform their leadership approaches and agendas, ensuring that the ideals of liberation and democracy are manifested and accounted for, especially with regard to students and their communities. This approach, with its emphasis on spirituality and a radical restructuring of school leadership, challenges the traditional canons of educational administration and leadership in multiple ways. In particular, it humanizes the profession by explicitly making spirituality a critical component in leadership. In this way, spirituality is given its much overdue critical consideration as a primary resource of strength and as a tool to resist oppression; these possibilities have long
been ignored in educational leadership literature.

While finding myself engaged by Dantley’s application of African American spirituality to West’s prophetic pragmatism, I was also perplexed by its dynamics. For instance, while knowing that peoples have been marginalized to varying degrees, I wondered how multiple and even competing spiritualities would be, and could be, integrated in Dantley’s theoretical approach to educational leadership. In educational leadership, it is critical that equitable and equal emphasis be made for spiritual agency and determinism for those from varied and even competing spiritual epicentres; this is especially true when the focus is on the leading, serving and protection of all those who make up the public in public schooling.

Within the Greater Toronto Area (Southern Ontario, Canada) context, there are many schools that are over 90% South Asian and in which the spiritual epicentre varies tremendously – from Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Christian and other heritages. Dantley’s approach would thus require an extension which would require educational leaders to engage in reciprocal dialogue and activities with multiple communities, especially with regard to the care needed to work with communities when spiritualities and cultures collide. A further examination of the power matrices inherent in the ordering of spirituality would also be necessary. Christianity, including its
denominations, continues to be a hegemonic privilege enjoyed by the mainstream, instilled and reflected in most pillars of society. There is thus also a privileged centring of spirit (even to those who are marginalized) afforded to those who ascribe to this faith, as they see themselves repeatedly reflected in the multiple places and spaces within society that affirm Christianity and its norms. Another critical consideration to this approach to leadership is the role of those who do not believe in any spirituality, prime mover or divine or enlightened force: how then should such a leader engage with the myriad spiritualities and absence thereof embraced by their (marginalized) students and communities? Lastly, while Dantley’s approach is groundbreaking in many respects, much more attention needs to be focused on the locatedness of the educators and school leaders. Specifically, how could educational leaders from this proposed theoretical base potentially navigate, disrupt and strategize against discrimination within their contextualized leadership positions, in order to lead from multiple and even competing spiritualities alongside Dantley’s insightful theoretical base of African American spirituality as grafted onto notions of Cornel West’s prophetic pragmatism?

In another article, *Faith-based leadership: ancient rhythms or new management* (2005b), Dantley expands on his definition of spirituality and
its potentialities in educational leadership. Here Dantley challenges scholars and practitioners in educational leadership to examine spirituality as an integrated reality that has significant impact on the personal and professional behaviours of educational leaders. Dantley insists that the traditional and prevalent forms of educational leadership that disembody, fragment and/or render the leader as a-spiritual are problematic. In recognizing this deficit in educational leadership, Dantley proposes a faith-based approach that centres the spiritual core of leaders in educational leadership.

A cornerstone of Dantley’s conception of a faith-based leadership is leaders’ ‘faith to’ and ‘faith in’ conceptions of democracy and social justice. The leader’s belief in the humanity of those serving in the school community may provide the critical directions for school reforms. He then applies Cornel West’s notions of deep-seated moralism and profound pessimism (notions of faith and spirituality) to the development of “principled” and “purposive” leadership. Critical to this discussion is Dantley’s definition of faith, which he articulates as being at the core of spirituality:

Faith simply is the extension of one’s belief in the existence or the nature of something or someone. It is the suspension of our
confidence in linear, empirical, quantifiable data to confirm the actuality of things. A critical faith actively interrogates the essentialisms that are produced through hegemonic rites, constructions and institutions. This faith is crafted from the pragmatic notions of antifoundationalism and fallibility that leave literally everything open to inquiry and deconstructions. Faith is prophetic in that it argues that as what we see is a current reality, surely there is an antithesis, a response or a future reality not yet realized…Faith is a spiritual behavior that affirms existence without physical validation (Dantley, 2005b p.6).

Expressing faith is actually a spiritual activity that causes the one who exercises this ethereal transaction not to be removed or transcended from the real world but rather to become thrust more in it. In fact this liberates one to create what is essential to enhance and often transform the real world…Our faith releases us to envision a better future that leads to our acting and constructing assiduously a new reality that can be replete with changes grounded in justice, equity and morality (Dantley, 2005b p.8).

Dantley defines faith and spirituality as an existential relationship that is also an embodied experience with the capacity and responsibility to be
critical of its contextualized reality. While cognizant of these realities, Dantley also articulates faith and spirituality as manifesting movements that can liberate and create social change.

Dantley aligns faith and leadership through the transformative leadership dynamic. From this perspective, Dantley endows the leader with the capacity to actualize other human beings; the creative and positively constructive operations of faith cause a leader to actualize other human beings from a moral standpoint. Such an ethical actualization demands a moral way of interacting and engaging with those on whom leaders have impact and influence. Here Dantley aligns faith and transformative leadership within the current asymmetrical relations that rely on a hierarchy of power, which have traditionally been responsible for the very marginalization he opposes. In this leadership dynamic, there are two issues that require further deconstruction and analysis. The first issue is the vagueness of Dantley’s use of “constructive operations” and “moral standpoint”. These terms are incredibly steeped in particular belief and value system(s) that manifest themselves differently from one spiritual practice to another. This ambiguity leaves carries grave risks.

The second issue is that Dantley endows the leader with the potential capacity to actualize other human beings. This concept – that one could
cause other human beings to actualize – is steeped in particular understandings of spirituality, beliefs and value system(s) that are not always pregnable, equitable or respectful of those from differing spiritualities with potentially competing beliefs and value systems. For instance, Hinduism and Sikhism do not endow such awesome ability (to actualize others) onto an organizational leader. I am now explicitly referring to the leader as contextualized by Dantley within society and the workplace, and more specifically within educational administration. While both Sikhism and Hinduism are spiritual orders with critical roles, directions and guidance given by and for leaders (in the demonstrative forms of Gurus, teachers and those who embody the learnings), their conceptions of leadership differ greatly from that which Dantley espouses here. Specifically, the spiritual underpinnings of Hinduism and Sikhism are incompatible with the hierarchal ordering of administration which situates the leader with an awesome locus of control and power. Rather, the underpinnings of Hinduism and Sikhism emphasize duties to a higher spiritual order as manifested in the embodied lived realities and toiling of peoples. While Dantley does not disagree with these spiritual underpinnings or the problematic of hierarchal ordering of power relations in educational administration, he does problematically suggest that we
embrace the idea that a leader could potentially cause others to actualize. While I agree that people could possess the capacity to assist others in their paths to actualization, that the idea be given such potential reverence within the current context of the (often) individuated position of the “leader” is highly problematic. The root of this problem within the existing hierarchal power relations in educational administration is the locus of ultimate control, ultimate power and ultimate responsibility as endowed upon the leader. No matter which critical conception and/or practice of leadership a leader adheres to – unless and not until – the leader has this ultimate locus of control, power and responsibility dislodged from their (often) individual position should anyone – either leader or follower – have faith in, an expectation of, or the belief in the potential for a leader to actualize others.

Later in the same article, Dantley (2005b) opposes asymmetrical power relations, stating that “…those who lead from a faith-based perspective problematize the asymmetrical relations of power inherent in the traditional notions of school leadership and therefore assist the learning community in crafting a space that welcomes the polyphonic realities of all the players in the educational process.” While acknowledging the significant role of the polyphonic players, Dantley still situates the leader as
being responsible for assisting and crafting a space to welcome diverse realities in education. This bestowal on the leader of the responsibility to be inclusive squarely maintains the locus of control and power with the leader thus maintaining boundaries and subsequent barriers between the leader and followers. With the locus of power and control remaining in the leadership position, no amount of inclusive efforts on the leader's behalf will ultimately produce equitable and equal relations among the leader, educators, students and communities. All this also varies from context to context.

Continuing to invoke the integrated nature of faith-based transformative leadership, Dantley asserts that such a leader must necessarily engage with issues of morality, justice and an ethic of care. Referencing Gilligan’s’ gender specific arguments of morality along with Kohlberg’s human moral development (as articulated in Dantley, 2005b), Dantley asserts that “this caring ethic (Gilligan) is a spiritual activity that exudes faith in the continuous process of the humanization of men and women. It is this kind of faith, informed by morality of care, that subsumes transformative leadership” (Dantley, 2005b p 10). He continues to articulate the actions of a faith-based transformative leader as “…us[ing]this spiritual activity of exercising faith not only to envision
schools grounded in democracy and social justice but they [the leader] then labor to bring about what they have created by faith into existence” (Dantley, 2005b p11). Dantley’s articulation of faith-based transformative leadership presents several challenges, especially for the diverse marginalized communities whom he is aiming to serve. These challenges are especially difficult for those with substantial degrees of difference in their embodiment (or the lack thereof) of faith. For instance, the ethic of care invoked in this article is rooted in a western and secular definition of care that also engenders it. Further, Dantley does not examine or discuss the multiple and even competing notions of faith as well as the differences and complexity in defining and defending multiple notions of spirituality, care, morality, democracy and social justice. Such notions are not defined, embraced or embodied uniformly across ontologies and knowledge bases.

Dantley goes onto present his construction of principled and purposive leadership as grounded in Cornel West’s concepts of prophetic spirituality (Dantley, 2005b). Dantley’s definition of principled leadership includes a leader’s capacity and responsibility to critically reflect on “the immorality [of] the prostitution of the teaching/learning process” (Dantley, 2005b p 16). He deems this critical reflection an essential strategy for resistance and reformation; he goes on to state that principled leaders
“have come to grips with the inequalities and oppressive practices in schools and are determined to engage them and work to change these debilitating forms of rituals in educational sites” (Dantley, 2005b p 17).

Being engaged in the eradication of oppression is a critical component to furthering social justice; however, I began to wonder what sort of oppressions was Dantley concerned with. Throughout the article he refers to issues of race, gender and class – but what of issues of homophobia, xenophobia and the many other compounding and intersecting realities which leaders, educators, students and communities endure?

Dantley defines purposive leadership as requiring leaders to exercise their faith in the efficacious power of resistance (Dantley, 2005b). In particular, he states that purposive leadership entails “leaders assisting members of the learning community in developing projects and strategies to accomplish academic achievement though that traditional measure of a school’s success is not expected of them” (Dantley, 2005b p. 18). This too is a critical insight into Dantley’s contextualization of the current milieu of education in the United States, and even here in Canada, wherein the expectation of those from marginalized communities is that they will not succeed in school and thus will be substandard at best in the overall grooming of a nation’s productive and engaged citizenry. However,
Dantley’s construction of purposive leadership commands that leaders engage in the ‘doing’ of social change through the development of meaningful projects focused on academic achievement where none is expected. Dantley further states: “school leaders who operate through purposive leadership understand the necessity of selecting members of the school team who have a commitment as well as a call to serve a learning community that have innumerable external as well as internal battles to fight” (Dantley, 2005b p. 18). While it is wise for leaders to hire a critical mass of those committed to the eradication of oppression, it is also necessary to be cognizant of the differences in the multiple and even competing spiritualities and their approaches to service and serving. For instance Hindus and Sikhs do not believe in being “called” to service; rather, duty is an explicit as well as implicit component of their faith, with a focus on defending and serving those who are marginalized without distinction of race, gender, creed, class, sexual orientation, caste or other socially constructed distinctions. Further, those who adhere to the Sikh and Hindu conceptions of service are not attached to the rewards or glorified ends of social justice. In these conceptions of service there is also a great deal of attention and emphasis placed on detachment, humility and integrity, thus requiring an extension of Dantley’s’ faith-based leadership
approach wherein multiple and even competing spiritualities would be critically engaged toward the end of leading in diverse contexts for social justice (in all its multiple forms).

Dantley’s conception of educational leadership that integrates both African American Spirituality and Cornel West’s notions of African American prophetic pragmatism and prophetic spirituality is compelling. While I have critiqued Dantley’s approach to educational leadership, I am very much drawn to his critical insights into the working of educational administration and his insistence on centring our spiritual selves within leadership. It is for this reason that I have become excited by the potentialities of his work and am considering the possibilities for those from multiple and even competing spiritualities to be as forthright and secure in integrating their spiritualities, not only in educational leadership but also in the overall educational sector and society.

While there has been some critical work in the area of social justice and leadership, there remains much work to be done. These conceptualizations and frameworks (related to social justice), with all of their shortcomings, are the pioneering beginnings of a revolution in educational leadership.
Summary

Schools are breathing organisms that affect and are affected by their situated contexts, which include historical, social, political, environmental and global systems. In the examination of educational leadership, it is essential to examine these situated contexts from the perspectives of “leadership as praxis”. The examination of leadership then requires insights that are not simply theoretical, but rather integrated through an equity framework into the institutions’ situated contexts and exemplified through practical and administrative processes and practices. From time to time administration can be a frontline profession, requiring administrators to have strong insight and foresight, as well as quick responses to spontaneous changes. Yet, such insights must be interrogated and substantiated by leaders who have examined their leadership philosophy and practices critically. Part of this critical examination is a thoroughgoing and concrete answer to the question “Leadership for what?” through their and others’ moral and ethical lenses. With regard to leadership for inclusion, inclusion cannot be the end in itself. Inclusion requires a critically reflective practice that centres on multiple moral imperatives and that requires a focus on democracy.

As outlined above, critical perspectives in leadership have gained
increased popularity, all offering insights from their respective places. What remains to be substantially researched is the concerted effort to integrate these conceptions into the actual everyday practices and programming of leadership for social justice. A critical examination of how administrators make space for agency is necessary, I believe that the distinction between the conception of leadership and the frameworks within which it functions is crucial, especially to the articulation of the meaning of leadership for social justice.

**Personal Reflections and Positioning: Defining Leadership for Social Justice**

For this research study, I have taken “leadership for social justice” to mean that equity minded administrators have critically examined and reflected on the situated contexts of their schools and their schooling practices. In addition, they have *intentionally* adopted an engaged and integrative approach to remedying injustice, as evidenced in their engagement with the socio-political contexts of the school, programming, curriculum and/or instruction that inhibit democratic and civic engagement. This engagement with injustice may include, but is certainly not limited to,
addressing conditions that perpetuate racism, sexism, classism, ableism, disregard for the environment, homophobia and other historical and disenfranchising conditions in Canada. Further, my definition of “leadership for social justice” requires administrators to take a deliberate position for justice on issues of inequity, thus necessitating these leaders to be social justice advocates and even agitators that are deliberate in their vision of leadership, educational programming and practices. This definition of “leadership for social justice” is concerned with exposing, addressing and eradicating marginalization, and the processes and systems which perpetuate it. My definition of leadership for social justice includes: transgressing the status quo; making hidden and implicit power relations visible; and strategizing and leading for radical changes within our local, national and global socio-political positions. It anticipates the emancipation of one’s own conditions and also strives for empowerment and agency for the purposes of social and spiritual agency (both within the self and communally), with a core sense of responsibility to oneself, our communities and global communities.

In this regard, intrinsic to leadership for social justice is the commitment and perseverance needed to be engaged in constant tensions. It further requires a commitment to the learning and unlearning of “isms”
with the intent of exposing the normative processes and behaviours that perpetuate oppressive conditions. My definition of leadership for social justice requires diverse personnel in multiple positions (within and outside the organization) to actively engage in exposing dominating, marginalizing and oppressive processes and cultural practices. It also requires personnel to be responsive and responsible in the integration of social justice imperatives (including those related to democratic ideals and human rights). This requires that social justice imperatives (along with the local, national and global realities) be integrated into all aspects of programming and organizational development. This integration is especially significant in order to interrupt oppressive mainstream practices and systems that maintain and/or seek to simply navigate the status quo, instead of challenging it. Leadership for social justice seeks to disrupt the current protocols that create and/or maintain oppressive conditions and replace them with practices that actively engage in the transference of tangible power to those who have been denied such positions based on human rights violations including discrimination based on race, sex, class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion/spirituality and so forth. It is imperative to note that the “transference of tangible power” does not simply mean transferring the top spots in the current hierarchy of power relations to marginalized
peoples and/or communities. Rather, the transference of tangible power would require a simultaneous renegotiation and re-defining of power relations, so that they are not defined by or reliant upon the current hierarchies or other power matrices within society.

Further to my conceptualization of leadership for social justice is a necessary interrogation of “leadership”. It is relevant to reiterate that leadership is contingent on several dimensions, including the socio-political and historical contexts that leadership occupies. That being said, in my utopian image of leadership for social justice, every person would be committed to and involved in the eradication of discrimination and marginalization. In this way all personnel – those within and “outside” an organization – would be a leader. Each person would be governed, inspired and robustly supported in their innovative and collaborative approaches to the eradication of discrimination and marginalization. Thus, leadership would be both an interwoven and issue-oriented phenomena, reciprocal in nature and governed/operationalized collaboratively and not via hierarchy. Consequently, leadership would be seen as an administrative function, without a sole individual or office with ominous organizational power or oversight. This administrative function would see routine changes in those who occupy the leadership seat along with the filtering of
responsibilities to all personnel who would ultimately be responsible for the well-being of each other. Further, personnel would have more autonomy and control over their work, including its production, assessment and material/monetary gains achieved from their labour. Lastly, personnel would be ultimately responsible for organizational effectiveness, efficiency and productivity as defined by them themselves. Overall, the organization would cease being an organization and instead be a healthy living breathing organism\textsuperscript{11}.

While my conceptualization may be criticized as an oxymoron, for the idea of leadership for social justice existing in an institution may seem preposterous to many, I believe that there is indeed the opportunity and moral responsibility for our schools to lead, demonstrate and embrace social justice. I also believe that the purpose(s) of schools and schooling are different from those of other public institutions. Schools have been groomed and are strong reflections of industry and other profit-oriented organizations (Bowels and Gintis, 1976). Schooling at its very core, however, is also about learning, engaging with ideas and is ultimately committed to the progression of democratic ideals of humankind, all of which are implicit in educational leadership for social justice (Dantley

\textsuperscript{11} Yet, the reality is that in our current socio-political and philosophical positioning here in Southern Ontario such an approach is too radical to even begin to imagine in our mainstream educational procedures.
Conceptual Framework

Educational institutions are microcosms of society, and as such are not separate or isolated from their contexts. Schools reflect, and in many ways replicate, societal systems and processes. In particular, schooling is a reflection of traditional forms of societal hierarchical organization. This organization is evident in the structure of educational institutions: rigid hierarchies, educational programming and organizational pillars. This eurocentric\(^{12}\) structure and dynamic – historical, social and political (re)productions of organizational leadership – are based on existing models of administration as produced by the mainstream, for the mainstream (Corson, 2000; Dantley, 1990; Foster 1986; Greenfield, 1987; Price, 2001; Ryan 2006). Like all of contemporary society, schooling is faced with challenges, barriers and opportunities in implementing social justice. Traditional leadership models adhere to the rigid maintenance of the status quo, and thereby the power differentials and discrimination embedded

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\(^{12}\) I use the term “eurocentric” to describe the privileging of euro-American beliefs, traditions and cultural practices at the cost of those beliefs and practices of those from the margins. In administrative thought this is evident in the over reliance on administrative literature from which current educational leadership emerges. In particular, the term “eurocentric” can be traced back to (European) colonial roots of worldwide domination and slavery. In this way “eurocentric” describes the production of knowledge—and the over reliance on such knowledge bases— as narrowly based on the privileged experiences of the mainstream. This privileging of the mainstream includes the normalization of (seemingly) Christian beliefs, values and practices, thus leading to the marginalization of other knowledge bases and to the perpetuation of disservice to those from the margins. This disservice manifests itself in the forms of racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, ableism, language discrimination and so forth. Furthermore, eurocentric knowledge bases implicitly reference, quantify and evaluate knowledge from an euro-American mainstream context of values, histories and truths (Bhattacharyya, Gabriel and Small, 2002; Dei, 1996; Dei et.al, 1997).
within them (Foster, 1986; Greenfield, 1987; Smyth, 2006; Smyth, 2009). It is for this reason that the literature review focused on Review of Administrative Thought: Towards Articulating Leadership for Social Justice, with an explicit focus on leadership theories with regard to difference, marginalization and social justice.

The current work studies educational administrators who claim to lead for the disruption of the status quo. Drawing on the critical theory tradition, and in particular the emancipatory paradigm (as identified earlier), this study considers leadership from an integrative equity approach. In this approach, I have intertwined critical dimensions of anti-racism as articulated by George Dei (Dei, 1996) and Black feminism as articulated by bell hooks (hooks, 2000) in order to conduct a rigorous examination of the power relations that govern and impact the capacity of educational administrators to lead for social justice. The conceptual framework adopted in this thesis makes the following two assumptions: 1. that the present structure of schooling and administration inhibits the emancipation of educators and students. 2. that marginalized educators and students endure subsequently more challenges in administration. These challenges arise from the lack of recognition and responsibility to address historical

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13 A further discussion of the integrative equity approach as articulated by Anti-racism (Dei, 1996) and Black Feminism (hooks, 2000), is articulated in the Theoretical Framework in chapter one.
inequities (Calliste and Dei, 2000; Dei, 1996; hooks, 1994; hooks 2000) and the changing social and political contexts that compound and complicate marginalization. Furthermore, marginalized educators, administrators and students face challenges that are systemically embedded in inequitable educational structures: in processes and practices, in current educational institutions’ approaches to human rights appeal processes, in curriculum, board amalgamation, hiring, promotion, retention, funding schemes, lack of policies, lack of equity programming and accountability measures.

These two assumptions have guided my analysis of the leadership literature. My analysis has led me to identify five critical areas that have not yet been examined in a substantive way, namely, power relations; lived realities; administrative responsibilities; local to global contexts; and the need for a substantive re-conceptualizing of power. In an integrated combination, these five tenets provide the potential for a thorough analysis of leadership for social justice. Furthermore, these tenets are interwoven with the theoretical framework of this research study as outlined in chapter one. In particular, the five tenets below interconnect to participant experiences of leading for social justice in that the findings (presented in the data chapters) substantiate the sub-questions of this thesis. The sub-
questions sought to examine how administrators were oriented to social justice; how administrators conceptualized social justice; how administrators exemplified social justice action; and finally the barriers and supports to leading for social justice. These five tenets presented below are not listed in any chronological order and each of them are permeated by the others.

The first tenet identifies current power structures in educational administration as eurocentric, capitalistic and hierarchical and calls for an examination of how these structures impede leadership for social justice. The problem is evident in educational leadership literature, wherein the majority of leadership models and practices exclusively reference eurocentric foundations and fundamentals. However, narrowly conceived eurocentrism is not the only challenge to which educational administration must transgress. In 2010 we find our world in dire straits – human rights travesties, globalization, genocide, world recession and the continued exploitation of our human and natural resources (Bhattacharyya, Gabriel and Small, 2002). The field of educational administration, including its theorists, researchers and educators, must take seriously the call for reflective and insightful contributions to a leadership that seeks social change within and beyond our local boundaries.
Leadership is not and cannot be neutral. Critical to dismissing this myth of neutrality is the need for administrators to locate themselves in the contextualized positions they occupy within power relations. In current Canadian hierarchies of leadership, access to power is contingent on the socio-political and economic locatedness of an individual (including ‘isms’ as they are systemically instituted, and individually experienced) and their educational achievement. Those possessing eurocentric cultural capital are found in positions of power and those without such capital are variously distributed. This imbalance of power requires an interrogation of power relations that goes beyond the level of individual, examining instead the interrelated experiences of subjugation from the personal and systemic positions of those who intentionally and transparently work against injustice. Power relations must not be taken for granted; these constituted relations benefit privileged positions while furthering the oppression of marginalized positions. While one can simultaneously be oppressor and oppressed, it must be acknowledged that current power relations (personal and systemic) lead to the further fragmentation of those facing multiple oppressions, so that the marginalized at best learn to navigate the system without becoming the fabric of the system. In this way, power relations have a pivotal role concerning who is allowed into leadership positions and how
leaders interact with others; leadership is too often the domain of those who are equipped with eurocentric cultural capital, and who do not disrupt the status quo. What’s more, the consistent practice of awarding positions of power to those who mimic a capitalist eurocentrism and who do not resist the hierarchy precludes the promotion of those who lead against the grain, and who are consequently not positioned in roles carrying formal authority.

The second tenet focuses on leader responsibility, with an emphasis on the ability to respond. I do not mean responsibility in its traditional sense of educational administrative responsibility for productivity and efficiency. Rather, we must focus on responsibility in terms of the leader taking the onus and responsibility to interrogate themselves. To this end, leaders must be responsible and examine their own locatedness as individuals, leaders and citizens. Their personhood must be critically self-examined, leading to an understanding of their locatedness in their contextualized power relations, and a recognition that their locatedness will inform leadership and equity programming. This entails an introspective, self-reflective analysis done by leaders to themselves – possibly guided, or equipped with appropriate resources and training. Such introspection would include an examination of one’s privileges, marginalization and capacity to lead for
social justice. Leaders are responsible for critically reflecting on and examining their relationships to their context and society. Leaders must define for themselves, through a meditation on their experiences and knowledges, a social justice orientation. Through consciously locating oneself in the matrix of privileges and oppressions, one becomes aware of one’s leverages, and of the need for capacity building and how this informs leadership for social justice.

The third tenet is concerned with understanding and learning from lived realities, as these are sites of learning how subjugation is manifested and operationalized. Understanding subjugation’s workings enables critical insights into the manoeuvring for navigation, interruption and/or disruption of injustice, thus creating sites for inspiring and mobilizing social justice. This is not the same as knowing diverse people, their cultures and faiths; while this knowledge is important it is not sufficient for an understanding of people's lived realities. Understanding and learning from lived realities means working from the assumption that the personhoods and lives of administrators, students, families, educators and communities are permeable realities, wherein the line between private and public is blurred (hooks, 1994; hooks 2000). Rather, there are no clear boundaries, in that what we know is learned, applied and built on in both the private and public
spheres. This is especially significant for historically disadvantaged and marginalized populations in their internal/external struggles with the 'isms', as contextualized in differing socio-political and economic realities (hooks, 2000). Understanding and learning from the intersections of these lived realities requires going beyond listening to the stories people tell. It requires a cognizant remembrance of these stories, along with an examination of how oppression is systemically instituted and how individuals become power brokers at the institutional, local and global levels.

The fourth tenet informing a thorough analysis of leadership for social justice is the examination of the relationship between global and local contexts. Understanding context is critical to answering the question: Leadership for what purpose(s)? One cannot lead effectively without understanding and analysis of the context in which one is to lead. This announces the need for a reflective examination of the historical, socio-political, economic, cultural and demographic information, from global and local levels, required to make informed decisions that support and lead for socially just outcomes. Thus, we must examine schools and schooling as living organisms that are permeable and shaped by their contexts, but – like living organisms – also shaping these contexts in return. Schools and schooling must also be contextualized in terms of school climate, structure,
history, demographics, and with regard to larger socio-political and economic discourses (e.g. accountability discourses).

The fifth tenet focuses on the need to re-conceptualize power and leadership, indicated by the inadequacy of the existing leadership literature to engage with critical issues in and approaches to leadership for social justice. I must be explicit in stating that what I have in mind is not the same as a “paradigm shift” wherein we continue to build on existing literature. Rather, this re-conceptualizing of power and leadership entails a conscious commitment to lead against the grain, to challenge previous narrow conceptions of leadership and justice, and to develop new foundations and new ways to achieve substantive democratic ends. Since there is not a wealth of educational administration literature to work from, leaders will continue to use “living frameworks” from which to lead for social justice – meaning that as they lead, they will learn, and as they learn they will reconstitute their programming and leadership agendas, and so forth. At the programming and practice levels, leaders will find themselves capacity-building with faculty, students, families, community agencies and leaders. They will find themselves developing and searching for new measures of

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14 Substantive democratic ends include the processes and means to substantially improve the oppressive conditions as experienced by marginalized populations. This would involve radically changing the power dynamics so that those peoples and communities who have been marginalized are major stakeholders with equitable access to resources and all aspects of programming & decision making within and outside the organization.
evaluation and accountability for themselves, their faculty, and their programming (including testing and other student evaluations). And they will find themselves engaging with critical issues related to ‘isms’, to systemic discrimination, and thus ultimately to leadership for social justice.

While these tenets are provocative – and maybe even commonsensical to some – their implementation will not be without its obstacles. For if such tenets were already fully embraced by our educational sector (in the form of critical approaches to leadership, financial investments to equity planning and programming and administrative support), the implementation and accountability of social justice measures would occur as a matter of course. Social justice and social change would be seen as expectations of education and not visionary goals.
Chapter Three: Research Methods and Methodology

This chapter outlines my approach to the study of administrators leading for social justice. I have taken a critical and emancipatory stance to traditional forms of research and embrace a position that is cognizant and cautious of the power and privilege matrix inherent in the actions and doings of research. In particular, this chapter examines the Research Methodology used, the Ethical Considerations of myself as the researcher and finally the Research Methods including: procedures; recruitment; criteria for recruitment; risks and benefits; and precautions taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

Research Methodology

After much contemplation I have come to understand that the manner in which many academics have traditionally conducted research is oppressive. As qualitative researchers, we typically examine “sub-cultures” of people. Referring to people and their realities as “sub-cultures” automatically puts them into a subordinate position, and assumes that they and their cultures are inferior to the dominant group. In this approach, the dominant group is put into a position of hierarchical power, and their ways of being and organizing their activity – their culture – are accepted as
normative models. In this way, traditional research methods have embraced a colonial approach to the examination of these “sub-cultures”, whereby researchers go into a domain, extract what knowledge they “require”, impose their perspectives and spin out their conclusions, then claim this as real knowledge – superior in some way to the lived, living culture they have attempted to explain. Rarely is there any sincere, genuine, reciprocal or soul-recognizing interaction between the researcher and the participant(s). The result is data from which the researcher generates inferences, without any input from the participants. In particular, scientific approaches to research methodology claim a position of objectivity and neutrality for the researcher – a nonsensical concept. As has been pointed out by many other researchers, we are never neutral (e.g. Portelli, 2005; Calliste & Dei, 2000; Dei, 1996; hooks, 2000; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2000). To the extent that we are socialized, ascribe to an ontology or ontologies, and have presence, every decision and thought we have has been influenced by our location within relationships of power. Consequently, in this research I have chosen to acknowledge my non-neutral state and my location in the web of power relations throughout the development of this thesis, and within the interactions with the participants in this research.
In the world of academia what we research is just as critical as how we research. While this study examines leadership for social justice, I must also make explicit my research methodology. I approach this study with an explicit bias for equity and in doing so I am committed to a critical social justice approach to research methods and methodology. To research with a bias for equity means to intentionally do research from the margins for those in the margins. This requires a deliberate move from the “…bland politics of inclusion to a new politics of transparency and accountability” (Dei and Johal, 2005 p. 115). As researchers we are trained to believe that the legitimacy of our research findings is contingent on the validity of our data. In order to ensure this legitimacy, measures for accountability are put into place as checkpoints. Such checkpoints include departmental research applications, ethical protocols and other governing bodies to ensure the accountability and legitimacy of research studies. What remains to be established as a measure of accountability is the legitimating of research studies and their findings by those from the margins. While I acknowledge the important role that the above-mentioned systemic checkpoints play, they are not sufficient in accounting for – or legitimating – the experiences and the lived realities of those from the margins.

Systemic exclusion has resulted in the examination of research
findings, and the generation of theories and 'knowledge', without any legitimating accountability to those from the margins, or their lived understandings of the world. My chosen theoretical stance of integrative anti-racism and Black feminism faces several challenges from traditional, mainstream approaches to research methodology. These include: challenges to feminist knowledge from dominant approaches to science inherited from the enlightenment era; intersecting experiences of those from multiple locations (class, race, sexual orientation, ability, nationalism, heterosexism and the power relations among them); and the experiences of oppression as “ideas” rather than systemic barriers embedded in the social construction and stratification of those isms (Dei, 1996; Dei and Johal, 2005; hooks, 2000; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). While the above identified manifestations of systemic oppression require a total re-thinking of research and research methodology, there are already strategies available to combat this oppressive regime. They include critical approaches to research methodology, navigating the system by sincerely engaging research participants and communities in the process, and intentionally researching the lived realities of those that are oppressed and/or have been historically disadvantaged.

Critical in furthering these strategies for agency is the integrative anti-
racist and Black feminist approach of this study, which carefully probes power relations. In particular, while each of the participants have had formal experience in positions of power (e.g. as administrators) this study sought to examine the lived experiences of those beyond these formal and performative titles, looking at the workings of difference(s) in these stations of power as participants self-identify positions of resistance to oppressive systems and structures. The integrative anti-racist and Black feminist approach is the means by which to identify, examine and challenge the values, structures and behaviours that perpetuate oppression (Calliste and Dei, 2000; Dei, 1996; Dei and Johal, 2005; hooks, 2000).

**Ethical Considerations: Positioning of the Researcher**

In their critical research methods book *Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods from the Margins* (1989) Kirby and McKenna give priority to two essential components of research from the margins, namely “intersubjectivity” and “critical reflection on the social context”. Kirby and McKenna first draw our attention to intersubjectivity as “an authentic dialogue between all participants in the research process in which all are respected as equally knowing subjects” (p. 129). While I agree that the role of the researcher is to respect all participants equally as knowledge
creators and knowing subjects, equality of respect should not be conflated with equality as far as the representation of participant voices.

With regard to participant voices, Kirby and McKenna state “when managing and analysing the data, this means that priority will be given to the voices from the margins” (p. 130). While Kirby and McKenna are thoughtful in acknowledging authentic dialogue and prioritizing the voices from the margins, they fail to acknowledge that equity in terms of the representation of participant voices vis-à-vis the researcher’s voice is not the same as equitable representation among participant voices. In their writing of “Voices in Context” Kirby and McKenna state:

There are a number of voices in the draft report: the researcher’s, the participants’ and the voices of those who have assisted with parts of the research or contributed secondary information. As ideas are explained, the different voices have to be presented in context...Researchers have the responsibility of reporting on the research in a way that is fair and equitable to participants. This requires a certain personal preparation so that the researcher’s voice does not dominate the reporting. The voices of the researcher and the participants usually differ in two main ways. The first is that the researcher is interested in
expressing what a number of people think about a particular experience or topic, rather than concentrating on one individual description. The second is that the researcher is likely to be concerned with discussing how those ideas fit together and how well such patterns explain the topic being researched. While participants may be interested in describing and explaining their experience to the researcher, there may not be a corresponding willingness or sense of obligation to become an active seeker of social change. Although there can be some movement from description to more theoretical analysis, in the final report the overall reporting should reflect the voices of the participants. Contrasting attitudes among participants are too presented, within their appropriate context. The researcher’s responsibility is to create a forum for presentation of these experiences and ideas rather than seeking the most frequently expressed or the strongest opinions. (Kirby and McKenna, p. 161-162)

As evident in Kirby and McKenna’s discussion of presenting “Voices in Context”, their primary concern is ensuring that participants' voices are equitably presented in regard to that of the researcher, so that the researcher’s voice “does not domineer the reporting”. However, Kirby
and McKenna do not examine the voices of the marginalized as highly politicised and potentially requiring that one and/or a group of marginalized voices could be outweighed by another.

For instance, while an examination of 10 white female administrators may represent and require equal representation in the data, it does not necessarily report an equitable or generalizable representation of females in administration. Critical female voices from other positions of marginalization have not necessarily been included or accounted for (for example, low class, racialized women) within the literature, thus requiring that certain voices from particular positions of difference be afforded increased privileges over other marginalized voices and positions. In an ideal situation, a hierarchical arrangement among marginalized voices would never occur; however, within the eurocentric context within which administrative research occurs this privileging is a necessary process in doing research for and from the margins.

Further, Kirby and McKenna do not substantively address the crux of marginalization – that being the positions of exploiter/exploited and how we can occupy both spaces simultaneously. For instance, once the interview is completed, and the data analysed and published, the researcher is often rewarded with a publication credit on their CV, an opportunity to present at
a conference or two and/or social mobility. But what is the participant
rewarded with? What access or resources are they mobilized with? These
are pressing questions that weigh heavy on my heart. I am not in a position
to mobilize resources or offer participants from the margins access to the
upper echelons of the ivory tower, and as a result I find myself deeply
conflicted in this position as a researcher.

The second essential component to research from the margins,
according to Kirby and McKenna, is a focus on “critical reflection on the
social context”. Quoting Freire and Finson, Kirby and McKenna state that
critical reflection involves an examination of the social reality “within which
people exist and out of which they are functioning” (Finson, 1985: 117), for
that is “the real, concrete context of facts” (Friere, 1985: 51). In other
words, context is the fabric or structure in which the research, and the
participants’ experiences, have occurred. It only makes sense that if we are
to fully understand the data and effect change, we must try to understand
contextual patterns and how they are sustained and controlled (Kirby and
McKenna, 1989 p.129). Here Kirby and McKenna ask us to responsibly
examine the social reality of our participants. While this is an integral
component of research centred on equity, Kirby and McKenna fail to
substantively examine the researcher’s social reality and the hierarchal
positioning as the “researcher”, especially regarding how as researchers we directly benefit and even profit from information that the participants disclose. In this way they fail to acknowledge that as researchers we occupy contested space(s) that require a critical self reflection on our own social contexts. They do not engage in the hierarchal positioning of research itself and especially research on/from the margins. For instance, it is only in the contemporary framing of educational leadership and its concern for growing racially and ethnically diverse demographics that research on marginalized realities has become popular. In order to conduct responsible examination of social realities we must be articulate in identifying our positions, locating ourselves and research in positions of power, privilege and oppression. This also requires us to be capable of and willing to understand social realities from multiple perspectives as opposed to simply a social reality. Lastly, as responsible researchers we must be transparent about these positions with our participants, and willing to be open and to engage in dialogue about our locations.

**Research Methods**

The above-mentioned issues have been conscientiously taken into consideration in my research methods. There were several practical reasons for choosing to approach this study from a qualitative approach
(through interviews) rather than from a quantitative or mixed methods approach. First, the examination of administrators leading for equity is a relatively new area of research, with too few studies that have identified or examined the barriers to leading for equity. Second, the examination of administrators leading for equity cannot be meaningfully quantified by simply using numbers or questionnaires. Participants must be given an opportunity to identify and articulate their experiences and the nuances of these experiences as they themselves see them. A qualitative (interview) approach is critical for the researcher as it gives them an opportunity to engage in reciprocal dialogue with the participant, probing for clarification and understanding of their experiences. Lastly, a qualitative (interview) approach to this study is in tune with my predisposition as a qualitative researcher. This chart below (adapted from Glesne and Peshkin, 1992 p.9) is a helpful tool in identifying predispositions of modes of inquiry:
The above chart identifies the predispositions of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research methodology. Research methodologies can be loosely organized into three paradigms: positivism, interpretivism and critical social research. Positivism is associated with the predispositions of quantitative modes of inquiry and interpretivism
associated with qualitative modes of inquiry (Creswell 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Marshall and Rossman, 1980; Merriam 1988). Critical social research modes of inquiry can be associated with either, or be a combination of quantitative and qualitative modes of inquiry. This is due to the different assumptions on which the critical social research paradigm, and in particular the integrative anti-racism and Black feminist stance, rests.

In order to examine and understand the experiences of the participants, I conducted open-ended interviews with open-ended questions (Appendix B). The interviews were between 60 and 90 minutes long. The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed. The interviews examined the complexities, adversities and interlocking issues that these educational administrators experience as they led for social justice.

**Procedures**

I recruited participants through the existing Canadian public education structure in order to maximize the diversity of educational administrators leading for social justice. Given my broad methodological choice to use qualitative rather than quantitative methods, it makes sense to approach potential participants in a purposive rather than random way; I used a combination of criterion, snowball, opportunistic, and convenience
sampling. I began in an opportunistic way by emailing invitation letters (see Appendix B) to people I have met who are educational leaders. My letter explained the purpose of the research. I then asked the participants to contact the researcher if they were interested in participating or if they had any questions. Once the participants had expressed interest, I scheduled an interview with those who agreed to participate and asked them to identify three educational leaders who have been involved in a variety of social justice initiatives within the education system. I then sent out email invitations to these three administrators explaining the purpose of my study and invited them to participate.

The data collection included semi-structured personal interviews with a criterion-based sample of 10 participants. Given the aims of this study, 10 participants is sufficient to examine leadership for social justice. Conducting 10 interviews wherein participants were asked to reflect on their experiences and give insights into their conceptions of social justice and leadership generated a substantial amount of data. Inadvertently, most of the participants in this study were or currently are graduate students. Due to their exposure to graduate level work they were able to explicitly articulate their particular social justice perspectives in a similar manner to academics. The value of this study rests on the reflection and insights
shared by the participants in the interviews. Both the researcher and participants were required to probe to ensure that experiences and insights were understood and later articulated in the research findings. As described here, the nature of this research study demanded reciprocal interaction between the researcher and participants to ensure that the participants’ responses were not misconstrued and that both parties were given an opportunity to clarify. The necessity of this reciprocal interaction precluded the use of other research methods such as questionnaires.

One semi-structured interview of approximately 60-90 minutes was scheduled with each of the participants at a quiet space and at a time that was convenient for them. Participants were made aware both in writing and verbally that they could withdraw from the study at any time or decline to answer any questions in the interview. With the participant’s permission, interviews were audio taped and transcribed. A copy of the transcript was then forwarded via email attachment and/or hand delivered (whichever was preferred by the participant) one week after the interview. They then had the opportunity to revise and return the document and/or collaboratively interpret the interview data with the researcher. All participants were assigned a pseudonym to ensure anonymity.

As noted in the above section, Ethical Positioning of the Researcher,
I realize that I am not neutral in the process of data collection and interpretation. Furthermore, I did not analyse this data in a positivistic manner, but instead attempted to understand the multiple ways in which participants experienced, explained and manifested their orientations to, conceptions of and the supports and barriers to leadership for social justice. I used the theoretical lens as described in chapter one, relying heavily on hooks’ conception of power in Black feminism and Dei’s integrative anti-racism framework. My approach to reading the transcripts multiple times was to ensure that I was able to understand the participants’ responses to the guided questions and their critical insights into the issues being examined. Once the interviews were transcribed I reviewed the transcripts multiple times, at a minimum of three times. In each reading and rereading of the transcripts, I noted critical experiences, themes and subthemes that emerged. I then categorized participant quotes and excerpts into broad themes, aligning them with this study’s research question and sub-questions. Using Windows XP I categorized themes into separate files and stored them on my hard drive. At this initial stage, these themes were: orientation to social justice; conceptions of social justice; examples of social justice in practice; barriers to social justice; and the supports for social justice. The majority of participant responses fell
naturally into one of the broad themes as previously mentioned. The final major themes chosen for organizing the data include: Interconnectedness between lived realities of educational administrators and “doing” social justice (life experiences, familial experiences, faith, and giving the guidance that was not provided to them); Educational Administrators’ Conceptualizations (anti-racist, Freirian, inclusive leadership, and anti-oppression conceptualizations, as well as the participatory democracy model of Sudburt Valley); Examples of social justice praxis (systemic implementation of social justice programming, engaged civic and political action, transparency in social justice programming, mental, emotional and spiritual congruence, and subversion); Barriers to social justice (racism, systemic and structural constraints, lip service, the personal costs and consequences, and ideology); and finally Supports for social justice (board and administrative supports, unions and organized groups, peer supports and building critical masses, and community supports).

**Recruitment**

Recruitment for the semi-structured interview process was generated via snowball sampling (Appendix B). The first potential participants were contacted via email. Those who agreed to participate were then asked to refer other potential participants to the researcher. Participants were given
permission to forward my contact information to potential participants, who could then contact me of their own accord. Participants were offered an opportunity to take part in the interview process by emailing or telephoning the researcher at the email address or telephone number provided in an email.

Candidates that were selected for the study were contacted via email with an attached invitation and consent letter (Appendix B). Consent forms were signed and returned at the scheduled interview session.

The researcher had no power or supervisory relationship with any of the participants.

Criteria for Recruitment

The participants in this study were selected on the basis of several criteria. The participants would have been administrators (principal, vice-principal, department head and/or senior board level administrators) for a minimum of three years, in Ontario, and would self-identify as administrators leading for social justice. Participants were administrators from the elementary, secondary and/or post-secondary system. This study also sought a diversity of participants including those from diverse backgrounds in the areas of gender, race, sexual orientation, ability, class and other lived experiences.
**Risk and Benefits**

Participants were informed of the nature of the study and of their participation as interviewees. They were also informed that they may withdraw at any time without penalty or discrimination. Participant names and any names related to people or educational institutions were not identified as pseudonyms; however, there is a small risk that participants may be identified in the report of the study due to the unique circumstances or contents that may be associated with their experiences. I have further minimized identification risks by rephrasing unique situations or contents associated with the participants’ experiences and/or positions. The interview responses were collected with the sole intention of examining educational administrators leading for social justice. Finally, a copy of the final thesis will be made available to all participants.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

Participants were informed that all data collected was kept in strict confidence and that names would not be used or even mentioned in any publication that describes this research. Further, pseudonyms were used to describe and identify participants and the educational institutions in which they worked. All participants were informed that they had the right to
withdraw from the study or request that the data collected about them not be used. All data (taped interviews, transcripts and field notes) were locked in a filing cabinet in a locked room at the researcher’s residence. No one other than the researcher and the supervisor had access to this data.

Summary

The focus of this chapter was to outline the research methodology and methods used in this research study. In this chapter I took a critical stance to traditional approaches to research and identified several essential differences in my approach including: being cognizant of the power relations created by occupying the space of researcher as the interviewer and beyond; conducting the interview as a discussion to ensure that participants could question and probe as well; and creating opportunities for collaboration with participants as they were given opportunities to review, augment and/or add to their transcripts. While research has traditionally been value laden with narrow definitions of rigour, I found having this reciprocal approach with participants to data collection, assessment and analysis required the highest degree of attention and demanded an ethic of care based on the integrity of both myself and the participants.
Chapter Four: Introduction to the Data and the Lived Realities of the Participants

Introduction

The participants in this study represent a breadth of administrative positions. These self identified leaders for social justice represent the elementary, secondary, public school board and university administrative levels. The chart, ‘Participant Demographics’ presents an overview of the participants’ positions, their school contexts (including the socio-economic status of the school) and other personal dimensions. The above mentioned chart is further detailed in the “participant profiles” section. In the reporting of this data, pseudonyms are used to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. Also, where appropriate and at the discretion of the researcher, details that could possibly lead to the identification of the participants were left out. In the data reporting section of this chapter, participants have identified several common themes running through varied experiences. The sub-themes reported on in this chapter are:
Interconnectedness between lived realities of educational administrators and “doing” social justice; Leadership for social justice: educational administrator’s conceptualizations; Supports for leadership and social justice; Barriers to social justice and; Examples of social justice practice: Leadership and social justice praxis. While this chapter reports the participants’ responses, this data is analysed for its significance to educational leadership in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

Participant Profiles

Anise
Anise is a Black Jamaican female administrator at the University of Lauder in a major urban city in Southern Ontario. At the time of the interview, Anise was the coordinator of an urban university program called “Engaged Mentorship”. She was hired to develop and implement this university wide program, which serves all students, with special emphasis on those who are marginalized due to race, class and recent entry into Canada. Anise has been in this position for five years and within this time has been able to increase student registration in this program from 50 students to over 1500, representing over 99 countries. The program is founded on a peer
mentorship model that engages students’ learning from each other, providing psycho-social supports and even Canadian work experience. Since its inception, Anise has been able to raise over 2.5 million dollars in external funding to support the Engaged Mentorship program. Anise is also active on University wide committees including the Equity Committee, Career Centre and the Human Resources Hiring Committee.

Kiranjoyt

Kiranjoyt is a South Asian Punjabi female administrator at Donald Secondary School. At the time of the interview, Kiranjoyt was a vice principal at this sub-urban high school. Donald Secondary School has over 1400 students with approximately $^{15}$ 60% South Asian, 20% Black and 20% European descent. Kiranjoyt has been an educator for over 30 years. She has been a vice principal for eight years in total at three different high schools. Kiranjoyt is the founder of South Asian Teachers Organization (SATO) as well as its subsidiary South Asian Teachers Organization-Youth (SATO-Y). This organization serviced teachers board wide with over 150 teachers registered. In each school she has taught and led in, Kiranjoyt has been responsible for organizing South Asian student clubs and

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$^{15}$ This is an approximate number since the board Kiranjoyt works for does not openly collect student ethnic data.
programming. Her focus has been on developing board wide mentorship programs that focus on South Asian students learning from each other, teaching, research and social action. Under Kiranjoyt’s leadership, SATO and SATO-Y organized many conferences, information sessions, teacher trainings and research that influenced curriculum and programming. Each of these initiatives included staff, students, community agencies and leaders with the result of social change.

In addition to her administrative involvement, Kiranjoyt has also been heavily involved in school politics and committees including: executive membership on AMENO; Political Action Group for OSSTF; Campaigner and Lobbyist for a successful Liberal Candidate in Ontario; Chair of Human Rights Committee; Chief organizer for a milestone (and the first in Canada) international South Asian conference.

Bill

Bill is a Black Barbadian male who was the first racialized person to be the director of Canada’s second largest school board. At the time of the interview Bill had recently taken on the executive director position for the retired teachers association\(^\text{16}\). Bill has been an educator for over 35 years

\(^{16}\) The interview focused on Bill’s trailblazing work he did in the position of school board director.
and has worked in four major school boards in Canada in various positions from teacher, department head, administrative assistant, superintendent, vice-principal, principal to director. In each board he worked for, the student diversity varied, while the staff diversity remained constant – with few racialized people in administrative positions or other positions of formal authority. While in the position of director, Bill implemented equity programming and policies that had never before been considered for racialized populations. He also made funding available for equity initiatives and rewarded those that led them.

**Tara**

Tara is a Black female administrator at Finchgate Middle School. At the time of the interview, Tara had been the equity chair for this urban middle school for the last two years and an educator for over 7 years. Finchgate has been assessed as being one of the neediest schools on an index ranking of over 100 schools. About 90% of the students are visible minorities with the majority of these students being recent arrivals to Canada from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia. Many of these students are put into English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Tara estimates that about 70% of the teaching staff is white. As equity chair, Tara leads
initiatives, professional development training and programming that impact teachers’ curriculum and pedagogy.

Gail

Gail is a White female administrator at Hail Collegiate Secondary School. At the time of the interview, Gail was the curriculum leader (similar to department head) for the Canadian and World Studies department\textsuperscript{17}. Gail has been in the position of curriculum leader for four of her five years as an educator. Hail Collegiate is located in the downtown core of a major southern Ontario city. This majority of students are from low income families, with family income for most students at $20,000. Hail Collegiate is a highly diverse high school, with over 80 different ethnicities represented. The majority of students are from the Caribbean, South Asia, Portugal and Tibet. While registration in the past years has been at over 800 students, there was a dramatic drop in recent years and registration is at an all-time low of 500. With a teaching staff of 50 teachers, there is seemingly remarkable diversity with only 15 white teachers on staff. In her position as curriculum leader, Gail designs curriculum, offering learning tools and

\textsuperscript{17} This curriculum leader position is similar to department head. Given the financial constraints the administrative team amalgamated several streams under a given department and hired curriculum leaders to be responsible for several streams within it.
strategies to educators and students around social justice issues, as well as programs for students to have new experiences committed to social change (? Not sure here re) meaning). Gail is also very active in other school/board wide initiatives including hunger strikes, resistance movements and artwork displays.

**Gordon**

Gordon is a White male administrator at St. Paul Elementary School, and at the time of the interview, was its principal. Gordon was an educator for 6 years and has been a principal in two school boards for a total of 7 years. St. Paul Elementary is located in a low ses (first mention – spell out/explain) area and has been labelled as a ‘high need’ school in need of support and intervention. In the first school where Gordon was principal, there was significant diversity in the student and teaching body, with over 90% of students being racialized from ethnic backgrounds from Somalia, Vietnam, China and Spain. This is in sharp contrast to St. Paul Elementary where there is only 1 racialized teacher, with the majority of newcomer students from Serbia. St. Paul Elementary’s teaching body is 70% female and 30% male. Gordon states that the board has recognized the need for more racialized teachers on staff and has committed to hiring more in the
future. Gordon is also on the equity committee at the school board.

William

William is a White male administrator for the Rising Futures Program. The Rising Futures Program serves students who are marginalized based on their sexual orientation, providing them with an opportunity to study in a LGBTQ friendly and safe climate. This program is now in its 13th year and operates out of a church in the downtown core of a southern Ontario city. At the time of the interview, William was a Program Teacher18. An educator for 7 years, William has been in the position of Program Teacher for two years and was in the position of support teacher19 for two years prior to that, totalling four years as an administrator. The Freedom Alternative Secondary School, the parent school of the Rising Futures Program, is very diverse with students in grades 9-12 in one classroom, with the youngest being 13 years of age and the oldest being 20 years old. Students mostly seek entry into this program because they have been rejected from mainstream schooling, resulting in either being pushed out of the system and/or searching for a safe environment in which to learn. The students

18 The position of “Program Teacher” is similar to a principal position in terms of technical accountability, oversight over programs & students and interfacing with school board, communities and agencies.
19 The position of “Support Teacher” is similar to a vice principal position in terms of supporting the Program teacher in technical accountability, oversight over programs & students and interfacing with school board, communities and agencies.
come from across southern Ontario and from various ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. The students face challenges with issues ranging from homelessness, disabling learning environments, psycho-social disadvantages and homophobia. Due to financial constraints this school has only 24 students, which is six more than the board mandated number of 18. There is a waiting list of students trying to get into their program, while others call in weekly in hopes of entry into this program.

Kyle

Kyle is a White male administrator and teacher. He works for two schools; he is an administrator at Pine Alternative Secondary School and a teacher at an arts based high school, both located in a major urban city in Southern Ontario. Kyle, a co-founder of Pine Alternative, is still an active leader in its everyday operations including the school’s organization, budgeting, leadership, business management and student & staff recruitment and professional development. Kyle has been an educator for 8 years with five years as an administrator at the Pine Alternative Secondary School, which has 15 students ranging in age from 4-14 years. There is only one racialized student. The school’s democratic framework follows the Sudbury model of schooling, which is based on self initiated learning, democratic
governance, trust, age mixing in learning and community participation. There is no formal curriculum for this school and no traditional forms of assessment. Rather, students are self directed, leading to purposeful engagement with learning. Further, the school committees and town hall meetings are centred on the examination of issues that lead to individual responsibility and freedom. In addition to these two fulltime jobs, Kyle is also a curriculum developer for an organization centred on teachers for social justice and peace.

Narinder

Narinder is a South Asian male administrator. He is a human rights manager for a large school board in southern Ontario. In this recently board-appointed position, Narinder is responsible for managing and developing equity focussed initiatives. He has been in this position for 5 years. Initially Narinder was hired to implement a workforce census that centred on the collection, analysis and dissemination of ethnic data, with a view to identifying student needs and making recommendations for programming and other board wide initiatives. Narinder is also responsible for leading professional development on issues of equity. In addition, he leads a mentorship program for minority teachers in the board and is also
active in reviewing equity related issues brought forth by teachers and administrators.

At the time Narinder was hired, the school board had been without an equity office, management and personnel for over 7 years. With regard to the diversity of the school board’s personnel, there is a growing number of women in administrative positions, with the exception of the elementary administrative panel. Further, there is also a small but growing number of visible minorities entering into the teaching and administrative workforce. Be this as it may, Narinder is quick to point out that this growing number of visible minorities in the workforce is not representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school board’s student body.

Larise

Larise is a Black female administrator. She has been a high school administrator for over six years in two highly diverse sub-urban schools. In both schools she was a vice principal. Larise is one of five Black administrators in the entire school board at the secondary level. Being one of five administrators has its challenges, namely racism. Larise describes the demographics of both schools she led in as having highly diverse student bodies; however, the diversity of the student body was not reflected
in the teaching and leadership bodies. With over 110 staff in each of the schools, Larise states that there were less than seven GM educators and/or administrators in each school. As a result Larise, in her vice principal position, made priority the recruitment and retention of GM educators (and in total hired four GM educators) and as a consequence has been targeted by white staff and peers and accused of acting in a biased way. Larise describes the schools as being at the end of two extremes. In her first school, Trillium Secondary, the majority of students and parents were focused on academics and pursuing post secondary education. This was in sharp contrast to the second school, Lauder Collegiate (a vocational school), where study was a means to finding employment upon graduation. While student trajectories at the schools differed, Larise did state that both schools had major concerns related to discipline, with the majority of disciplinary issues involving Black and South Asian students. Further to her experiences as vice-principal, Larise was also part of the development team for a system wide equity framework and policy document.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Graduate studies</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>School Context</th>
<th>School SES</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sexual Orientatio n</th>
<th>Theoretical Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. William</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Urban secondary</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>Anti-oppression (queer theory)</td>
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<td>2. Kiranjoyt</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Vice Principal</td>
<td>Sub-urban secondary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>South Asian</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>(Antiracism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Anise</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Sub-urban university</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>Antiracism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Bill</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Sub-urban School board</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>Antiracism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>5. Narinder</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Equity Officer</td>
<td>Urban School board</td>
<td>Board-wide</td>
<td>South Asian</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>Antiracism</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. Gail</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Coordinator &amp; Head of Department</td>
<td>Urban secondary</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>Frierian</td>
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<td>7. Kyle</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Principal (Co-Founder of School)</td>
<td>Urban secondary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>Participatory Democracy (Sudbury model)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8. Tara</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Equity Chair</td>
<td>Urban middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>Anti-oppression (anti-classism theory)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Gordon</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Urban elementary</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>Inclusive theory</td>
<td></td>
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<td>10. Larise</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Sub-urban high school/ vocational</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>Antiracism</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Interconnectedness between lived realities of educational administrators and “doing” social justice

Introduction

When asked how they got involved in social justice work, the participants gave a wide range of answers. It is evident that each participant’s commitment to social justice is a visceral one. Their responses demonstrate the interconnectedness between the lived realities of these educational administrators and their commitments to lead for social justice – the former impacting and informing the latter. From the data there are four themes articulating this interconnectedness, including: Life Experiences (with the following sub-themes: Marginalization, Living in Different contexts, Learning through Educational Experiences); Familial Experiences; Faith and; Because No One Did It for Me. All participants noted several critical factors that informed their understanding of and contributed to their commitments to social justice.
Life Experiences

Experiences of Marginalization

When asked how they got involved in social justice work, four of the participants – namely Anise, Kiranjoyt, Tara and William – identified experiences of marginalization. Anise recalled her horrible experiences growing up in Alberta. Although Anise was born and raised in Canada, she endured both blatant and systemic racism within the educational system. As a result of this racism she was put into ESL classes for the first ten years of her schooling (oh my lord! HL), had no teachers of colour, endured derogatory racial epithets and cross burnings on school property.

I had some very terrible experiences in Alberta . . . well from the experience of having 10 years of English as a Second Language, and English is my only language. To not having any teachers of colour, to having an Aryan Nations Group in our High School [and] crosses being burned on our [school] field… (Anise, p.20)

While in university, Anise continued to face discrimination and often felt like she did not belong. The school environment was hostile and exclusionary.
As a response to this silencing environment Anise and the other visible minority students created a student group, but were told by the student council that they did not want students of colour organizing and “jumping around fires”. This reference bastardizes First Nation traditions and further confuses the First Nations sacred traditions with South Asian ones.

So when I got to university I could count the Black students on my hand, and we were West Indians, and then there was a few African students. There was a few Asians, South Asians students and a few Asian students that was it. . . . terrible experience. Didn’t belong I went there and I proved that I could be there and I proved that I could do well, so when I opened my mouth I tried to make sure what I said made sense or I wouldn’t open my mouth. But it was a very silencing experience that if you say the wrong thing they remembered forever…one student said to me, white student, she says, “I envy you guys [racialized students], you guys always have somebody to talk to”. Cause she sees us [racialized students] talking, “Are you kidding me? That’s the only people that talk to us, is ourselves.” No one else [white students] would invite us for lunch, or you know join a team, or any of it. No one talked to us at all. We started a Black Students
Association but they wouldn’t give us student status, so we had to keep paying for the room, so finally we asked the representative from Student Council to come and talk to us. It wasn’t just Black students [in the student group] it had South Asian students, on it because there wasn’t enough of them for anything for themselves either… the guy [the student council representative] said in front of all of us: “Well we can’t be having you bring in your people and bringing down the university’s reputation.” [That’s] exactly what he said and [having your] “people jumping around fires” [racist description of visible minorities cultural traditions and faiths] . . . *(abruptly stopped and did not want to continue, as she re-experienced these bad memories)*

(Anise, p. 20-21)

Anise recalls further exclusionary practices by educators. She recalls the only conversation that any white professor had with her, one that centred on the drug-taking scandal of sprinter Ben Johnson.

… the professor doesn’t talk to me and my friend the whole class, whole months are passing and then the Ben Johnson thing, he catches up to us after class… and he says, “What do you people
think about Ben Johnson?” That was the only conversation he had ever had with me….Not when he [Ben Johnson] was successful. ‘My people’ think of him? and I said ”I thought he was a Canadian a minute ago, now he is back to being Jamaican!” We also had a disagreement about something else in the class. And then I started to just plain disagree with him, and not care anymore about the consequences of the grades. I just couldn’t really care less, by this point I couldn’t care less (Anise, p.21).

Similar to Anise, Kiranjoyt has also endured experiences of marginalization. Kiranjoyt’s experiences include working in exclusionary environments, lack of reflective mentors and subsequently the challenge to be self motivated in her work. These experiences have made her committed to continuing the work in the name of social change.

…I always found myself lacking the mentors, the role models, I never, ever, had any role model, right the way through my life...in terms of, um, the educational area. (Crying) So, to this day, I can honestly say that I’ve never had anybody there that would sit down and say, ‘These are things you need to do, and you’re really great.
And this is how you can get there.’ And that’s one thing I’ve always wanted to do both with students and teachers now…is to be able to sit down with them and say, we know you can do it, and this is how you prepare for it. And in whatever way, and whatever support you need, these are the avenues that we can create. And one thing I’ve learned to do is create all my own opportunities…every single opportunity I’ve had to create myself. I’ve never had an administrator that’s tapped me on the shoulder and said ‘Kiranjoyt, why don’t you do this…’ (Kiranjoyt, p. 10)

Tara’s commitment to leadership for social justice is connected to her personal experiences of being racialized as a student. In particular she recalls being misunderstood and as a result finding herself targeted as a minority student by teachers. Her parents taught her how to interpret and interrupt this situation.

I think it started in high school where I realized that I needed to figure out how I was going to get through the process. It was just a lot of teachers reading me. If I stand a certain way . . . I took ballet—if I stood at a certain way “oh well she is giving attitude.” And some of
the time I probably was and some of the time it was just I had a bad back and while they were instructing I would stand and I would just sit on my hip a little bit. And well, “oh she has attitude. Oh I don’t think she wants to be here.” And they questioned a lot of things that they didn’t need to. And I found myself constantly trying to justify my actions where I would see other students just going about the same routines, and just not visible, not being a target all the time. And I got angry. I spoke up. I spoke up when I shouldn’t have and just understanding the power structure...

And my parents talked to me about it. . . . “Well yes, you’re right, but this is how you need to go about it!” And when it finally clicked for me I thought to myself, that’s when I knew for sure that I wanted to teach. I was always kind of yes, I want to be a teacher or a lawyer. But in high school I realized you know what, I’m going to become a teacher and I’m going to tell my students the real deal so when they encounter (not if, when) they’ll be prepared, because I think for me it was a struggle. (Tara p. 17-18)

William’s commitment to social justice is revealed throughout the interview.
In this passage he describes the harrowing experiences of being a gay student in a rural Ontario high school. William endured homophobia in the forms of physical and verbal abuse from students on school grounds every day. Educators mostly ignored his experience, with the exception of an English/music teacher, who would be a nourishing presence, while providing him a safe space in her classroom to wait for his ride after school. By grade 12, William could not endure the marginalization anymore and dropped out of school. His mother was also pivotal in providing him agency by offering him home schooling and other alternative routes to educational attainment. In his adult years, William has spent much time reflecting on these experiences and has articulated how they have cemented his commitment to leading for social justice.

Yeah, I’ve been thinking a lot about that in my own sort of journey in becoming a teacher and more so I think since I’ve started graduate studies in education because it’s allowed me that opportunity to really “reflect” upon how I came to teaching. It’s ironic because there was a part of me that always wanted me to be a teacher. I had a great experience in school up till grade 8 and then I moved, started a new high school with nobody I knew in terms of friends, and that’s the age
when you sort of come into your own sexuality, around 13. I always knew I was gay, I may not have had the language to talk about that but when I hit high school everybody else seemed to know. And, you know, it was just hell for four years of being in high school in a rural community in southern Ontario. I faced bullying, in terms of verbal abuse, physical abuse everyday. Teachers did nothing when they heard it. Save one teacher who opened her classroom at the end of every school day, and our school ended at 3:15, most of us were bussed students to the school so we didn’t leave until 4:00. So there was 45 minutes of terror, as I called it. We were forced to roam the halls and luckily this one teacher, who was my homeroom teacher the first year, figured out that she always was there. And she must have known what she was doing – to be the only teacher that was actually sitting in her classroom rather than hanging out in the staff room or taking off to go home. She opened her classroom until the busses left. And she created sort of a space where people could come in... everyday after school. And it was the days that she wasn’t there I was in terror because I didn’t know what to do to make sure I was safe from 3:15 until my bus left at 4:00. And I’d often, I’d even call my mom sometimes to say, can you come and get me that day or can...
someone come and get me? Cause I would not want to be alone in the school for 45 minutes. That’s how terrified I was of high school. I used to make agreements with my mom to stay home. She never asked me why. But I’d say, “Mom, I just, I can’t go to school…” I literally, if you look at the school records, I probably missed half of the school time I was supposed to be there. And I would do work at home, and you know, because my mom worked in education she would get, she would talk to my teachers and get stuff so I could actually keep up. And I did really well.

William’s experiences of marginalization led him to intentionally seek opportunities that would remove him from his rural context where he “just couldn’t be”. In particular he sought opportunities to engage in exchange programs that would take him into contexts where he found less judgment and increased safety, having in particular a good experience in Quebec. Then, finally

…I just couldn’t take it anymore and I was also struggling with a stepfather I didn’t get along with, so I moved to Toronto at 16. I got my own apartment and went to Jarvis Collegiate for awhile and
decided that I was just gonna get out and be queer at Jarvis Collegiate. And it was amazing because for the first time people were like “Oh my God you’re gay – that’s so cool!” I was thinking, “What’s going on? This is bizarre.”…I didn’t finish grade 13 because I just found that I couldn’t keep up with school and had to get a job and start working…” (William, p. 6-7)

William thus articulates the need for social justice agitators and leaders to make connections with marginalized individuals and groups. The homophobia he dealt with served to radicalize him as an educator, in that his story makes clear the links between experiences of marginalization and interrupted, disrupted and painful formal schooling.

**Living in different contexts**

When asked how she became involved in social justice work, Gail recalled her experiences in Ecuador and the un-learning of some of her views. In particular, Gail realized that she had a problematic paternalistic view of international development and learned that the “problems” were not necessarily in the Third World, but in North American society and its socio-
political actions. These un-learning experiences in Ecuador inspired her to become a teacher. “…the reason why I even came to this work in the first place in terms of education was through experiences teaching in a popular education school, based on the ideas of Paulo Freire” (Gail p.4). Gail continues to discuss the (un)learnings of her internalized oppression and her own positioning of power and privilege in the global power matrix:

…my paternalistic views were that I could bring knowledge to other places, and influence change right? … I had this view that International Development… was needed in the “Third World” right, and that if only knowledge was gained from the first world …And so then going to Ecuador in my third year kinda blew my mind open and realizing ‘Wait a second, like, change needs to happen and it needs to happen in North America and we need to change consumption patterns and policies that are negatively impacting places around the world, but that the tools, the knowledge the people, the ideas, are all present we just need to kinda be in solidarity with groups of people in other places…” And so I realized that my role wasn’t there, but was actually here in terms of changing minds of youth… so that we could promote change here, and promote links to help groups that are
already trying . . . . working for change there. Which is why I decided to apply to teacher’s college… (Gail p.13).

Gail identifies the critical importance of personal growth, learning and unlearning through international experiences. She also concretizes the connections between critical pedagogy, practice and reflection. Her heightened consciousness of power and privilege enabled her to be critical of her own positioning and power relations locally and globally.

**Learning Through Educational Experiences**

Another critical life experience that participants identified was “Learning through educational experiences”. Four participants – namely Gail, Gordon, Larise and Kyle – identify a variety of educational experiences, ranging from traditional curriculum to experiences in graduate school and the learning required to be a theatre director.

Gail has spent much time reflecting on her own educational experiences. In particular, the Bachelor of Education program afforded her the time for deep reflection. As a result she has become aware of her educational success as being a privileged experience that others do not necessarily have. Gail explains that it was easier for her to go through the
education system since her reality was reflected in the curriculum. Gail recognizes that others do not have this same affirming experience and she works from this premise when doing social justice work.

...in general many of us [teachers] have come from backgrounds of privilege right, we have been success stories through the education system... and then have seen ourselves reflected in the curriculum which is why we decided to become educators... and in kinda recognizing that you know, my students haven’t had the same experiences that I have; and I have always been aware of those things as something that’s always been on my mind ... whether it’s teaching or being present for students one way or another, so that I guess it’s become the context over the last five years has become just life, life in general. (Gail, p.16).

Gordon’s commitment to social justice stems from his university education, first as a sociology student studying equality and more recently as a doctoral candidate. These experiences have taught him that there is much to learn about social justice, and about the rewards of commitment; “ I feel good about myself when I can make a difference in someone’s life in terms
of helping either them overcome certain barriers or circumvent them or whatever…” (Gordon, p. 14)

What I found is this has been the best learning of my life. I was a sociology major; I was Sociology TA at U of T for seven years in social equality. And I said to the prof around 10 years ago, I said, “The more I read the more I realize I don’t know.” And he goes, ‘Ah’. But the courses here, the discussions, the way that we can have friendly discussions, that we disagree with each other, but the disagreements are based on some good arguments…. I’ve really learned a ton…I said to Jamie [pseudonym] in an e-mail that coming to OISE. . . . You know attending the courses that I’ve attended with Padre, Mary and Jamie [pseudonyms], it’s kind of like the Matrix. I’m probably at part two now. You’re getting a better conception of really what’s out there.. so that’s what I kind of think of it, and I realize how little I know… (Gordon, p. 16)

Larise’s commitment to social justice was also cemented by her experiences in university. Under a socialist government her university education and activism were embraced, resulting in civic engagement and
participation in the rebellion.

Then I grew up and went to an all girls Catholic high school. That was highly oppressive in many ways and classist. And Jamaica is a very classist society and I rebelled against that. And by the time I got to university, when I was 18 I continued to rebel against that and the media talk of the injustices.

Jamaica at the time had a Socialist prime minister...who then talked about class and privilege and saw education as a great equalizer and paid for us to go to university and empowered the dis-empowered and it was just that (an expectation) that once you got your degree you had to give back.

So on Labour Day we would be picking up garbage, and there was this whole sense of pride in Jamaica where we were all cleaning up sidewalks and working in the nursery schools and we had school feeding programs and shoes for the kids and education was from cradle to grave and I was a part of that. So at age 18, 19 and 20 I was in the university demonstrating against South Africa (apartheid) and so you know, I was twisting my hair and finding my own identity in that process.
As Larise reflects on her history that rooted her commitment to leadership for social justice, she articulates social justice as an all-encompassing phenomenon. In particular, she identifies the lack of distinct boundaries between social justice activism in her public and private lives. She examines these connections between her activism in her academic/political life and her marriage to a husband who was also active in similar social justice movements.

I married my husband who was in the movement, who was from a bourgeois family, they had the class they had the power they had the prestige and the colour to go along with it. And I say that facetiously, of course you know how oppression comes in Jamaican terms in layers of the skin tone. Racism. And we again, in university I was the leader of a democratic students. And was fighting against the bourgeoisie and all of that. There is a book called *Who is American and Who is Jamaican* with the finding that 9 families own 80% of the wealth (in Jamaica). I had Trevor Monroe as an instructor...he was a strong Caribbean activist and you know I met an activist from Grenada- the one that got killed- and the arch bishop. So that is my history, my education at the University of the Caribbean. And so for
me equity is not coming to understand to see diversity and needing to do something, it’s simply something I believe in. I come from a world that was unfair to many.

Kyle did not get involved with social justice issues until his late twenties when he was hired as a theatre director at a local high school. While learning this craft, he became interested in participatory democracy. It was this learning and working with students that cemented his conviction that social justice work was vital. While reflecting on his position as theatre director and in his interactions with students, Kyle realized that in knowing how the system works, he could interrupt it and create spaces for multiple perspectives. This realization led him to reflect on his ‘moral responsibility’ as a citizen and his capacity to assist students in their own thinking. Kyle’s focus in his work is to provide students with counter and critical perspectives, so that they can analyze situations and make their own informed choices.

…I basically got involved [in formal education] because I was displeased with the system. Well I mean when I decided to get formally involved I was in my late 20s...I said I was never going to get
involved [in school] because I was so, like, “Whatever – school.” But it was actually through the arts and being a theatre director [in school] and through my politics that I had gotten into more say democratic participatory governance and contributions and even more organic collective creations and stuff like that...that I wanted to get more involved in terms as an educator and basically because I felt that that kind of perspective is not being presented in the system at all. And then I felt a moral responsibility to do so. That look, you are probably somebody who --understands the system-- can swallow the system-- if you need to and then bring a perspective that is either neglected or non-existent in the system. And I know from conversations of my peers, it’s pretty low ...and even so even if you are wrong, at least you bring another perspective.

Kyle is cognizant that he is challenging mainstream thinking and practices. He also guides students who are conflicted between different philosophical perspectives on education and challenges them to be critical and find their own voices.

…I often share my view on education with the students I work with.
And one young fellow said, “Well sir I got this one teacher who thinks that you know, school is the best thing. It’s the cat’s pyjamas, and you are saying that’s oppressive and it is terrible how we treat children and stuff like that.” He [the student] goes, “Who am I suppose to believe?” And I said, “Well if it’s public education shouldn’t you hear both perspectives and choose for yourself?” And he said “thanks”. And that’s what’s key, that’s what’s critical is that if there is even going to be even those types of changes in terms of pedagogy, that you have in other words those people who have that view and they are like, “I can’t work in that system”, as far as I’m concerned they have more responsibility to work in that system.

Kyle continues to articulate that social justice activism takes many possible forms. He believes that change can happen both outside and inside the system. While enjoying the privileged location of an insider, Kyle is committed to bringing real philosophical diversity and critical consciousness to education.

I felt compelled that I couldn’t just sit on the side; …I felt that I could not anymore not get involved. I had to get involved, and directly in the system.
Now I knew that I could not create or lead some kind of revolution inside. The system is too, you know, the institution is too deep. That’s where I see equitable things, and making it more arguably in terms of even the surface stuff. I think it is still important… so long as you understand the system. That just because you get a diversity of teachers, doesn’t necessarily mean you are going to get diversity of philosophies of education. But that doesn’t negate the necessity of getting a diversity of teachers, you know.

**Familial Experiences**

Participants referred to their familial experiences as being sites that cemented their commitments to social justice. Six participants – namely Kiranjoyt, Bill, Tara, Larise, Gordon and William – all recalled upbringing, values and experiences in their families of origin as orienting them to social justice.

For Kiranjoyt, her family life and traditional values heavily influenced her understanding of and commitment to social justice…. [my] *central values, I think, come from home. They come from family, they come from parents,*
they come from my brothers... (Kiranjoyt, 14)

Bill’s commitment to social justice is heavily influenced by his childhood experiences. In particular, Bill’s father, a Black man, was a union organizer and human rights activist in his own right. He organized and led a group of Black workers into striking against unfair working conditions; this was ultimately Black workers revolting against White management at a local foundry. His organized efforts led to the successful re-employment of the Black workers under fairer conditions. This was the first strike ever on the island and Bill witnessed this entire process, thus becoming oriented to social justice at an early age.

My father was a union organizer – when I was growing up as a kid... he worked in one of the two foundries in Barbados and had to get to work at 6:30 in the morning. My father got a group of men together and lobbied to get that changed to 7:00AM. Then, he became one of the union organizers within the foundry. His bosses fired him and then there was the first strike ever in the island of Barbados by workers, because this was an attempt by the white bosses to break the union. It led to a closure of the port, it led to all sorts of... the Government intervened, ultimately my father was offered his job back with
compensation and the union then offered him a full-time job and he went to work for the union full-time. But he made me very conscious of the injustices that Blacks, at the time, were suffering from and the inequities and he got me interested… he was the one who had me interested in people like Mahatma Gandhi and the plight of poor people in other colonies – at the time were probably colonies that were transitioning into independent countries...So, I think it started with my father. (Bill, p.6)

Tara’s commitment to social justice has been profoundly influenced by her parents. As one of the only visible minorities in her school, Tara faced much discrimination from students and educators. It was during such instances that her parents would guide. Tara notes that her parents had different philosophies regarding how to respond to discrimination - although both were “very strong advocates for autonomy” (Tara, p.18). Her dad’s advice was to view obstacles as part of life – something to overcome through perseverance – however, her mother’s advice was to stand up and speak up. Tara acknowledges that both of these approaches were valuable to her learning.
My parents are very opposite. They are both very strong advocates for autonomy and just seeing yourself as who you are and recognizing your power and your potential. My dad is more of the school of thought of “Well not everybody is going to agree but you have to know who you are and to stand firm with who you are.” Kind of like the Gandhi mentality [laughter] . . . It’s okay. . . . So there’s that aspect of me that clicks in every so often, and I recognize that it’s a long term battle and I’m okay, and I’ll say okay well, I’m fine. I know who I am and it will just take time. And then there’s my mom who’s “They can’t do this! You need to stand up!” [emphatic tone] My mom works for the nurses union actually. She is labour relations officer, so that’s what she does on a daily basis. (Tara, p. 18)

Larise’s’ commitment to social justice was deeply influenced by her grandmother. Raised in rural Jamaica, Larise learned about charity for the poor and serving the helpless.

I have become oriented to social justice by grandmother, who was very influential in my life who I saw was very kind to those in need. I grew up in rural Jamaica…my grandmother used to pick bread fruit
and other fruits from our garden and put it outside and when I asked her why, she said, “So someone who does not have can have.” So when you understand my history you can understand why modelling social justice rather than talking about social justice is just far more important to me, then pontificating about it... that is why I say, equity lived rather than equity minded. I had no place to theorize (social justice as per the lessons learned in rural Jamaica) at age 6-7, as to why it was necessary to give bread fruit to the poor folks or that why my grandmother took in a girl with sores and adopted her because her mother couldn’t afford to care for her. And at age 7 I was taking care of this little girl’s sores, bathing her and [mending] her sores, so they wouldn’t bleed all over her, and never thought anything about it. (Larise, p.12)

Gordon recalls his father being a moral steward in issues of equity. He further explains how his father’s profession as a sociologist had impacted his understanding of marginalization at a young age. He loves working with people, and his own experiences as a parent contributes to his understanding of how important kids are.
Well my dad was a sociologist, my late father, and he never stands for any racist nonsense or garbage. We would talk about issues of inequities and society at the dinner table. So my upbringing was the fact that I wasn’t better than anybody, that you can learn a lot through listening. (Gordon, p. 13-14)

William’s inspiration is his mother, an elementary school teacher. As a single parent, Williams’s mother had her share of struggles; she always remained optimistic, though, and insisted that William be at once respectful and yet go deeper in examining issues critically.

Yeah…she’s pretty hilarious, and doesn’t like to take things at face value and I think she taught me to sort of read between the lines but go a little deeper. Be respectful but question. Always be respectful in the way you frame things but know that it’s okay to critique…so, I think she was a very major influence on, you know, who I am today and, you know, I’m not nearly as radical as she is. Maybe I am in my own way…(laughter)” (p. 15)

Participants identified the vital importance of familial foundations as critical
spaces in which social justice was examined, discussed and defined. The family of origin was also a space where connections were made between faith and social justice. In the next section these connections are further documented.

**Faith**

Several of the respondents stated that faith was a motivating factor in their commitment to social justice. There were three participants – namely Tara, Gordon and Narinder – who named faith as a galvanizing factor in their commitment to social justice.

For Tara, her understanding of loyalty is informed by her Christian faith, which in turn animates her understanding of social justice:

...I think loyalty motivates me in a sense. My understanding of loyalty to my students, to whatever it is that I believe in. If I believe in it I’m loyal to it and I commit myself to it. My faith is a pretty strong motivator but more of how I gauge myself and how I keep myself in check, and just being aware of who I am. (Tara, p. 22)
For Gordon, spiritual beliefs and commitment to fairness also inform his devotion to social justice.

I would say I’m spiritual but . . . I don’t know if it comes from a religious background because I’ve learned a lot about the different religions, not just Christianity. I believe there’s many ways of knowing what you believe. My central value is that . . . I guess the core of me, and I guess it will go back to John Walsh’s issue of fairness in the areas that we can control as much as we can. (Gordon, p. 14)

Narinder’s commitment to social justice is rooted in his religious faith, Sikhism, which is centred on protecting human rights. At the heart of this doctrine is the commitment to defend the rights of all, even if their religious and cultural values are in contrast to Sikhism. Here Narinder intertwines his faith with the ideas of more contemporary leaders of social justice; he identifies Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and Malcolm X as leaders for social justice, insofar as they too made equal rights the centrepiece of their approach.
A lot of the foundation in terms of social justice for me is grounded in being a Sikh, where some of the founders of the faith not only philosophized about equity and equality but institutionalized these pieces. To think that 500 years ago that some people challenged the fundamental social status of society in that area head on at the most controversial levels of men and women can sit and partake in spiritual discourse equally, that women do not have to commit to society, that women can lead congregation. That an untouchable can sit with the king and they’ll sit equally and be treated equally. These were some challenges to the most fundamental social systems at that time in that era. The equivalent of saying, well Martin Luther King was asking that the blacks and whites be able to go into the same washroom, into the same restaurant, into the same school and look what happened to him and many other blacks that were killed, arrested, abused, assaulted, jailed and stuff… So 500 years ago to challenge those types of social norms in those regions and institutionalize them too is something quite remarkable. And then through that history too of fighting for the rights of other people to practice their faiths, which in some aspects of some practices we completely discredit it. So during the Mogul rule and trying to convert Hindus into Islam defended the
rights for Hindus to be Hindus although we didn’t believe in things like the caste system or… how to worship or during the Hindi rule trying to convert the Muslims, and although we don’t believe in fasting and a number of other pieces, defended the rights. So this concept of fighting for righteousness and social justice is kind of founded on that… (Narinder, p.24-25).

While faith enabled participants to make critical connections to social justice, it also afforded them space to learn particular values and practices to take into their everyday administrative roles. While applying social justice principles and values to their everyday practices, participants identified a disconnect between their learnings from their faith and the reality of lacking a supportive and collaborative work environment that embraced their approaches to social justice.

**Giving the Guidance that was not provided to them**

Two participants identified their dedication to social justice as being informed by their experiences of marginalization and the lack of mentors along their career paths. Having experienced these injustices, both Anise and Kiranjoyt are committed to providing opportunities to others in similar
circumstances.

Here Anise discusses her commitment to social justice work as means to provide marginalized students with the opportunities and guidance that she did not have, and how the success of her program testifies to its necessity:

Because I think somebody has to be there to make small changes, and the small changes happen, they do happen. Because for whatever reason the “Engaged Mentorship” program did very well it’s at the Board level and now they know that these are some of our students. Now they know that you have to try to do things slightly different for students to be engaged. This program has more student engagement than any other program Student Services runs. So I can get 300 people on a night.

Anise is cognizant of her positioning within the power relations at the university. She intentionally creates experiences and opportunities that assist marginalized students.

So obviously we are doing something and the image of the students is an excellent image of them, and they don’t fit the stereotypes…
they don’t fit the white norm of these leaders standing in front of the classes, you know, organizing adventure trips. But they are leaders and the administration is acknowledging that they are leaders, because I have got winners of the Dennis Mock award, which is the university-wide leadership award. And many of the winners are Engaged Mentors. And one of the persons they asked to speak on behalf of all the winners is an Engaged Mentor. And I’m really, really, happy that somebody somewhere kinda sees that they are valuable people and they have a lot to contribute. So that’s why I’m doing it, and I wish that when I was in university somebody did it for me. Cause it was a very bad experience. If somebody had even told me what a bursary was, what a grant was maybe . . . if somebody told me it was O.K. to feel the way I felt in the classroom, but no one told me anything. The only thing I did was “look screw you” and “I’m going to do what I have to do”. (Anise, 26-27)

Kiranjoyt has experienced discrimination at various levels within the education system. Her frustration with not being able to achieve her professional goals due to systemic discrimination has informed and cemented her commitment to guide others in meeting their goals. In this
passage she discusses her dedication to her students by making sure they feel included in different ways, including the school environment, curriculum and leadership.

...The activism, I think, comes from not being able to...reach the goals that I had for myself. And seeing that there are so many kids out there that have the goals and I want to see them achieve them...you know, and I think that’s my drive...is to see more and more of our youngsters actually in positions where they can help others feel as comfortable rather than spend their entire lifetime having to challenge and question and battle and break down those barriers and have to...feel uncomfortable. I can’t believe that after 26 years, I can go into a senior admin meeting or I can go to a PSSVPA meeting, that’s the vice principals here, and feel like a loner, and feel ostracized in many ways...um, and...the basic right of challenging the way I’m treated, you know, through a human rights complaint where they tell you that there is no fear of reprisal, or there shouldn’t be, I know for a fact that the superintendent will walk past me and ignore me, I know for a fact that the principal will sit there and stare straight past me. And yet when you file a complaint and you say “You know
what, I’m sick and tired of being treated like that, by ignoramuses,”
who can…who can do that in whatever way they want. And they have
the autonomy to be able to turn around and say, “Uh, we’re not going
to support you”…and that one person not supporting you can screw
up not one year, two years of your career. …Before I retire I want to
make sure that every kid that comes into the school environment, is
able to experience success and not feel disenfranchised…not feel
that that’s not the place for them. And I think the way that we can do
that is by making sure that they’re reflected in every, every aspect of
the school…the climate, the instruction, the program, the leadership
even…is providing them with opportunities that they know that they
can take away, that they can feel proud of. (Kiranjoyt p. 14)

In this section, participants articulated the critical importance of ensuring
that marginalized students, educators and administrators receive guidance
and support in order to navigate the system. Participants also identified the
importance of creating opportunities and experiences for the marginalized
in which they are personally affirmed and validated within the education
system. In the next chapter I examine participant conceptualizations of
social justice.
Chapter Five

Leadership for Social Justice: Educational Administrators

Conceptualizations

This section examines the educational administrators’ conceptualizations of leadership for social justice. When asked How do you define social justice?, educational administrators identified five theoretical conceptions. These were antiracism, the Freirian Model, inclusive leadership, anti-oppression framework and the Sudbury Model. The participants’ articulations varied widely and in some cases were conflicting; their ideas and nuances will be further examined in the discussion chapter.

Social Justice: Anti-racist Conceptualizations

When asked How do you define social justice?, respondents offered a variety of definitions. Five of the participants described their approach to social justice from an anti-racist perspective. While each of these participants – namely Anise, Kiranjoyt, Bill, Larise and Narinder – identified with anti-racism as an orientation, they differed in their emphasis of anti-
racist tenets. At the same time, the notion of a ‘level playing field’ was a strongly recurrent theme throughout many reports.

Anise characterizes her pedagogy as an “integrated antiracism” that includes the examination of the intersectionality of race and gender. She continues to discuss her perspective of antiracism as being centred on supporting multiple and diverse paths, creating a supportive and safe environment as well as role modelling.

I would say that it’s an interrogated critical anti-racism pedagogy, because it’s incorporating race and gender. It’s critical it is interrogated which means we are incorporating everything – it’s not just anti racism, it’s everything, but race is salient and that’s how I work . . . (Anise, p.10)

For Anise, social justice includes creating an antiracist environment. This means an environment of openness, discussion, and the acknowledgment of the importance of lived experiences. In this environment people can develop and have the freedom to express their thoughts.
Well, where I start is I want an environment where people can discuss what they feel and what they think. Whether it’s right or wrong… And I try to so the environment has to be there that there is enough freedom that people can discuss how they feel. So that there could be room to grow. Because there can’t be room for growth if we tell people “Well, you are wrong”. , and the hope is that they will come with ideas, where they will come with concerns and we are able to talk them through what are possible options or past experiences so I, more through narrative stories and how things are done, and how things may be and what would you like to do. (Anise, p.8)

Anise continues to reflect on the anti-racist framework and connect this framework to her leadership position. She maintains an emphasis on the importance of her role as a leader in setting the workplace tone and thus creating a more just environment. Anise highlights the significance of her work relationships with staff and students, in particular she discusses the importance of being a role model, of having integrity and being on the same page as staff.

I think that the role modelling and the fact that my integrity and what I
say is what I do [is important]. I am really consistent [with] everybody across my program, all the staff I hired worked very consistent with our message. Anything that we put on, anything that we do has the same focus. We try our best to take all of these things into consideration, you know if we make a mistake we let people know that we have made a mistake and this would be what we are changing next time. (Anise, p.14)

Anise continues to discuss how social justice means supporting the diverse paths that people choose for themselves. Her support of students crosses racial divisions; as a Black woman she also supports ethnic specific programming beyond her own communities. This means providing guidance, resources and administrative support for them to meet their goals.

Even when I was a counsellor I wasn’t the directed type of counsellor, I’m from the cognitive behavioural approach where you have to let people take the time to get to where they want to be. So on a social justice thing… they might bring something to me about a student group – they won’t give them the student group because there is too
many Chinese Student Groups. I would forge through and try to solve the problem for them. I’ll start to decompress and separate all the issues that they are dealing with and ask them if they have what they would like to do. And then at the same time provide information and support and resources on how they can do it and provide the support in the back end of it so they can move forward and can commit to social justice…but I have never called it “social justice” (Anise, p.8).

Anise identifies social justice as a way of acting, thinking and being. She describes it as being responsible for oneself and others, and being committed to this responsibility.

It’s a way of being, it’s a way of being responsible for the other people, it’s a way of being responsible for yourself and others… And many of us from different communities, we know that.. And so this is what we do, we ultimately do what’s right. And we work with people so they will do what’s right. Not necessarily us telling them how to do it, so it’s right, but so they will eventually understand that doing it this way, will have these results. And these are good results and why
wouldn’t you just do it this way (Anise, p.8).

Anise continues to discuss how she operationalizes social justice through avenues of training that include discussions and reflective exercises:

So in my program, in our training we do extensive training, equity, diversity – we do power and privilege but there are pockets of training which gives room for discussion, so people can come back to us and talk to us about “What did you mean by that?” “That made me feel really uncomfortable,” and I think that’s where the learning comes in, when it comes to social justice because they have to know who they are, and they have to have some idea of their own identity, and their own experiences and how they relate to the broader community, before we can ask them to go forward and do social justice. Make a change, cause they don’t know who they are. (Anise, p.8)

Kiranjoyt also defines social justice out of an anti-racist framework. Her application of anti-racist pedagogy applies to the educational power structure, to grass-roots movements, and to the socio-political strata played out beyond the school walls. Antiracism, therefore, comes from many different levels… “from a political action level, from a building resources
Kiranjoyt conceptualizes social justice through an anti-racist ethic centred on respecting basic human rights. For Kiranjoyt these basic rights include empowerment, justice, equity, opportunity and dignity:

Social justice to me is providing very basic human rights that everybody is entitled to, and social justice to me is even more than that…it’s an emotional connection, it’s an emotional responsibility to make sure that there is justice, that there is equity, that there is empowerment, there is an opportunity for everyone to be, you know, at a level where they can comfortably, and with each other on par, with each other…(Kiranjoyt, p. 3)

Kiranjoyt delineates the differences between equality and equity by using the claim of “colour-blindness” as an example that draws that distinction, thereby introducing “social justice” as concerned with issues of equity – having a “level playing field” – rather than sameness:

I think social justice for me still is having that level playing field. It’s
providing an opportunity where we’re all treated equally, ok. And when a teacher tells me that she doesn’t see colour that is not social justice. Social justice is being able to bring those lower than yourself up to a level where they will begin to feel honoured and also where they begin to relate, connect, associate, integrate, and feel that they are being treated equally. That’s the social justice piece. It’s what you have to do in order to be able to move that person from the level that they’re at now, which is disadvantage, to a level where they can begin to function and feel that they are being honoured and respected in exactly the same way, and treated in exactly the same way. And being given the privileges in exactly the same way as the mainstream. (Kiranjoyt, p. 7)

Further, Kiranjoyt defines her anti-racist perspective on social justice as requiring an emotional connection with those who seek out advice – students, parents, community, and school staff. She believes that making this connection is particularly crucial for Global Majorities:

Students will frequently seek out advice and so will teachers – they feel more comfortable...it’s an emotional connection, it’s an

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emotional, uh, responsibility to make sure that there is justice, that there is equity, that there is empowerment, there is an opportunity for everyone to be, you know, at a level where they can comfortably, [be] with each other on par.. I mean, it sounds ridiculous but when you’re not functioning at an equal level then unfortunately it’s very difficult to make those emotional connections. And… you really have to be sensitive and connected in order to be able to understand how the other person must feel.” (Kiranjoyt, p. 3)

Because of these felt emotional bonds, students who graduated a long time ago still contact her from various parts of the world (one is currently studying in Africa, another is currently at Waterloo) and at different stages in their lives. (Kiranjoyt, p. 17)

…and so the connections are still there…so obviously it’s not just the South Asian kids that are being impacted when you are committed to social justice or human rights…it’s about everybody. It’s about teaching students that respect about leadership, about that emotional connection…. (Kiranjoyt, p. 17)
Like Anise and Kiranjoyt, Bill defines social justice from an antiracist perspective. His conception of anti racism involves both thought and action. Bill characterizes social justice as the capacity to develop awareness, create opportunities, level playing fields, raise consciousness of equity issues, focus both local and global issues, and generate opportunities for informed choices, democratic processes, thought and action.

My definition of “social justice” is an awareness of and working of [anti-racist] policy, programs and activities that try to create opportunities, first of all, to even the playing field, make people conscious of equity issues and create opportunities for everyone to achieve to their potential. It involves a recognition that we don’t live in isolation, either in our local communities or in the world, and therefore we have an obligation wherever we can address issues of injustice, to address those issues, both locally and globally (Bill, p.2).

Bill goes on to illustrate his anti-racist approach as providing people with information to make informed choices, developing democratic processes and thus developing the capacity to transform and bring about changes in our world.
… first of all, I believe in giving people opportunities for informed choices…[which] means having a democratic process, but I also believe that all of us have the capacity to transform the world in which we live to bring about changes that improve the lives of others and cause people to stop and think about the things they do, why they do them, what’s influenced them, and allow them to see even the very language that we use influences our thoughts and our thinking. So, really, you get people to think about what they’re doing but also do something about it – it’s not enough just to think about it (Bill p.2).

While Larise also labels her pedagogy as anti-racist, she realizes the label has been highly politicised and somewhat sidelined. As a response, she is sceptical of the more recent and broader labels of critical democracy, social justice and equity – and uses them with caution, making sure to keep race issues in focus..

So my labels over time have been floating shifting and changing. When I did my doctoral thesis in 2005, it was ‘anti-racist’. I have noticed over time, even here that that term is not being used
anymore. We seem to have now to have gone onto ‘social justice’, and I am a little troubled by that, I do not know what that means. I think Canadians have taken up social justice, just as the UN has of course, so we do not have to talk about race – ‘social justice’ makes it feel comfortable….. And so that is why they have moved away from ‘anti-racism’ because of course it causes you to reflect and think about oppression, power and privilege and all of those things. So I label it, um… I do use the terms critical democracy, social justice and equity, however I use them cautiously. And I usually say “this is what I mean about social justice”. (Larise, p.18)

Working from an anti-racist framework, Narinder believes that social justice takes many forms, from hiring visible minorities for reflective employment diversity to addressing inequities within mainstream society. This includes providing safety nets for people and improving the quality of a person’s life.

Social justice at the end of the day I believe is trying to level the playing field, that is to opportunity, and then level the playing field in terms of what’s the game being played… so that’s actually moving to the next step of having people in positions that represent the diversity
that we’re looking for, and that’s probably an employment perspective. You were talking about addressing inequities wherever they may be in society. So it’s access to resources, access to people, access to opportunity, inferior treatment, inferior services… At the end of the day social justice is about quality of life and if somebody is not receiving a certain level of quality of life which should be expected, then it’s a social justice issue. If it means that they’re not getting hired and being discriminated against that means they’re not being able to provide both for themselves at the first level and their family if they have one, so it becomes an issue of quality of life (Narinder, p.3-4).

Although Narinder affirms that actions toward greater social justice take many forms, he is also mindful of the centrality of an anti-racist orientation:

I say start with race. (Narinder, p.23)… to be honest most of my work is being done as an ally. I only identify through the racial lens as a person although it defines the majority of my life and how I mediate life and how people mediate me. [In] almost every other position that I work on social justice I work as an ally, so that’s really the challenge
for people, do you know what I mean? When they look at the issues is that they have to function predominantly as allies on most issues. (Narinder, p.25)

**Social Justice: Freirian Conceptualizations**

Only one participant, Gail, referenced a Freirian perspective on leadership. In particular, Gail focused on making connections between students’ lived realities and the curriculum. She also used Freire’s conception of dialogue – deep and reflective understanding – to inform interactions with students.

When I think about pedagogy I think about that’s why I kinda use Freire’s Model - you know, Popular Education in the sense of when I think of ‘pedagogy’, I think first of starting with student experiences, recognizing their life experiences [and] connecting that to the curriculum right? Reflecting on that new knowledge... deepening our understanding of that knowledge and then looking to action. So kinda that cycle that continues, right? (p.12)
Gail continues to sketch this Freirian model as raising awareness and connecting issues to students’ lives and the lives of communities, and promoting equity among all groups – while examining systemic inequities.

I define a social justice educator as someone who is… committed to raising awareness, amongst people about issues and then also in connecting those issue to students’ lives and then the lives of the communities which we are a part of and then engaging in action to hopefully change, make more changes . . . in whatever avenue we see we want to transform…when I think of a social justice I think about promoting equity amongst all groups. So, looking at the issues of systemic discrimination whether it’s systemic racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism that exist in our society, and social institutions and trying to break down those barriers and promote equity for all.  
(Gail, p.3)

While Gail consistently articulates her vision of social justice as being centred on the work done by Paulo Freire, she also recognizes that context matters. Depending, therefore, on the context she is in, Gail will
intentionally use different terms to identify her work as “social justice”.

Other terms she commonly uses that define or connect her to her work include: equity educator, anti-oppression educator; transformative educator; popular educator and global citizenship educator. Interwoven in her articulation of social justice is her focus on leading youth to view themselves as global citizens and to view their actions as creating rippling effects worldwide. While Gail may use multiple labels to communicate her conception of social justice, each one of her references stems from how profoundly her approach has been shaped and impacted by Paulo Freire.

[People] similarly might see themselves as equity educators, as inclusive teachers who are involved in an inclusive curriculum, teachers involved in anti-oppression teaching… [I] sometimes referred to myself as a global citizenship educator…because I’m well thinking about global citizenship – it’s recognizing the issues that are affecting us here…. but then also looking at how those struggles are also international. And how… almost every action that we take and every purchase that we make has ripple effects internationally and so as a global citizenship educator I look at kind of how we can think about how we are interconnected with peoples around the world.
Whether it’s because we have come from different parts or, the things that we do impact out of racism so how we can not only transform our own lives but also then hopefully transform the goal of society. …I think being a social justice educator for me also kinda encompasses the global as well, but I mean [it] depends on what group I’m in. I might start off by saying I’m a social justice educator, or I see myself as a global citizenship educator or I see myself as a transformative educator, or I’m an inclusive educator or equity minded educator… I can define them all in the same way, but, sometimes I start with different labels based on the groups that I’m in because we all have our understanding and definitions…Oh I guess popular educator, cause …the reason why I even came to this work in the first place was through experiences teaching in a popular education school, based on the ideas of Paulo Freire that was in Ecuador, so before any of the other labels that I didn’t even know about, really.. I always called myself a popular educator… (Gail, p.4)

While Gail embraces a Freirian frame for her conceptualization of social justice, she is also aware of the impact of context on its application to lived
realities, in actual educational environments.

The next section continues this examination and analysis of conceptual understandings of leadership through an inclusive leadership perspective.

**Social Justice: Inclusive Leadership Conceptualization**

Gordon’s conception of social justice is informed by John Rauls and Ryan’s (2006) formulation of inclusive leadership. For Gordon, social justice is the pursuit of fairness and is inclusive of others’ realities.

My own… is similar to Jim Ryan’s and to John Rauls’ idea of social justice is fairness and Jim Tate’s of being more inclusive to make sure [to ask] whose voices are being heard, who is being left out of that. So a social justice educator I would define as someone who is inclusive of others’ histories, cultures, ideas and words. It has to be both their past and their present. (Gordon, 3-4)

Gordon continues to depict inclusive leadership as requiring an emotional connection to students, parents and communities. In particular he identifies the need to support students’ identities and
development of their self-esteem.

They’ve met the curriculum but they’ve also allowed the child not to lose her or his identity. And you can see, not only visually but you can see in their writing, because there’s a sense of pride when you are able to tell about yourself without being judged. (p.8) I’ve given them positions within the school so they can develop that self-esteem and [said] you are going to make it. (p.9)

Gordon underscores the power of these words we use to affirm students; “we can never forget how powerful our words are.” (Gordon, p.9) He then goes on to discuss the critical importance of awareness of injustice, the need to further one’s personal knowledge of injustice and to make connections to one’s own growth. In the next section, social justice is examined through an anti-oppressive lens.

**Social Justice: Anti-oppression Conceptualization**

Two participants placed social justice explicitly within an anti-oppression framework. Tara and William identified an anti-oppressive framework as being centred on redressing inequities that exist within society on multiple
levels. They both articulated that people can be both in positions of privilege and marginalization simultaneously, rendering the examination of inequities highly complex.

Tara’s anti-oppression framework is founded on notions of equity, one that does not entail simply giving people the same thing, but giving people what they need. This lesson of giving people what they need was taught to her by her parents.

My definition of equity – not giving everyone the same thing but giving everyone what they need: that’s how I explain it to my students and how I’ve been trying to explain it to staff because I find that a lot of us get confused with equity versus equality, and then we bring in issues of fairness and our perception of what we think is fair to us; so that’s my nutshell definition. How it comes into play in my pedagogy? I think my parents have always kind of brought me up in the mindset of being aware. Not being angry about it or resistant but just being aware of how power works. And when I finally got that, life was so much easier. (Tara, p. 9)

William associates the term “anti-oppression” with social justice pedagogy.
He believes that you cannot simply teach about one oppression without recognizing how all the others are linked.

I’ve really sort of adopted what I would call an ‘anti-oppression’ approach to education. When I started OISE grad school I wanted to do anti-homophobia education because I thought that was really important, and I’m not saying it isn’t, but I think it fits into a larger puzzle of, you know, oppression that exists in our schools. I think you can’t just do anti-racist education, and that seems to be a really big focus right now say in the TDSB, “Let’s put all our money into anti-racist education”…okay, that’s great… however, I think you can’t deny that apart from being racialized, students are classed, they’re gendered; all of these other things have to be considered (William, p. 7).

**Social Justice: Sudbury Valley – a Participatory Democracy Model**

Kyle’s definition of social justice is grounded in the Sudbury Valley Model. He identifies this model as centred on a participatory democracy that includes a radicalized vision of curricula and students’ freedom to learn.
...Sudbury Valley Model of Education works on that idealist basis
...how it works on a day to day basis is that it initiates learning so the students determine what it is they want to pursue that day. Nothing is forced upon them. With regards to the administration and running and arguably the rule making, we have a Rule Book which is actually quite dynamic, cause when students are in charge of the rules it actually ends up being more rules than when adults makes the rules [Laughter]. Cause I mean there are some things that adults would just like you know you just don’t do that, but these young people cross their “T’s” and dot their “I’s” – it’s so anal you know. So there is a rule and we meet weekly to discuss actually the motions about the running of the school, cause things come up on a daily basis of maybe we need to create a new rule or we get something new like, O.K. I’ll give you an example, we had a couple of acquisitions. We bought a guitar and we bought a bass and an amplifier. Now as soon as something new like that is brought in and could be a used by students and staff, we had to come up with what’s called certification procedures. So we don’t go on the bias that because you are older you know how to use it. We try and determine together, as
particularly the people who were instrumental in acquiring that asset, or arguably that tool for the students, we have to come up with a procedure that you have to – anybody has to – demonstrate before they can use it. (Kyle, p.5)

Kyle is a co-founder of the “Freedom School”. This school, located in Toronto, is founded on the Sudbury Valley Model. Here Kyle conceptualizes and articulates the Sudbury Model’s enactment of its precept “responsibility, authority and freedom”.

With the Freedom School…I mean first and foremost, it’s like you are responsible for your education… and that is basically a metaphor as well, you know – you are responsible for the right to self-determination. You know, so what are you going to do about it? The obstacles are yours, we are here to help, but the obstacles are yours to overcome, and what is it that you want and… is it worth going after or after two weeks do you basically give up because you didn’t want it? I would say the ones who succeed in the public system are the ones who conform to the system. And that’s what we are basically producing, we are producing consumers who will conform to…and
submit to authoritarianism (Kyle, p.13).

Now to me the most liberating times were when the students would go and play video games or whatever, and I said nothing. …In other words, they chose what they did with 75 minutes and no authoritarian was going to say whether it was wrong or right. Whenever I can give more freedom to the student in the areas that they take ownership of what they want to do and I have no moral objection to someone who wants to go to the video game for 75 minutes or something like that. If they want, they can play all day (Kyle, p.24). And I tell them, “Look guys, I will try and give you as much freedom as I can but if I can only give so much so I can maintain my position here… I think I can try and serve you better by maintaining here”, so it’s always a bit of give and take. (Kyle, p.24).

You pick your key moments. You know a perfect example is when I taught Law. They asked me to teach Law…I don’t have credentials for it so I thought it was funny getting an anarchist to teach Law. Well fine, sure, I will teach Law. And you know right off the bat, we open up the textbook and it says, “Why You Need Law”. And I said, “Okay ladies and gentlemen, I’m going to question this statement, ‘we need
law’. Why do we need law?”...so I said you must never forget that underlying question, do we need law? Don’t answer it like it does in the textbook and don’t accept this just because the textbook is so simple... (Kyle, p.35).

Kyle invokes the Sudbury Model of learning as a tool for eliciting and developing critical thinking among his students. In the next section we will continue to examine further tools and examples by which participants apply their conceptual understandings of social justice through praxis.
Chapter Six:
Examples of Social Justice Practice: Leadership and Social Justice Praxis

Introduction

This section reports participants’ responses concerning how they implement their conceptions of leadership for social justice. Their responses and examples illustrate an intentional movement toward social justice as praxis and that their leadership conceptions were in fact approaches that went against the grain. In the discussion chapter, I will further consider the participant approaches to equity as “intentional approaches against the grain”. Suffice to say that participants discussed rich and complex approaches to leadership for social justice. While these participant experiences are categorized into subsections below, these divisions are necessarily artificial. These divisions are false insofar as the respondents’ conceptions of leadership for social justice, and the implementation of social justice in educational programming, are not divorced from the context, environment and political landscapes within which they work. Taking this into consideration, I present the data under the following headings of Systemic Implementation of Social Justice
Programming (with the following sub-headings: Development and Implementation of Curriculum; Critical Professional Development and Training; School Programs to assist Traditionally Marginalized Populations (Rising Futures Program, Engaged Mentorship, Leadership for visible minorities, Freedom School); Provide Resources and Strategies to support counter hegemonic action; Strategic Implementation of Policies and Processes); Engaged Civic and Political Action; Transparent social justice approaches to programming; Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Congruence; subversion.

**Systemic Implementation of Social Justice Programming**

**Development and Implementation of Curriculum**

Participants reported that the development and implementation of social justice curriculum is critical to leadership for social justice. Four participants, namely Tara, Kyle, William and Gail, reported a central focus on curriculum.

For Tara, curriculum and the development of pedagogy are intertwined. Tara identifies the need to examine how power operates and is manifested
within society. She has been able to further articulate this for staff and students by developing and incorporating her pedagogical stance through learning units focused on “identity” and “perceptions”, which include teaching about race, class, gender, and other social justice issues with respect to popular media. For example, Tara discusses the movie *Crash* with students, as well as the race-based divisions on the reality show, *Survivor*. She compares these with real-life stories such as articles in the Toronto Star featuring race-based data on school suspension rates. She facilitates students’ coming to terms with some of their preconceptions and stereotypes – the ones they are subjected to and those they project on others.

I’m teaching them essay writing, so we looked at the movie *Crash*, which is. . . . I warned them, I said you are not going to be comfortable but you are going to learn something from it…controlled by society. So we watched the movie and their assignment was to pick from one of two arguments: that identity is controlled by the individual or identity is systemic. They are building their arguments and their essays based on that. We also have a debate. Every term I do a debate with them, so that’s going to be the topic of discussion. . . . The same day I brought out an article from the Toronto Star
about... data collected on suspension rates and what races are being suspended and being expelled, all of a sudden it was a different story. “That’s not fair! “That’s racist! “How could they do that to us!” “They are dividing us by race!” They went off. And I just kind of brought it to them “Well, it’s the same scenario. You are dividing people by race and trying to make judgments based on it. Why is it different now that it involves you?” That’s when it clicked for them that okay it’s not just a game, it’s not just oh yeah whatever, it doesn’t affect me. So that’s where I started with the identity unit. (Tara, p. 11- 13)

Tara uses public policy and research that relate to teacher and student experiences thus implicating and engaging them in issues as citizens. In this way she develops curriculum that teaches about power – the very ideas underpinning the hidden curriculum (a way of referring to all the power relations implied and enacted by our supposedly ‘neutral’ public school curricula).

I started off the identity unit looking at the race-based statistics that they’re collecting for the school board. Relevant, necessary to talk about — the census is being taken on Thursday at the middle school
– from Grade 7 to 12. It’s asking them questions about how they feel in the school… I try to get the students to look at how they fit into the equation. …I was talking about the principle of looking at an issue and not just stepping back and saying oh yeah, that’s too bad we should help them or we should feel sorry for them, but how do you play into it? And I find once they realize that they are part of the process I don’t have to necessarily teach the principles of it. They get it – ‘I contribute to what’s happening, so I need to help fix it’. So that’s how I deal with that in the classroom, and I’m still working on that with the teachers (Tara, p. 12-15).

…there is this hidden curriculum and the whole idea behind hidden curriculum. So I think you are doing a huge service by having the students really understand the structures and power relations so they can understand then even the deeper ideas behind the hidden curriculum, and they’ll pick it up as they go along. (p.21)

Gail also uses curriculum design as a site for social justice work, with a focus on development, implementation and evaluation. In this way, Gail works with teachers and students to bring about critical awareness of issues affecting marginalized groups within society.
…as social justice educators in terms of looking at the curriculum, and [thinking] how can I make this content more socially just, right? So making sure that the examples I use are recognizing whose knowledge is present, whose knowledge isn’t present, whose voices are heard, what are the values inherent in this content…what examples can I use to show these things etc., to promote kind of an awareness about social justice issues and then getting students kind of interested and then together wanting to promote change right? (Gail, p.7)

…in terms of curriculum it’s like making sure as a social justice educator using the curriculum to my advantage, right? And just infusing social justice in it and making the comment, any activities I do at the end of the unit and that’s kind of involved in getting students to see that not only can we be aware of these issues but we can also be agents of change…(Gail, p.9)

Gail worked with students to bring about critical awareness of issues affecting marginalized groups within society. With her students she facilitated a school-wide hunger strike; organized resistance to male
violence; created art work that was displayed throughout the school resi
ting popular culture; and teaches curriculum from a social justice perspective. Being there and being active in creating groups to further the social justice agenda is her practice.

...big themes in the Civics Class are on citizenship and active citizenship, so we ended up putting together our school’s version of the 30-hour Famine but we called it the West Toronto 29-hour Famine because we thought that instead of giving the money to students, or to people overseas who are also absolutely needy, that we would give it to people in our own community and so the money we raised went to creating a fund in our own school for students who are in need. ..We have always done an anti-violence against women campaign around December 6th, looking at the issues of violence against women, but also at issues of violent masculinity basically through pop culture and media… I guess I plant the seed in the sense [of deciding] the theme for the December 6th campaign, but they design what they want to do in terms of posters and other things...

William uses the curriculum as a site for creativity and innovation. He
invites speakers from the community and mentors to speak on issues that relate to them.

We bring in TEACH which is “Teens Educating And Confronting Homophobia” to do workshops on how to do coming out stories and how to make them safe – [asking questions such as:] What do you want to share in one circumstance that you might not want to share in another circumstance? How can you adapt your story? And the reason I think this is so important in social justice is it allows them to discover their identities and for the first time, share those identities. And that’s going to be that one common thread that connects each student in the program. Cause yes, they in some respect have a queer identity. Then from that they can see that okay, this person comes from this other community or communities and this person comes from that…but we all have this one common connection. From that you can build understanding, respect, acceptance and move from there. And that’s where we really…from that unit, if we do that unit well, we got them… But it’s a really great way to start group dynamics in September. (William, p. 8)
William has employed subversive tactics in meeting the Ministry mandated curriculum goals and learning outcomes while making the curriculum relevant to students. Here subversion means speaking directly to student experiences, highlighting the queer aspects of mainstream curriculum and mainstream media, and analyzing their effects on queer youth and how they impact the perceptions of the queer community at large. By subverting the mandated curriculum, William is able to make it more meaningful for queer youth.

**Herveen Singh:** Okay, I wanted to ask a question about the curriculum, the mandated curriculum obviously. Your school runs under the mandated curriculum yet you find all of these ways to be subversive within the curriculum, and still meet the mandates; they’re still getting their credits, they’re still going on to post-secondary school and getting their jobs, they’re still being productive within society, and obviously their self-esteem has been affected greatly because they’re able to go ahead with this accomplishment...how do you create space in the mandates, what are the crevices?

William responds by discussing the programming of the school, including
how the school day is organized, how the curriculum is manifested and the role of teacher and student:

Yeah, the way the school’s set up, in the morning students do independent study and in the afternoon we do group classes or teacher-led classes. So in the morning we have… as an alternative school, packaged almost all of the grade 9 and 10 curriculum into booklets so that students can work through a series of booklets together for their compulsory credits for high school. So that takes a big chunk off my plate. As a teacher, I’ve had to learn all that curriculum if you will. But it’s really easy – so you’re working on Book 18 of Science, I can hop in and go, “Ok so you’re doing the ‘cochlear implant’ okay, so, this is how that works.” And then I can hop over to Student B who’s doing, you know, Canadian history and we can talk about the role of women in WWII. So that sort of covers the compulsory curriculum. Then we work within the Health and Wellness, or Healthy and Active Living, which is Phys-Ed curriculum, and we allow students to create physical ed hours outside of the classroom and then we do a Wellness Unit every year, which is a quarter credit. And we make sure to do lots of stuff that are important
to queer youth, right. Around safe sex, around Sexually Transmitted Infections, that sex is good and fun and you can enjoy it, we bring in different people from the community, we take them out to the Health Centre, which is focused for the queer community… The rest of the units are pretty much English units, and the English curriculum, thank goodness… at the high school level, is very vague…you have to sort of meet these criteria, but it doesn’t say I have to use “Othello” in grade 11 to teach drama, right. So what I’m trying to…my focus as I’ve taken over, is to try to bring in more stuff that the English curriculum demands, but do it in a way that really affects queer youth. So, we do a media unit, and in every English grade level we’re supposed to cover media.

William is mindful of the need for students to be engaged with the curriculum and thus makes direct connections between the school text, student experiences and the realities of their social context – especially as regards gender and sexual orientation. He fosters critical awareness of the content and sheer volume of media that students take in daily, again from a queer perspective.
So what I do is I focus on... the principles of media. Like how the media constructs reality, how it’s a business, you know, those kinds of things, how it has codes and connections...but I tie it into queer perspectives. So, when we watch a show like “Queer as Folk”: What are we learning? What is mainstream society tying us to through that story, is this representative of our life? Have they constructed a reality that just isn’t possible? We look at “Will and Grace”, because that’s such a mainstream show, has that really pushed queer issues forward, or has it allowed a new forum for ridicule? Right? So we can discuss all of these things, we can bring in different opinions, people can write their own thoughts of it, we can look at pieces like documentaries, “The Celluloid Closet” that looks at the trail of gays and lesbians in film from the Silent Era right through, sort of, the `80s. We also do things like “culture jamming”, which sort of teaches a way to react to media, a way to bring it out, if you will, because you’re just sucking it in all the time. So they get to understand media a lot better and what an impact it has on our lives, and then how it impacts us as queer people in terms of our own representation and how we’re portrayed. You know, how successful are the “Brokeback Mountains” in moving our cause forward, if you will, if there’s a cause, but just
being recognized as, you know, humans.

The other thing we do, this year, for drama for example, I’m building a unit…based on Tony Kushner’s “Angels in America”…we’re going to look at the play, which is… done by HBO. We can analyse drama, we can look at plot graphs, we can look at conflict, we can do all those things that the English curriculum begs for, but you’re doing it from something that has a queer theme. And then I’m bringing in young artists in their 20s, who do resistance art, they’re going to talk about how art is used as resistance, and they’re going to come in for the second day of the unit. And we’re going to talk about that and we’re going to go out and look at resistance art pieces, we’re going to look at video… and then students are going to be able to build their own little piece.. So this is where I try and manipulate the curriculum.

Another thing we do is a video unit, as a final unit every year, and that unit works with the English curriculum, it also can work within the grade 10 technology course.. …I bring in a guest facilitator for the whole month, and she teaches students how to storyboard an idea…how to go out and video [an] idea and then, put it on the Macs, edit it, so that they can create a 5 min. video. So it works into that media component, it also, as I say, can go into that tech course in
grade 10, it can be used as a compulsory.

While William is committed to trangressive forms of teaching, he is also aware of the Ministry of Education guidelines and the requirement to adhere to them.

So we’re constantly using the Ministry guidelines, but doing it from a perspective, and I think more teachers could do that if they were aware that they could… But often, I think, if you’re in a big collegiate, you’ve got a department head who says, “Everybody who’s doing grade 10 English is doing, you know, Romeo & Juliet this year…and we’re all going to sit together and write a final exam” so everybody’s teaching to that final test, right. And it’s almost moving towards that business approach, or marketing approach, to education, which goes to that standardized test, [as] opposed to each classroom having its own community. Sure, if everybody wants to read…you know, Twelfth…(well I would use Twelfth Night cause it’s got queer themes!) (laughter). (William, p. 11-13)

For Kyle, curriculum design and delivery are critical to leadership for social justice. At the Freedom School, learning is student led in its purist
sense. Students decide what to learn, when to learn it and from whom. There are no traditional assessment measures and no formal curricula involved in this democratic approach to learning and curriculum:

The central principles of this alternative school derived from the Sudbury Values Model are: students choose what they will learn with the conviction that this leads to meaningful learning; students participate in the democratic running of all aspects of the school; no formal curricula exists, nor is there assessment in the traditional sense. Town Hall meetings and committee work emphasize individual responsibility as well as individual freedom. (Kyle, p. 13)

In his capacity as a teacher at a mainstream arts based high school, however, Kyle feels there is a contradiction between standard assessment practices which require a “paper trail”, and the discipline of drama which is more holistic. The students work for many hours outside of class on production set design, costume creation and rehearsal, yet they must perform pencil and paper tasks for assessment. In implementing this component of the Ministry-mandated curriculum, he compromises his own values, his idea of what constitutes the work of the unit, and he feels both
coercive and coerced.

While participants discussed the critical importance of curriculum, they also discussed the Ministry of education requirements and their often tenuous position of making the curriculum relevant to students while meeting the necessary Ministry mandates. In the next section, participants identify the importance of critical professional development in furthering social justice.

**Critical Professional Development**

Participants reported that the critical professional development of educators was crucial to leadership for social justice. Two participants, Bill and Tara, used a variety of approaches to engage educators in their personal professional development.

Bill wove his activist work together with the professional development of his team and other educators. He convinced his school board to take educators to the American NABSE conference on issues of race and equity. Bill also developed extensive equity policies, led workshops and presentations on anti racism and ethno-cultural equity issues. Bill co-organized a press conference and wrote to the Minister of Justice concerning equity issues outside his capacity as an educator, as well.
I’ve been involved in the development of anti-racist policies, I’ve been involved in trying to get the Toronto Board to bring teachers and administrators together to go down to the States and look at some of the things that they were doing, look at some of the policies and practices in the UK, which, back in the 80s, they thought was ahead of Canada, in many respects. So, bringing their resources here, making our schools aware of them, our teachers aware… I was involved in giving lots of workshops and presentations on anti-racist and ethno-cultural equity issues. So, my field was education, that’s where I had a certain degree of credibility and that’s the field I pursued. But I mean, that didn’t limit me, because, many years ago when many of us were concerned that the police were shooting people who either were mentally unstable or who were minorities – myself and a Metro Councillor and some other people organized a press conference to raise the issue and then we wrote after the Federal Government, the Federal Minister of Justice and the Premier of Ontario at the time, saying that these issues need to be addressed (Bill, p.8)

Tara uses her position as the Equity Officer at her school to provide a
platform for offering professional development, working with the staff and faculty.

At the Equity Committee . . . actually we spent about three meetings trying to figure out what our vision was, and I just kind of took the ownership and said ‘It’s going to be professional development’, because a lot of teachers don’t know what equity is. They think they do and they don’t or it’s kind of become this catch phrase of we do something so it’s equitable. Well then it’s not equitable for those students on the other side. (Tara, p. 13)

As a part of her leadership for social justice Tara focuses on facilitating dialogue among staff and faculty.

So the main thing right now is PD and my goal is trying to force the staff to talk, because a lot of us, myself included, are in this space where we recognize that issues exist but we are not able to confront them and discuss them and deal with them. So I’ve tried to look at different ways and just kind of forcing people out of their comfort zones and even getting them angry but just getting them to talk …
We have division meetings every month where the primary division meets junior and intermediate, and we brought up discussions about race and gender, just to get people talking. But again, people say what they think you want . . . they want you to say – so we’ve done that, but I didn’t find it very successful. (Tara, p.4-7)

While critical professional development is discussed by participants as important to furthering social justice, there are major challenges to ensuring that such development occurs and is sustainable. In the next section participants identify the importance of school programming for marginalized populations.

**School Programs to Assist Traditionally Marginalized Populations**

Participants reported that developing and instituting programs centred on social justice ideals was at the core of their leadership for social justice. Five participants – namely Anise, William, Kiranjoyt, Narinder and Kyle – conceptualized, implemented and assessed programs that are critical to the mobilization of marginalized groups. They were also active in supporting other initiatives that mobilized marginalized groups.
Here Anise, the director of the “Engaged Mentorship” Program, discusses the program’s vision and purposes:

So I run a very large mentoring program that has 1,500 students in it this year, who have to identify themselves if they choose to [they have to or they choose to? HL], and we match accordingly based on the needs that they have. It could be culturally, linguistically; we keep them for four years, so first year students start with us [and] get supported by a student similar to them. They move into second and third year leadership development, become a mentor themselves. In the fourth year we mentor them with professionals in the field they want to work. So it is a program that provides a holistic approach to their education throughout the four years (Anise, p.2)

In addition to her directorship, Anise furthers her commitment to leadership for social justice by incorporating her understanding of social justice into other educational initiatives. She is part of a group that involves people from all levels to research and discuss issues affecting the Caribbean community. This group includes community, faculty from different universities, and students all seeking opportunities to further research on
Caribbean communities.

... it means that faculty members are applying for grants that specifically deal with Caribbean peoples, and many of the things that deal with Caribbean people are about racism, sexism, and from different perspectives. It depends on the faculty members... we have the Jamaican Canadian Association, we have Marion Chambers, so there is a very interesting group of people that are interested in using research and using our connections to the community to build our community. That’s social justice. And students can join this committee. Oh and we do monthly research series so people come and report back on research that they are doing in the Caribbean communities. The Director of the Caribbean Research Centre ...suggested... [to] apply for grant money. (Anise, p.10)

In contrast to Anise’s involvement with racially marginalized students is William’s experiences with LGBTQ students. As the sole administrator for the “Rising Futures Program”, William provides critical programming and services to a diverse group of LGBTQ students.
We have students who live with their parents and get parental support and we have students that are living on their own because they’ve been kicked out of home. We have students who identify as lesbian, gay, trans-gendered, straight…although I think everyone else in society would label them as queer. We have students who have different academic abilities, be they working at the essentials level in certain subjects, whether they’re working at the applied or the academic stream. All in one class...

William goes on to talk about the program’s mission. He describes it as recently evolving, in part due to the increasing involvement of transgendered students, who bring needs that cannot be met in mainstream systems in ways that keep them safe (such as for washroom/gym class privacy).

It initially started out to create a safe space for students where they could come and learn about queer history, queer people, those voices that just aren’t in the curriculum, or, in the hidden curriculum, if you will. And learn that it’s okay to be me…, there are other people like me, there are places where I can go for support. The idea was that
they would transfer to another program, i.e. to another alternative school program to finish high school, [go] off to the workplace, or to post-secondary. It’s transitional in that a student would be here maybe a year or a year and a half. However, I’m seeing that change and there’s a few reasons that I’m seeing that change. Part of that is that we’re having more trans-gendered students coming to the program, and for transgendered students, it’s almost impossible for them to transition back to a mainstream or even alternative setting. They have to negotiate washrooms, gym classes and those kinds of things that we just take for granted. As a trans-gendered student you’re never going to be comfortable in a washroom that you can’t close the door and be by yourself, because you could be at various states of taking hormones, various states of perhaps going through gender reassignment surgery….. We have about 6 students in the program of 24 right now that identify as trans- and maybe 2 or 3 that are sort of considering if that’s a possibility…So I’m really envisioning the program as being something that should be an option for students who want to come from grade 9-12; however, always saying “yes” there are other places you can go – and encourage that sort of transition, but knowing that there is that safe place if they need to be
there for four years. This is the first year that we’ve actually had a student whose done almost his entire...he’s a bio-female but identifies as male, he’s done his entire education at our program. And it’s been difficult for us, being in that one room schoolhouse atmosphere, to make sure that he’s getting all the courses that he needs to meet Ministry expectations, as well as the expectations that he and his parents have for what he should be. (William, p. 13-15)

For Kiranjoyt, the constant lip service of equality with no equity measures led her to organize South Asian teachers into a group called the South Asian Teachers Organization. She also developed a youth version of this group that motivated South Asian students to become involved in education as teachers, researchers and leaders.

When I look at the barriers, the policies, the procedures, the inequities, the omissions, within the curriculum, within the system, within the hierarchy that are there and are almost impossible to challenge on an individual basis and that’s why it is so ...so crucial that we become organized. And that’s when the South Asian Teachers Organization came into being...which I chaired...yeah,
which is where we said, ‘Ok, what are the issues?’ And that time we listed all the issues, we said well, what are the challenges? What are the solutions? And how can we present them in a way that we can be heard? And then fortunately what happens when you are in the powerless position is that you can make as much noise as you like. You can do it in a very professional way, because we actually ended up going to the Ministry of Education…we ended up presenting, as a strong lobby group, as a strong group of educated advocates for South Asian kids, um, actually met with the Minister of Education at that time. The Minister…the Assistant Deputy Minister at the time. And then, later on… a race relations, uh, Minister, Ministry of Race Relations… who actually came to my school to consult with me at T.L Kennedy (identifying?) to say, ‘you know, what do we do now? With the South Asian students, with the South Asian issues, with the South Asian networks we know that we need to be able to partner with you or work with you to identify what those needs are and to be able to try and address some of those issues (Kiranjoyt, p.27)

Kiranjoyt is an antiracist educator who has engaged in a great deal of social and political action. Her definition of ‘antiracist education’ is
fundamentally about empowerment, and action that takes place in many different ambits. As well as “letting [students] feel the support”, Antiracist education, in my opinion, has to be [on] many, many different levels; it can’t just be, you know, just go into the classroom and teach antiracist education. I think it’s totally ineffective if that’s what’s happening, because there is a lot of resistance, um, firstly to get it in to the curriculum… I mean the classic example is when it was mandated by the NDP when it was, ‘we have to have equity and this is how it’s going to happen…and then there’s curriculum…and this is it’ but unfortunately, you’ve got to have the buy-in…and with the Euro-centric system that we have, unfortunately, there’s a lip service that’s attached to it but it really isn’t integrated or implemented in any true way. And I think antiracist education is making sure that you empower the individuals that are disenfranchised, and to be able to give them the skills to be mentors, to be able to help them understand what the issues are, and for them to be able to challenge in large groups, uh, those issues from many levels. From a political action level, from a building resources level, from an integration level, from a lobbying…it really does have to take all of those different avenues.
Like Kiranjoyt, Anise also developed spaces for ethnic specific concerns to be openly and safely considered among people of the given communities.

Here Anise discusses creating safe places for black women and men to dialogue about violence.

...the Caribbean Research Centre is social justice cause we just did something on gun violence and its effect on women. And that’s very important, Black women – because there is so much written about gun violence and men, Black men, those terrible black men – but that is actually affecting the Black women in the community as well. Cause we do not want to speak up against Black men, but they are also violent towards us. And so the images of Blacks in the media does affect women, Black women, and so we have to create avenues for discussion so people can see and people have the space and an area and a voice where they have been silent. So we do things like that...So there is a room full of people. So when we had the event on gun violence and Black Women it was packed room, there was nowhere to stand. We have to – it’s kinda like my program I have to
excel; I had to go beyond the targets and the numbers to be noticed and to be validated. That’s what we have to do with this, and it’s an exhausting role to be in. I mean you are constantly not given what other people are given, then you have to spend your whole energy trying to prove that you should be given something that other people just get and then once you get it you still have to keep working  
(Anise, p. 10-13)

Narinder has also instituted programming that focuses on the development of a mentoring program for minority teachers.

We’re developing a mentoring program for some minority teachers as part of the office, so there’s a number of different facets that go on to deal with issues of staffing that might come, for lack of a better word—complaints, although I don’t see it as a complaint office,…

(Narinder, p.11)
Provide resources and strategies to support counter-hegemonic action

Another critical piece to the systemic implementation of social justice programming was the readily available resources and supports required by educators, managers, communities and students to further their work. Five participants – Anise, Gordon, William, Kyle, and Bill – concurred that providing resources and supports was critical to leadership for social justice.

For Anise, this meant providing resources to students and community as well as explaining their human rights. Anise’s social justice work is also informal and includes providing information and resources to marginalized people within the community.

…I live in a building that’s subsidized so that means I have women in there from different [situations], from working full time [paying] market [rent], from welfare moms, but I’ll… talk to them about what they can do and what their rights are and how they can take a stand and move forward, moving through their own oppressions so they can build their
lives. Because some of them are stuck. That’s social justice. (p.10)

For Gordon, leadership for social justice includes accommodating those with different needs – such as language.

...Spending most of my time listening making sure that if a language is out there that I get an interpreter in, that I learn a few words in their language to welcome them when they come in. And they laugh at me because my accent is so bad [laughter] In our school with a larger Serbian population we’ve gone to Serbian and English signs up throughout the school for our parents, so modelling that. (Gordon, p.4)

William spends a lot of time one on one with students. He states that supporting students can go a long way, and that those who lead for social justice are passionate and committed to their work. For example, William talks about the student who learned to read in one year at 20 years old, and another student whom he helped apply for university and is currently a student at a major institution.

The fact that I often feel that we’re not supported by our
administration, by the Board, by the Ministry, the way that we should 
be…that really takes a toll…but I think, you know, the rewards as a 
teacher are just so much more in that if you really care about it, cause 
that’s the only reason you do this job, is that you see, you know, that 
one student who learns to read. And that happened to be my first 
year tutoring at Triangle, somebody who was 20 years old and 
couldn’t read, and by the end of the year, working with me, working 
with another tutor and the program, learned how to read, and you just 
go “that’s amazing”, you know. Somebody who for the first time who 
comes from a really working class background and says you know 
what, I’m going to be the first person in my family to do post-
secondary education, and you sit down, and you help them write the 
application and give them a reference letter, and they’re at U of T this 
year, you go ‘that’s a big difference’…” (William, p. 22)

At the Freedom School, Kyle provides supports for faculty and students 
alike through his pedagogy grounded on participatory democracy. He 
advocates for them to become oriented to “responsibility, authority and 
freedom and the right to self determination.” (Kyle, p. 13).
Bill has an extensive history in the field of education. Over the course of his thirty years in education he has accumulated many resources and has been involved in presenting a variety of workshops and presentations on anti-racist and ethno-cultural issues.

So, bringing their resources here, making our schools aware of them, our teachers aware… I was involved in giving lots of workshops and presentations on anti-racist and ethno-cultural equity issues. So, my field was education, that’s where I had a certain degree of credibility… (Bill, p. 4).

**Strategic Implementation of Policies and Processes**

Participants also reported that strategic implementation of policies and processes was critical to the progression and accountability of leadership for social justice. Five participants, Bill, Gail, Kyle, Narinder, Larise and Kiranjoyt, reported a variety of policies and processes that facilitated their visions of social justice leadership.

Bill likens his work to building a “critical mass” of like-minded people using
everything from recruitment and ethno-cultural and equity policies to activism within the educational system. Of strategic hiring and recruitment, he says:

...we had about five or six administrators who were of minorities, which was a significant, critical mass in terms of the overall... today, I mean, within two years of my leaving, they were probably down to only about one or two... (Bill p.8).

At the same time, of policy, he continues:

The board had a couple of policies in place that were difficult for them to reverse – like the ethno-cultural and equity policy, there was no way for them to actually reverse that, so I was able to use that to continue to do some of the things.

Also, I already had a couple of people in place – my associate director – and it was difficult to thwart the direction. I also believe that some of the administrators that we had in key positions and our other associate director, were supportive of equitable policies ...and we
were more concerned with fairness so that, for example, we instituted an online application to work for the Peel Board and that was a wonderful thing. A lot of people didn’t like it – I got people criticizing me for doing this stuff online. Well first of all, you had to fill out [the] form, you had to put in all of your qualification and everything, you had to put on your subject and we were then able to screen and pull people up. Your name didn’t come up simply because the trustee brought your application in or you would have sent or dialled up a principal in the system. It may have been an advantage to know people like that because they could tell you what you needed to help you fill out your form, what the things you should do that would be important, but the point is, you had to have the credentials. So we created a system that was shared …So what we tried to do was to put in place, it was important for me to ensure that there were mechanisms in place that didn’t have to do with me, that these were legitimate mechanisms for achieving fairness… (Bill, p.27).

As co-founder of the Freedom School and an individual against tuition, Kyle had to fight to abolish tuition while creatively finding other sources of income to maintain the school’s operations. After much deliberation with
educators, students and other stakeholders, Kyle was able to successfully introduce “Pay What You Can” measures, allowing parents to pay as much or little as they saw fit.

…that’s the biggest thorn in my side ever since the beginning. I mean I’ve always been able to understand it mainly because we are a not for profit organization: we have no money, we have no resources, and we are not eligible for funding by the government because we refuse to basically [force] the curriculum down the students’ throats. So the only way we can raise funds is either through fund raising or through tuition base or a bit of both….I said we cannot be turning away parents. WE are a start school and we have got a very radical philosophy of education we can’t be turning away families that support this. So [since] we are a democratic body, I put in a motion in that we [adopt] a three-tiered policy. In other words we have suggested recommended tuition, which is our standard tuition. We have a suggested minimum which is about a third of that off… and that’s kinda like the bare minimum. And then beyond that if you can’t meet the suggested minimum we have what’s called a special consideration tuition (Kyle, p.3).
Kyle provides a detailed description of ‘due process’ as an alternative to traditional forms of punishment, and of how it mediates grievances. The students at Freedom School run daily sessions of thirty minutes to deal with issues and complaints among the school communities. The second phase of the judicial committee work assesses whether a rule is broken and whether there should be a consequence.

If you have a grievance, it usually goes through a judicial committee…I would say our due process is very similar to like the courts of Canada and the United States, in the sense that you have got your typical infractions that are like parking tickets, those that would be the “clean up your mess”, and then the serious ones that could lead to potential suspension even. …so basically what would happen, like say for example someone had made a mess, …your responsibility is ‘you made a mess you have to clean it up’; they didn’t clean up their mess and someone writes them up… I find it really rare in a space like that where you don’t have adults being authoritarians that people are trying to hide their rule breaking behaviour (Kyle, p. 9)
As the manager of the equity office, Narinder has taken the opportunity to use the power in his position to initiate critical projects that lead to accounting for social justice. This includes setting a transparent agenda that engages equity at multiple levels from collecting ethnic data, to mentorship programs, to handling employee complaints around issues of equity.

One of the main goals initially was to implement a… process [to] analyze the information and look at strategies and make recommendations in certain areas where we can improve. And then what other areas we need to continue to collect information to see how we’re doing and progressing, doing in-services. (Narinder, p.11)

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strategies and make the recommendations in certain areas where we can improve. And then what other areas we need to continue to collect information to see how we’re doing and progressing, doing in-services. We’re developing a mentoring program for some minority teachers as part of the office, so there’s a number of different facets that go on to deal with issues of staffing that might come, for lack of a better word—complaints although I don’t see it as a complaint office, because that’s another piece of it. (Narinder, p.11)

Larise discusses the need to be strategic in how one positions an anti-racist framework and themselves while leading for social justice or working with new teachers.

You know when you go into schools and you start talking about anti-racism, the amount of work that you have to spend unpacking that is time and space that could be used for other things, (Larise, p. 22) …In a teaching ‘School and Society’ class, I do tell my students and my teacher candidates that I do operate from a position of anti-racism and what that means. But I also use all these terms interchangeably: critical democracy, diversity, equity, social justice and then explain
what it means from my critical position. It is also important that once we do the theorizing that we think about what does this look like, what does it feel like. (Larise p. 23)

Kiranjoyt takes a hands-on approach to the implementation of policies and processes. Over her long career, she has led home schooling through a community school for students who had been disengaged from the traditional forms of education (Kiranjoyt, p. 6) and has been capacity building with communities, parents and bridging partnerships and working them into the school for over 29 years. Kiranjoyt also reports the strategic implementation of policies around “meaningful practice” into (re)definitions of student success. Here she articulates meaningful practice as it connects to student success through an example with ESL students.

So, for example, an ESL student, coming into my class looking through a book, and just reading from that book, or going into a library that only reflects the Euro-centric perspectives, to me isn’t meaningful practice. But having a speaker… come in, and doing everything to set up that visit to the school could effectively provide that student with meaningful practice. What it does is, it provides an
opportunity for the student to make a connection with the speaker, to call the speaker, to develop a script, to invite the speaker into school, meet and greet them, to say thank you at the end…to be able to identify that there needs to be an honorarium or a gift or something that they can present to the speaker. So, they’re learning those experiences and being able to take them back home …so, everything that they’re learning within the class, how do they translate that into their own lives. To be able to write a script when you’re making a phone call, um, and know exactly what you’re going to say and how you’re going to say it, for an ESL student, can be a devastating experience. But to be able to do it with the comfort level and to be able to put it into practice, and to actually make the call and invite the speaker and have them come is a reward in itself (Kiranjoyt, p. 13).

**Engaged Civic and Political Action**

Participants reported being engaged in civic and political action that either supported or furthered their approaches to leadership for social justice. Kiranjoyt, Bill and Gordon discussed their civic and political involvement beyond their positions as administrators.
Kiranjoyt was active in politicking the efforts of the South Asian Teachers Organization that she chaired for over 18 years. She is also recognized as a strong community activist that has lobbied the school board and multiple levels of government on a variety of social change issues. Her involvement also includes roles as: an executive member of AMENO (an Anti-Racist Movement); a Provincial Political Action group member in the OSSTF; Chair of the OSSTF Human Rights Committee; and the chief Organizer for a milestone international South Asian Conference. “from a political action level, from a building resources level, from an integration level, from lobbying…it really does have to take all of those different avenues.” (Kiranjoyt, p. 4)

Kiranjoyt is also active in coalition building with the community, stating that “different aspects must come together for social justice education, such as special individuals, collegial environments, academic curriculum…. I think what makes it comfortable now is the fact that there are so many South Asian kids that are in the schools, so you can justify it…. (Kiranjoyt, p. 14-15)

Gordon’s’ advocacy centres on both educators and students. He is
adamant about assisting educators to help students “develop a critical eye”.

Teaching and inclusion is only one aspect. There also has to be advocacy - not only from the educators but also from the students. As they are getting older we talked about developing that critical eye. Look at your ads, how many non-whites do you see in your ads and what type of ads would those be and why do you think that might be. The inclusion has to be accompanied by the development of the critical eye and the development of their own advocacy saying well, I wasn’t listened to or this kind of excludes me. We can’t just tell them it exists and say well there it is. You have to… support them and allow for some democratic ideas going on so they can speak up and say you know what, my culture, my ideas, my history isn’t included in the way that we are looking at this. (p.5)

Like Gordon, Bill’s engaged civic and political actions focused on mobilizing educators and making them critically aware of the politicized reality of marginalized groups. An example of his activism and consciousness raising is exemplified here. In this case Bill talks about taking a group of 25 white educators to an all Black conference and then inviting speakers from this
conference to present to teachers at his school board.

So what you had to do is to look for allies – that’s one of the reasons why when I had an opportunity to take my staff of 25 to the conference I did… there’s a conference [of the] NABSE – National Association of Black School Educators – and the first time I went to that conference in the States it blew my mind. There were about four to five thousand Black educators from all over the States and these were high school principals for the most part and educators in colleges and universities and they were all Black… and the topics discussed there were very interesting...

I’ve been involved in the development of anti-racist policies, I’ve been involved in trying to get the Toronto Board to bring teachers and administrators together to go down to the States and look at some of the things that they were doing, look at some of the policies and practices in the UK, which, back in the 80s, they thought was ahead of Canada, in many respects. So, bringing their resources here, making our schools aware of them, our teachers aware… I was involved in giving lots of workshops and presentations on anti-racist and ethno-cultural equity issues. So, my field was education, that’s
where I had a certain degree of credibility and that’s the field I pursued. But I mean, that didn’t limit me, because, many years ago when many of us were concerned that the police were shooting people who either were mentally unstable or who were minorities – myself and a Metro Councillor and some other people organized a press conference to raise the issue and then we wrote after the Federal Government, the Federal Minister of Justice and the Premier of Ontario at the time, saying that these issues need to be addressed (Bill, p.8).

**Transparent in social justice approaches to programming**

Participants identified “transparency” as critical to their social justice leadership approaches. Six participants – namely Anise, Gordon, Bill, Gail, Narinder and Kiranjoyt – shared illustrations of their transparency in program development.

Anise asserts that on every opportunity she has – including consulting, conference planning, advising and counselling – she is transparent in her antiracist perspective.
...even though they asked me to talk more about mentoring, coaching, and Board development I would throw in equity from an anti-racist perspective, which is what the Board really needs. So that would be my role in social justice, without actually calling it what it is. (Anise, p.10)

For Anise, the characteristics of a social justice educator include: an attitude of collectivity – approaching the work from the perspective of “We” instead of I; fostering lifelong learning; going out of the way in order to make things easier for others; and an interest in the betterment/development of everyone.

...you can see it in the writing. Or in the way somebody speaks. It’s the “I did it”, and “I changed them”, and “I’m a contributor to this” and “I’m the one that made these things happen”, or “I was really proud when my students came back to me and told me on how successful they are”...and they felt very proud of themselves. There is a difference between the student coming back to you and saying thank you, you really changed my life, or thank you I’m doing so great. In other words they own it as something they are doing for
themselves… I am looking for people that go out of their way to make things easier for other people to get involved. And… I might be more interested in the leader who is organizing women, Muslim women and group meetings to deal with issues and they have you know bake sales or whatever… than somebody who says, “I’m the President of this course union”, “I’m the President of that course union”, because the other people are more interested in the development of everyone and the moving forward of everyone in the process… (Anise, p.9).

Gordon discusses how his approach to transparency in social justice programming stems from being aware of a Eurocentric bias, which also includes a critical examination of the extra-curricular events at his school. Here Gordon looks at the importance of hosting inclusive events:

In being aware of Eurocentric bias…we did a number of things especially around Black History Month where we had a radio station from York University come in and do a simulcast. Carl James was a moderator from York, and myself and an equity principal from Toronto and one of our parents — school council were there. And we talked
about (my school was George Syme) what was George Syme {not real name/identifying detail?} doing to make sure that we welcome and made our families feel proud of who they are. And so we had that, as well as we had our children of all cultures doing a West Indian dance and singing. It was a beautiful night. To understand who we are serving, to learn about their customs. And that the staff dressing during Diwali – all our female teachers dressed in the celebration dresses. And it was just a very, very warm environment where you have people learning where each other is coming from. Of course, we weren’t completely there but man were we on the money. (Gordon, p.7-12)

Gordon goes on to say that the school, its environment and its student base is a priority, before restrictive policy and other external constraints.

If policy comes down we’re doing certain things, but my focus tends to be on the kids in the school at all times. And yet, if some funding gets cut then we keep going back to what are our priorities in the school. And if our school is focused on inclusion and we’ve lost some money in some areas that’s going to affect them, if that’s our priority
then we are going to have to take away from somewhere else. I don’t tend to look much beyond the walls of the school . . . if we are not focusing on that environment someone is losing out. Do outside forces impact? Sure they do, but kids are still kids. (p. 11)

Bill is transparent in his approaches to equity work as he challenges his peers’ and superiors’ individual attitudes and actions. Here he discusses challenging a White superior in his attempts for consciousness raising around issues of equity.

...when I was with the Green Board, this goes back into the 70s, I recall the Ontario Government bringing out a document on multiculturalism. I was working out of the board office at that time as Admin. Assistant and one of the superintendents called me and said, “I’ve got a document here for you. This is about immigrants and Black people and, so I think this is for you.” So I said, “I’m afraid you’ve got it wrong.” He said, “What do you mean?” I said, “This document is for you.” I said, “Canada is changing, and this document is going to help people like you who don’t see this. Understand what the implications are for the changes.” We had an interesting conversation because I
was his junior speaking to him like this and I think he was a little... they all knew me as someone who spoke quite frankly, but I think he was surprised that I said, “This is for you.” And we got in an interesting conversation that day (Bill, p.3).

Gail’s transparent approaches to social justice programming are directly focused on the students. In working with the students her main role is to provide tools, strategies and open opportunities for students to achieve.

...so I think it’s love [and] learning to really understand them but then provide the tools and the strategies to them, make sure that the opportunities are open for them by working in the curriculum but then also, but also kinda talk... I mean something I spend a lot of time doing because of caring about these students is, you know, whether talking to other teachers, or going down to the vice principal’s office with them, or helping them draft letters, or writing reference letters when they have to go to courts, or giving them my phone number and having them call me at 11:00 at night or, you know, a student who just graduated two years ago who . . . went off to university and tried to
commit suicide a couple weeks ago, and so another teacher and myself planned a strategy, over the March Break to get him out of Toronto and spend the week with him at my house to be able to get him motivated, so like the love doesn’t stop when they leave the school right? We didn’t end up [doing that]… what we did though is spoke to three social workers, spoke to the [XYZ] Institute, because there is other issues involved and kind of to see what the best strategy was, but it’s – I guess loving the students is going beyond the 75 minutes that you are with them. You know? (Gail, p.5)

Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Congruence

Participants identified that engaging the affective domain of people was critical to their social justice approaches. Two participants, Kiranjoyt and Gordon, identified the many traditional facets of this domain along with meditation and spirituality.

Kiranjoyt engages the whole person in learning – including the spiritual, through the practice of meditation. Here she discusses challenges to a successful meditation pilot program that she developed for Special
Education students. The data results demonstrated that students measurably improved and thrived as a result of this meditation. However, Kiranjoyt faced a lack of buy-in for different or alternative initiatives from her administrator, and resistance to having the results publicized.

...same Board, same system, doing the same things. I mean a classic example is, it was what, now, three years ago...I introduced a pilot program on meditation within the Special Ed department...and the teachers monitored it. We saw a significant improvement in the students, you know, based on the indicators that we had identified...so we were looking at things like focus, attendance, punctuality, homework completion, and so on and so forth. Teachers identified all of the areas of improvement within those Special Ed kits, and we saw that it was effective, it was demonstrated in the data, and yet when I asked the principal to publicize that data within the same school, all of a sudden it was shoved under the carpet and it was ‘well we need to move on with something else...’ So although they let me run with it because they couldn’t see any sound reason for them to be able to say no, they allowed me to run with it, but yet they weren’t really prepared to commit to it in any way.... my principal
totally did not support, you know, the work that was done. (Kiranjoyt, pg. 4)

Kiranjoyt also articulates that the emotional connection is critical to students and is an important resource of support.

It’s their only avenue of comfort because when they’re in the classroom they’re constantly being bombarded by, not just a different language, but a different experience, and a different culture…all of that, and yet, you’re taking away that one piece that makes them, honours them, and gives them the integrity that they’re looking for when they’re in the classroom, when they’re in school...some teachers do give it...they give them that emotional support that they need. Students will frequently seek out her {whose?}advice and so will teachers – they feel more comfortable. (Kiranjoyt, p. 8)

So we can say yes, I know for a fact through all of my experiences that it’s crucial and integral to, especially visible minorities, to be able to have that connection...and so the connections are still there...so obviously it’s not just the South Asian kids that are being impacted
when you are committed to social justice or human rights…it’s about everybody. It’s about teaching students that respect about leadership, about that emotional connection. Students need emotional connections and support. This is why they will sit with each other (members of the same ethnic, racial, religious groups) in the cafeteria. Some teachers see this as a problem but it is not. It makes sense for students to be in their comfort zone, when given a chance:

(Kiranjoyt, p. 17)

In Gordon’s experience he has come to realize that school may be the only place that some students and their families get societal affirmation and recognition. He is keen on letting the parents of marginalized kids know that their kids are going to make it despite the odds. To this end he reaches out to students and their families in a variety of ways.

So the context again, is beyond good teaching; it’s really connecting with those kids and letting the parents know their kids are capable because there are some times the message that our marginalized parents get from society [is] that you know what, you are not going to make it. And we have to let the parents know that your kid is smart,
your kid can do it, and we believe in them. (Gordon, p.10)

In newsletters to families, we talk about how proud we are of their children, because we might be the only place they hear it from, as well as giving them leadership roles within our school. (Gordon, p. 5)

For Gordon, the emotional connection involves supporting student voices and validating their realities; he says [we] “have to find out who are the children in the classroom, what do you know about them and find out about the culture.” (Gordon, p.8) It also cannot be accomplished without ensuring that students’ basic needs are being met:

The inclusion has to be accompanied by the development of the critical eye and the development of their own advocacy saying well, I wasn’t listened to or this kind of excludes me. We can’t just tell them it exists and say well there it is. You have to give them and support them and allow for some democratic ideas going on so they can speak up and say you know what, my culture, my ideas, my history isn’t included in the way that we are looking at this. (Gordon, p.5)

Again, for our kids who had nothing we did a lot of work to make sure
they had food on their table, find out who they are. That’s part of it too. The kids have to eat. With social justice we talk about inclusion but if they don’t have any food in their tummies . . . and being aware and caring about kids, so those were the big ones. (Gordon, p.7)

**Subversion**

William identified subversion as critical to his social justice leadership, insofar as it is a powerful way to make the curriculum goals and learning outcomes relevant to students. Here, he articulates subversion to mean directly engaging students’ experiences, and using the curriculum as an opportunity to foster and establish a sense of community. At the Rising Futures Program, he starts off every year with a very important “Coming Out” unit; for most students it is the first time they have seen their experience reflected in literature and other media.

The focus of that unit is to give students an opportunity to read a novel or a collection of stories or something, an anthology of poetry that has a queer theme. So often for students it’s the first time they’ve
ever read, you know, a novel, or something with a queer theme and they’re like “Ohmigod, this is so cool” and we have a whole library of them…. And we have that from writers from various cultures and religious backgrounds – that’s really important so that we can sort of say, you know ‘What’s your interest… tell me a little bit about yourself, let me help you find something to read, and I can suggest two or three things and then you choose one and you can go with it’.” (William, p. 8)

William also encourages students to share and interpret their own biographical experiences and stories of being queer through the “coming out” unit.

Another thing we do through this process… is we craft our own coming out stories. And the really important part is not only do the students do it, the teachers do it. The aim at the end of the three-week unit is that we’ll have a story-telling circle. Every person will have that opportunity to share their story. And they don’t have to write the story as, you know, ‘Introduction. Body. Conclusion.’ (laughter) We allow them to do it in the form of poetry…we allow them to do it
as a story... as diary entries... as whatever way they want to get it out, right? As long as they’re expressing some ideas. We get them to workshop it with their peers, with us as teachers, we give them feedback, we get their peers to do feedback. (William, p. 8)
Chapter Seven: Barriers to Social Justice

This section examines the barriers to leading for social justice in diverse contexts. All of the participants reported encountering multiple barriers in leading for social justice. While I have organized the barriers under subheadings, participants’ experiences overlap and each barrier is connected to and informs the other. Thus these categories are artificial delineations and better understood within the context of each participant’s work and personal contexts. The barriers have been divided into the following subheadings: Politics of Race; System and Structure; The Personal Costs and Consequences in Leading for Social Justice and; Ideological: Bankrupt Notions of Equity.

Racism

Participants identified that concepts related to race and racism were major barriers in leading for social justice. Six participants – namely Anise, Kiranjoyt, Kyle, Tara, Larise and Narinder – identified critical ways in which issues of race operated in their day to day activities.
Here Anise identifies being a racialized person as leading to being the “only one of a few”, indicating that the lack of “visible minorities” throughout the university is problematic. She also acknowledges that her department within student services is the only department in the university that employs a lot of visible minorities and is solely responsible for the recruitment of other minorities.

All right, well I’m within Student Services... When I joined the university, I could name, I could name right now everybody that’s visible minority…and I would say Student Services is the most diverse and most accepting department in the university. So when I started there was myself, the Aboriginal Coordinator, and somebody that was doing the accounting, a Chinese person. …Now there is more, there is more because of me . . . I regularly sit on different hiring committees through areas that have nothing to do with me. Simply so I could be encouraging on the things that we might do that might exclude people …(Anise, 4-5)

Since Anise is “only one of a few”, she feels that the onus of responsibility to defend marginalized communities is placed on the
racialized/marginalized person in the position of power. Anise states that it is difficult to have visible minorities hired and that she is often the only one pressing for it to happen. This puts her in an compromising position where her reputation and ‘judgement’ are put on trial – if the minority works out well, she is not noted as choosing a great candidate, meanwhile if the candidate is not a good worker, she receives backlash for hiring a poor candidate. Anise is thus in a precarious position: hire an applicant based on colour and qualification. The social justice work becomes complicated when you are the only visible minority on the hiring committee and the candidate whom you are championing may or may not disturb the status quo, while if that candidate does get hired and anything goes wrong, you are deemed responsible.

…one hiring process, the person actually commented that this individual who was better than everybody was from India and her mannerisms would not set well in this environment. That was the word. “Excuse me?” . . . that was my response . . “Excuse me?” And then I went on to spell [out] our policies [on] what’s acceptable and not acceptable, and whether she fits or not is not the question it’s how the environment adapts to these differences… And they hired
her, but if that person failed I will take the backlash on that. Not because we have all picked somebody that we all agreed to but because me defending the fact that this person’s status, visible status was not something we should be looking at will come back one day, if she doesn’t work out, and say “Anise cannot be impartial”. And so even a decision that is the right decision… will ultimately come back at me if that person does not succeed. However if that person actually does succeed it won’t be credited to me, it will be credited to the person who hired her (Anise, p.6)

Anise is also tokenized: as one of the few visible minorities at the university, Anise states that this requires her to be the ‘token’ on a variety of committees, as the only racialized person (usually the case because each committee wants at least one racialized body sitting on it, and there are so few racialized employees to go around). Thus, while she is highly active within the University, there is a serious lack of recognition for the extra work – on top of her actual job – that she does sitting on these committees.

…They use my visibility as a what you call it, like a shiny star. “See
what we are doing”, but they don’t give the respect or the value for the amount of time it takes me to participate in all these things… The Aboriginal Coordinator is all over the place, she is the only one… and [it] is very time consuming, but there isn’t [any] acknowledgement that this… could affect my work load, it is just assumed that you would enjoy doing these things… and I’m not saying I don’t enjoy doing them and I know it is important that I’m there, but the balance is a very hard thing to find (Anise, p.6) [There is no recognition] other than thank you for participating on the hiring committee and the people that ask me to be on this committee, they are actually excellent people. But they are not people that you know do my performance review at the end of the year. (Anise, p.7)

Her final comment, above, demonstrates the potential injustice that attends these severe institution-wide power imbalances. It is further apparent that there are serious issues of racism and sexism throughout the power structures of the university; “if you see a Dean they are not females, unless it’s Community Services.”

Anise goes on to identify the lack of research on Black populations as
a source of tension. Such research is limited, not encouraged and not valued within the academy. Consequently, professors are hesitant to engage in Black-focused research knowing they may experience backlash for it.

There is no research. No one cares and it’s devalued. If you do it, it is devalued and that is part of the faculty’s problem: they need tenure …and the people that are going to be judging the tenure really do not care about any of this. And so the faculty members are in a very, very bad position. Because we want them to become more involved with the Caribbean Research Centre, to build it cause they are young faculty, however, they… can’t put in the research time to do something focused on this, because the faculty that will be assessing their tenure probably isn’t valuing this kind of work. (Anise, p. 11).

Anise has also identified her work of serving the marginalized as being constructed by others as giving “special treatment”: Within the university, the mentoring program receives major backlash from white faculty and staff, some of whom do not care to understand what it is at all. People want the mentoring program to expand and open to white students; however, the
goal of this program is to serve the diverse student body. In any event, the program is open to everyone; it is simply geared toward the needs of racialized students and newcomers. Anise strongly reacted to this backlash and has continued to fight any stigma or discriminatory actions taken against the mentoring program.

Meaning that it shouldn’t be just for them, which is not just for them. It’s just geared towards them. Anybody can join me, white students like every other students. But it’s geared towards their needs, their unique challenges, but now I was told that year, after year, you need to now broaden it. For more, do you not take a look at our campus and see who our students really are. They are in this program. We are keeping the focus where we are. We are not making it an “At Risk” program and they wanted to put it in with the English as a Second Language and stuff. I totally freaked out. Because. .  we do not want them to feel stigmatized, alienated and being see as “At Risk” because they happen to have these barriers. We want to work with them on some of their experiences and how they can use this for future growth and development. So it’s a totally different way of seeing something. (Anise, p. 17-18)
Anise and her program are under scrutiny by the mainstream staff and faculty. The common complaints are that her programming is exclusionary:

[They say] “You can’t call your program that because it’s excluding people”. [Well], that flame you are using for student success, looks like the Statue of Liberty and many of our students are not going to relate to that! Things like this that we are just pointing out simple little things that are like everyday experiences that we may have when we look at something, but we are always on our own (Anise, p.23)

Here Anise considers the privileging of whiteness, whereby a white person doing equity is privileged as a hero, while the racialized person seen as desperate or self serving. Anise has experienced her ideas and thoughts not being taken seriously, and labelled “over sensitive” at meetings; as a response, she has even decided what she wanted to say beforehand and had a white person present these ideas to the larger group.

Anise: I have even asked White people on the Equity Committee with me to do to speaking instead of me

Herveen Singh: Why?
Anise: Because they won’t value what I have to say if it comes from me. It’s just from me and Monica again, being over sensitive. But if a White person said it, they are more likely to listen and think it’s valid. Unfortunately it’s the truth. So I was asked to Chair the Equity Committee, I said no, I was told to Chair the Equity Committee and I said no, I said I will co-chair it with somebody who is White. Herveen Singh: Why? Anise: because I knew that they would listen to a White male over me. . . and I wanted the work of the Equity, the equity work to move forward, and it will not move forward into the broader stream if it is seen as a . . . my problem or the Aboriginal person’s problem. (Anise, p.23)

The consequences of privileging whiteness, according to Anise, operationalize racism among “supposed equal counter parts”. Here we see the white person doing diversity work being viewed as doing good work, versus Anise who is viewed as doing the only work she knows how to do - thus devaluing her work and undermining her expertise and knowledge.

So basically, I can’t even take on certain roles that would be good for
me, because they are not seen as good for me because I'm a person of colour, but if I was a White person in that role it would be seen as a developmental opportunity and it would be used to promote me. But because I'm a person of colour... it is devalued and it is seen as “see that's all she can do”. (Anise, p.24)

Anise also finds it difficult to find role models and mentors for herself. In the stratified structures of the university, there are too few visible minorities in positions of power. In transitioning from one type of administrative role to another, for example, Anise was unable to find any Global Majority leaders – in her own or other universities – with the relevant skill sets to guide her. The lack of mentors compounds another problem, that of being pigeonholed, Anise sees her social mobility as paralysed by being pigeonholed, in that she was hired to fill a race mandate and was not hired as an asset to be promoted through the ranks, clearly a systemic issue. Anise states that visible minorities are not in positions of power because they are hired to fill a minority mandate, and not advance their own careers and take a meaningful share of institutional power.

...And why there isn't anybody in those positions because they don't see us that way. Because usually when we get into the university
system we get in because we are working with visible minorities.

How many visible minorities have they hired to be their Financial Aid Manager? …None that I know. So maybe there is out there, I doubt it. How many Managers of Health Centres, counselling Centres are minorities? I would imagine that’s zero. So they already don’t exist, and they don’t exist, because they don’t see us in those positions, because when we come into the university usually, we get hired under those Visible Minority mandate…(Anise, p.24-25)

The social mobility barriers presented by Anise’s race often mean that she has to work harder and achieve more than her white counter parts – clearly true in an environment where some will get a permanent job position with their Master’s degree, while Anise feels she needs a Phd to legitimize her knowledge.

I want to be a Chair, a Director, Dean of Students something like that. That’s what I want…My tri-mentoring program is successful; I don’t want to do that anymore. I want to do something else, and to move into something else I really need somebody to show me how to do it… but I can’t find anybody who has actually done it. So that’s what
one of the things that I need to be successful, I do need my M.A.
Other people can go further without their M.A. but I won’t be able to.
And I think I had better get my Ph.D. or it’s not going to happen.
That’s what I think… (Anise, p 27)

Anise explores the optics of socialization that set up a situation where
befriending other racialized people triggers being labelled, and having
one’s credentials called into question. Thus visible minorities in positions of
power struggle with the politics of the system: if they associate themselves
with other minorities they will be marginalized and their credentials will be
called into question, as opposed to those bodies in the mainstream. There
is a lot of politics around associating with too many people of colour. In
addition, visible minorities know this is the way the environment operates
but do not dare talk about it due to fear of reprisal.

And she is Black and… there is a very fine line that if I only associate
with people of colour, then I become more marginalized, if she is in a
good position [and] worked very hard to get it and she start
associating with only people of colour she is going to lose that, her
credentials that she is gaining. So she is also in a very weird position
that she is not going to bring up those topics… I doubt that she would raise those issues. Not in the environment we are in right now…

(Anise, p.25)

Tara’s experiences resonate and echo some of Anise’s. Here Tara discusses the reality experienced by minority teachers and the fear of being labelled – and having the message lost or invalidated - when they raise concerns in the Equity committees. Tara describes how she will communicate her points of concern to a middle-aged white woman who will bring up the issues in front of the group.

….I think they probably held it more credible, and that’s why at staff meetings I’ll try and sit back. If it’s time to have equity, hear from the equity team, I’ll ask my white co-chair . . . “Do you want…?” . . . and she knows. I said… “because I know how I read, I know how people take the message that I give”. And she said, “oh yeah, no problem.” And she’ll stand up there and say what I needed to say… Brenda said the exact same thing… She goes, “I’m coming and I’m a 40-something-year-old white woman and I’m going to look very un-intimidating and they are going to love what I have to say because
they are not going to think I’m a threat.” So, that’s how it was – they were all very welcoming until she started to get into the issues. But they couldn’t say, “oh it’s because she is this” or “it’s because she has this”… (Tara, p. 6-7)

Tara also recognizes that visible minorities are commonly having to “sweeten” the message when it comes to issues of race. Tara recounted addressing herself to a teacher when problems arose in a class

…and it wasn’t even issues of race… I was the rep for the class so I spoke up. I addressed it to her privately because I learned the hard way that you need to do that. So I addressed her privately, I said here are some of the concerns and by then I knew how to smile . . . and I understand that it’s hard because you [teacher] have so many students and so many classes but a lot of us are concerned . . . sweetened it up. . . . (Tara, p. 19)

Tara also identifies mainstream teachers’ fears of Black students. Tara states that teachers are scared of students – especially black males. “A lot of teachers don’t walk down the middle school hallway because they are
scared of the black boys. And they’ll tell you I’m scared of them” (Tara, p. 28).

As one of five Black administrators at the secondary level, Larise finds that she is often out of place at formal board meetings for vice-principals and articulates it as an exclusionary experience.

In these meetings [vice-principal meetings] there are only a handful of minorities – sometimes you feel like you know people are talking around you and not to you. They (the system and its administrators) place a greater weight on Black administrators sort of having the social profile, which is the social profile of a Caucasian person. Not you know, what that means and how you conduct yourself, if someone is talking and suddenly you laugh (loudly) or whatever, God forbid if you should---because “we can dance” (stereotype of blacks)---that we look like we could dance at a party, you know that will be held against you. (Larise, p. 24)

For Larise, the lack of a reflective workforce and the lack of critical importance given to social justice work is a barrier to her leading for social
One would be the continued [situation] where we have the majority of the faculty not being reflective of the diverse student population, which means you are having to sort of always be changing minds and attitudes and behaviours and so on. Two, it’s the whole notion that the work we are doing is “in addition to, but not crucial part of”…another piece of that is I think that sometimes issues get conflated and sometimes people are not able to separate out the issues. And of course it is always having to deal with those who are so contentious and hell bent on maintaining the status quo ...(Larise, p.27)

Kyle is also aware of the nuances and complexities of the systemic mainstreaming of whiteness and how it actually limits the equity agenda since those that excel in the system and then champion equity are actually conformist, thus negating the necessity of hiring educators that represent cultural and ethnic diversity.

Let me use this example with the whole TDSB and this whole sense of diversity. So there is all this… worry about well, is the TDSB
diverse… There were questions about visible minorities but it was really big on just sexual identity. So O.K., I mean whatever, it was a questionnaire, you were not forced to fill it out, so I rejected filling it out. And we were having this discussion in one of our First Class conferences and my argument was because someone said, “Well you know at least it is something”. And I said, “No, it’s nothing!” I said if you are talking about whether… the Board is equitable in its hiring practices there is, you know, problems with that. First of all, it can’t be taken in isolation. I said you have got a system of mass schooling [which] basically rewards conformers and arguably, it’s a system that was set up by the white middle class, for the white middle class and so generally, you are going to have those specific types of groups who are going to succeed and certain types are [who are] not going to succeed so much… But the diversity is not even there because there are certain groups who couldn’t even get there first [such as] African Canadians. I mean I’m sure they are totally under-represented in education. And you know if there isn’t a reasonable amount going, I mean the qualifications to become a teacher are that you need at least two degrees, you need a university education. Until we break those barriers down, we can’t talk about equitable
practices… so to me it was a moot point.

…I take aim a) at the institutional structure of
education and b) what it is and how you define the teacher. Because
I’m against having a narrow framework to define what a teacher is.
And that is at the Freedom School you do not have to have
qualifications through the Ontario College of Teachers to be a staff
member

You see, in fact, I argue …I’m always worried about having a
“diverse” body of educators because to me that’s just an illusion.
What you have, so you have brown, yellow, white, red, black
altogether they have gone through the system. Arguably, they are the
ones, in other words, they are the representatives who actually agree
and will uphold and conform to the institution. So the more diverse it
appears in fact, the more frightening it becomes, because in actuality
it’s cementing what I think was a rotten system. Because it looks
great you know what are we worried about pedagogy and philosophy
of education, we have got a completely diverse both teacher
population so clearly students are being exposed to a diverse outlet
when really they are not at all (Kyle, p. 18-19).
Narinder identifies how the racialization of administrators leads to political consequences around race and ultimately the resistance from society on issues related to educational change. Had change for racial justice been led by a white person, issues related to ethnic diversity would not have been questioned.

…the reason being is because a white principal… does not have to mediate an issue of the colour of their skin. A black principal going into a predominant black school is going to have the weight of the community on them whether he wants to, whether he likes to or not, and it’s going to be seen through that lens.

There was a protest at Ryerson and there was a placard that said Lloyd McKell is failing black students. Now, Gerry Connelly will never get a placard by people protesting and saying Gerry Connelly is failing white students. For the same reason, and it’s not a matter of right or wrong good or bad, but it is what has the issue of pigmentation caused some people to have to mediate on a day-to-day that other people never will have to, even contemplate or mediate.
And so issues like Black History Month, does a teacher get involved or not, there are consequences both ways. Is it seen as tokenism, someone has been doing it for 20 years and what are we going to do about the changes, someone says I don’t want to and there’s consequences both ways. And other teachers will have to mediate that. There’s nothing to be won or lost if they did it or didn’t do it. (Narinder, 13-14)

Narinder discusses how racism operates in educational programming, so that programs for visible minorities are always in question and are not deemed necessary. This is in very severe contrast to how the other “isms” are taken up institutionally.

And if… it’s Easter, the white Christian teachers don’t go through the same contemplation. Should I do something for Easter or should I not? What are the consequences if I don’t? They don’t have to deal with that… I mean we’ve done it for gender. We get workers who are looking at safety and parking lot safety issues, and we get women together and men are not crying saying “I’m not there”, if you want to
be there yeah, but technically it’s not an issue and we don’t really care [if] you went for the five extra lights or you don’t – Fine. Walk safer programs in universities, gender issues permanently… but yet when it comes to racial stuff that’s always questioned.(Narinder, p.14)

**Systemic and Structural Constraints**

Participants identified that the educational system and its structures created barriers in leading for social justice. Eight of the participants – Narinder, Anise, Kiranjoyt, Tara, Gail, Gordon, William and Kyle – identified systemic and structural constraints to leadership for social justice.

Narinder reports that the equity trainer position is kind of a moving target in the organization.

…because there’s a lot of risk you put yourself in within an organization being the speaker and then having to see face-to-face these colleagues tomorrow or the next day or work with them in the future; it really puts you in a real difficult position to actually have to do this work within an organization with the same people and
especially the training part of it because it can get quite heated…

It always has been the case and historically and will continue to be that role. And that’s a very difficult role… quite naturally it is. I would say [it is] the most at-risk position on a personal professional level for any person in any organization that is doing this work, because people in organizations will hate the position for existing. And there is no other such position in an organization that they hate the position. They may hate the person in it. They might not like the director of HR or the executive director or the volunteer coordinator, but they don’t hate the position of volunteer coordinator. They… don’t hate the position of director or manager of HR, right? So let alone the person who will be in position, the position in and of itself is seen as confrontational, not welcomed and all the rest of it, and so that really puts the person in that position at even greater risk (Narinder, p.7).

Here Narinder makes the delineation between the equity office’s role as a resource for the entire school board for equity supports rather than being solely responsible for all equity in the board. In theory, the personnel in this office are there to provide services and support for equity programming.
However, in practice this office is perceived as the office that is responsible for all equity, thus removing the onus from others.

…somehow instead of seeing the office as a resource for everybody that should be doing the work, it seems like they’re the ones who are going to be responsible. In fact, my position is not necessarily to do the work, [it] is to facilitate and [when] people doing it have issues or stumbling blocks or any questions of resources that I’m somebody they can tap into (Narinder, p.6-7).

Narinder identifies equity positions as rarely created proactively, and thus they carry little power to make substantive change. As a mandated position, organizations are usually looking for a token to represent and be responsible for equity issues.

Power never concedes itself… You can have electrical power in the light switch and it’s not going to give itself out unless the demand is there. So to get power you must demand it because it never just gives itself up on its own… Power? These positions rarely ever hold any power because… power is only if you have the ability to enforce
consequences. In the absence of that for example, [in the equity office] I’m not the one who does the hiring nor am I the one that can whatever, for a lack of a better word discipline or force or have consequences attached to somebody that does not engage. So at the first level of just the power of hiring that’s done at the principal level… The ability to possibly have consequences attached with not meeting the goals of a team or what have you, then lies in the superintendent’s position. …My position in and itself does not have any authority to initiate any sanctions or what have you if people don’t want to heed to my advice or recommendations.(Narinder, p.8)

Anise states that the hiring committee can be used as a façade and that ultimately the hiring is up to a Dean’s perceptions; this process is systemic and very problematic.

…the Dean, or the Chairs decide who sits on these committees, and they say they understand equity and diversity but ultimately it’s their decision and their perceptions of who makes a good faculty member and who doesn’t. That’s very systemic and if the universities don’t break that down they are perpetually going to keep hiring the same
types of people (Anise, p. 7)

Anise identifies the struggle with the overseers and the issues that come with having someone overseeing equity issues but not understanding equity. Here she discusses the difficulty of having a Caribbean Research Centre when the Chair (the person overseeing this section in the university) does not understand or see the significance of this research.

...Because Caribbean studies falls under Sociology, the sociology person has some racial issues and doesn’t think Caribbean studies is of importance. So the Caribbean Research Centre sits under the Associate Vice President (Anise, 12).

Because Anise’s program is focused on marginalized youth, it is closely watched – leading to a high stakes or tense work environment. Anise knows that her program is closely scrutinized and that every success she has is limited by any mistakes she or the mentoring program makes. As a consequence, there is a lot of pressure put on her to succeed. This means that every event she leads must be a huge success and be more impressive than what happens on the mainstream campus.
He [the Dean of Seaton] doesn’t – they don’t usually come to these things, but anyways he came and it wasn’t a boring event, [where] you come up you get your Certificate and you walk away; we had Caribbean dancers, we had Bollywood Dancers, people didn’t know because it wasn’t on the Agenda [so] it was a surprise… We had cultural food, we had speakers from different cultural backgrounds, speaking about… their role with this program, so it wasn’t speakers that mean absolutely nothing to people. These are people that talked about their experience as a student, their experience in the Mentoring Program… and that’s what I’m really proud of doing and that’s what we are going to continue doing. But that event compared to all the other events [was] very, very good. But all the feedback I got was “Oh that was such an excellent event”… it was so well organized, blah, blah, blah. But you know if I had made one mistake, I would have heard about it. (Anise, 14-15)

Kiranjoyt is troubled by the hyper-rational and quantitative context of education and its need for numerical data and evidence without accounting for educator experience. The need for such “data” and “evidence” is often
cited as “required” in order to convince the Board and Administration of the value of ethno-specific projects, and student success initiatives with social justice tenets. Here Kiranjoyt provides an illustration of data being used as a scapegoat for not acknowledging or accepting actual student success results. The data for social justice education, such as community involvement, is hard to retrieve and very little research has been conducted on it thus far.

…for the first time ever within the Peel (identifying?) system we actually had a school that, at a literacy carousel, was talking about how they involved the community and how they had seen a significant improvement in student success and then the superintendent got up and he says, “Do you have any data to support that? Do you have data to support that that community involvement was reflected in the student success, or was responsible for it in any way?”...but guess what? We don’t have that data yet; and it’s probably the most difficult data to collect. How do you use data on, for example, school success or literacy, or improvement in those areas, and make it so that it really does demonstrate that the community involvement or the parent involvement has significantly
impacted the student learning? And I know we can, and I think we can start beginning to think about that, but it’s only just recently… that there are schools within the system that are beginning to say it has been a benefit. (Kiranjoyt, p. 6)

Kiranjoyt is now beginning to incorporate documentation/data sources for work with South Asian teachers in order for her work to be seen as credible.

That’s what I’m trying to do with the South Asian teachers now, is begin to look at collecting data, begin to… be able to say, Ok, let’s just look at 10 students or let’s just look at 5 connections that you have with families, and let’s monitor those connections and let’s see within those 5 students where they start and where they end up, and then compare it with the rest of your class, and see how much of a difference it makes. And that’s what we need to be doing on a regular basis is to be collecting that data, to be monitoring it, tracking it, and reporting it, so that we have that evidence. So that it’s not always put down to ‘do you have evidence?’ because that’s what they’re looking for all of the time. (Kiranjoyt, p. 6)
Kiranjoyt considers it problematic that teacher experience, lived experiences are not being taken as research or as “factual data”. South Asians need to make “smart goals” and make them realistic. She realizes the need for tracking, monitoring, reporting – all the methods validated by the mainstream – and works to implement those practices.

Here Kiranjoyt identifies the need to be politically organized, in the understanding that nobody can face the challenges alone. She articulates that without organization, it is in fact dangerous to do this work alone.

And when I look at the barriers, the policies, the procedures, the inequities, the omissions, within the curriculum, within the system, within the hierarchy, that are almost impossible to challenge on an individual basis and that’s why it is so …so crucial that we become organized. And that’s when the South Asian Teachers Organization came into being. (Kiranjoyt, p. 3)

Tara, too, identifies equity as only a priority when those with power – the “higher ups” make it one. It may therefore attract those who are insincere about the issue and want to impress those above them.
However, this year our superintendent made equity his primary focus, and when that happened we got three new members on the equity team, who one of them before out rightly said, “And you know this equity thing is not really for me.” —[He] joined the team two years ago, is on the admin track, and floating around looking at different teams…

Gail identifies bureaucracy as a major barrier to leadership for social justice. She states that the processing forms; the structure of the educational system and the departmentalized nature of education all inhibit the engagement of social justice work.

... what’s hindered it I think was just the bureaucracy of the Board, obviously the time it takes just to do everything else right? So to fill out all any forms needed to you know, go to meetings, do this, do that, all the time those things take away from the good work, and just you know the structure of the school in the sense of being departmentalized right…(Gail, p. 17)

Gail reports that having to fit her social justice work into an existing
mandate is a major barrier to leadership for social justice. Teachers are burnt out. Since Gail doesn’t have a family she has more time to invest in her social justice work. She believes that teachers would participate more if they could meet during the school day to organize. The decreased funding has led to a ‘vicious cycle’ where there is a lack of equity-focused workshops from the board. She also asserts that we need true commitment from the board and that more people would do social justice work if it were made easy.

…Hoops we need to jump through have been a hindrance although…it’s not that it can’t be done . . . it’s just it takes time and effort and the right channels to move through and to be able to promote this work …and what also hindered [it] is so much teacher burn out that it’s hard to get other teachers motivated… You know I don’t have kids, don’t have a family you know so it’s been easier for me maybe to do these things and to take the time… There is no time during the day for teachers to get together to kind of organize these things, cause I think that many people would love to get more involved in these things, but there is just not the time dedicated to promote it…Yeah, that would also help. …I think it would also be helpful if there was
true commitment from the Board [in terms of] funding, and you know, equity initiatives, people at the Board level who would come and do workshops so, and then the morale of teachers goes down so it’s you know, it’s a vicious cycle… I think that a lot of teachers would be interested in this type of work if it didn’t take a lot of extra work, right? (p. 15-16)

Further to this point, Gordon identifies that leading for social justice results in an overworked administrative staff; “they are overburdened and we need more support in that office area…” (Gordon, p. 15)

William reports that working with ‘at-risk’ youth is extremely difficult, and there is little systemic/structural support for this work. He usually has to find solutions to students’ problems on his own. Morally, it is a difficult dilemma to discern whether an ‘at-risk’ youth should be re-admitted to the program, as their ill behaviour may affect the other students negatively. The responsibility of the decision is weighs heavily on him as he will have to face the consequences if he readmits a student who is unable to follow the program guidelines.
Suicide’s higher. Drug abuse, alcohol abuse, all of those sort of abuses. Many of them turn to the streets…I had several students in my classroom this year who have at some time or another, worked on the streets turning tricks in order to keep food on their plate, you know…a roof on their head…. Yeah. I can think of three that have talked to me about it this year alone. (William, p. 19)

William has many roles to play as a social justice educator: administrator, guidance counsellor, program teacher, community outreach, fundraiser, etc. More money in the program would help lessen his burden, since working with the population he does requires support and advocacy for finding housing, health, welfare rights and payments, drug and alcohol abuse rehabilitation and so forth. It is as if he has several (underpaid) jobs simultaneously. Yet more than recognition for the extra work staff at alternative schools do, William would

…rather there’d be, you know, more money in the program in general, having extra support, having a child and youth worker, which, you know, we used to have, but the Harris government eliminated in their funding formulas, and those people really did a lot of that stuff that
has fallen on us, right. When you’re working with at-risk youth, you need people there that can help them advocate around finding housing, around making sure that they’re taking care of themselves…around drugs and alcohol. And, you know, if you look at any of the statistics around queer youth, they’re impacted far more than heterosexual youth on these issues, cause it’s a way of escape. (William, p. 18-19)

William identifies professional isolation as a risk in leading for social justice. There are too few teachers in the field and little effort is made to recruit new teachers. The Rising Futures Program carries a reputation as ‘marginal’ in the field of education so new, ambitious teachers are reluctant to attach themselves to it, fearing lack of professional development or career stagnation.

…yeah, I think that there’s just not enough of us, right now, out there, in the field, doing the work. And, there’s so few places where I think teachers feel empowered to do the work. And I think so many new teachers coming out of faculties feel that they shouldn’t be doing the work cause they could threaten their, you know, potential to get
tenured…I know specific instructors at U of T, OISE/UT (identifying detail?), within the last year, that told people not to volunteer at the Triangle program because it shouldn’t be on their resume, cause it could affect their ability to get a job. (William, p. 17)

Kyle identifies the lack of time given in order to develop equity focused curriculum and educational programming. This dearth of attention is itself a barrier to leading for social justice.

[The intention is to] bring in these kinds of social justice curriculum in units, in the mainstream and we started to try and develop some curriculum that we could share, but the problem with amalgamation is that everybody’s time is so stretched, it’s difficult to bring people together especially when it’s a …Leviathan right? (Kyle, p.7).

Kyle also names class size and community size as barriers to participation on issues that matter to individuals.

The difference at the Freedom School [is] it’s an organic document. It can change from week to week. And you know we also talked [how
maybe we are only ever meant to live in small communities where we can have direct participatory governance… That you cannot necessarily have 20-30 million people as a participatory democracy….what I care about is what is happening around the street from me, you know, and is it safe for my children? (p.36)

Narinder problematizes data and how numerical percentages are arrived at and applied. He proposes that data is relative to ‘how’ the phenomena is examined and manipulated. Here Narinder focuses on race as an example, but goes on to state that is also the case with other dimensions of equity, including gender and ability.

There are many different ways of analyzing data and information. If we’re looking at qualified teachers and so on a qualified population what percentage within the last census of qualified teachers that find themselves with visible minorities, and if that’s the benchmark we’re looking at then we represent those values at the Board. If we’re trying to look at what is the demographic makeup of a population and the community we serve… then we don’t necessarily reflect that population. (Narinder, p.2-3)
Narinder also discusses how equity positions are only as powerful as the organization is consistent with its messages and processes around equity decisions made by the equity expert. In this way, power is relative to the organizational hierarchy’s capacity to remain consistent with supporting decisions made regarding equity.

Power is only relative to the person you report to… that will defend the position that you take. And so within organizations… if there’s an incident and I step in and if somebody still has an issue with how I have framed or labelled the incident if I called it racist, they’ll speak to my superior and say “Narinder just called me racist.” So my superior has to be able to defend my position… or apologize… …Unless you get support all the way through, because then you’re going to imagine that my superior will tell somebody that he or she reports to… Now that person has to say yeah, they’re both right, or that person has to apologize for both of them. And then they also have somebody to report to in terms of board of directors. Let’s just say I report to a director who reports to the executive director and the executive director reports to the board. Every level on this process either has to validate what I said or believed, or it diminishes it. And so that’s also
power in and of itself too: Do I have a consistency within an organization that’s going to back me on a decision I make or a position I take? (Narinder, p.8-9)

Narinder identifies the Ontario Human Rights Commission processes as restricting leadership for equity through building a certain culture with its approach to systemic accountability of equity measures. Here he critiques the OHRC processes of examining discrimination from the systemic organizational perspective without examining individual complaints or rights.

…even the Ontario Human Rights position right now they’re looking to take —they don’t want individual complaints—they’re only looking at systemic organizational and you laugh and you say when was the last time a wall or a door discriminated against me, right? And its people—people make up an organization in the system to make it systemic. So people should be the ones you’re going after. And so yeah, when I do in-services I talk to people and I say this is about changing you both personally and professionally. As you grow professionally you become a better person personally. At the core of
the issues we’re talking about is individuals and attitudes and beliefs
and behaviours. (Narinder, p.15)

Narinder believes education is far behind other pillars of society in
engaging with and implementing solutions to meet equity.

I’ll give a good example. In the National Football League (NFL) they
made it mandatory that for every single new coaching vacancy you
must interview one of the candidates as a minority… What it did at
one level is bring people to the table who otherwise would not have
the opportunity… And it has made a big impact just the last number of
years in terms of number of coaches. That’s what it takes…
(Narinder, 16-17)

Narinder identifies Canada’s bureaucratic processes and civic culture as
barriers to leadership for social justice insofar as often the examination of
equity issues becomes a process that is slow and emotionally and mentally
draining.

The strength I see is that we have a process by which these issues
can be heard... and addressed. But the rate at which they're being addressed, how or why they have to go as far as they go and the length and time and energy it takes from communities, and then sometimes winning the battle but losing the war of public perception takes its toll. (Narinder, p.19)

“Lip service”

Kiranjoyt identifies the lack of (board, administrative and even teacher) supports in doing equity work. She has found that there is a lot of “lip service” paid to Equity and Anti-Racism and not substantive follow-up; people say all the right things – for reasons that are self-serving or well-intentioned – but take little or no meaningful action. Here one positive example very much stands out as an exception:

We know institutions that have not only paid lip service to equity and to social justice and to human rights...we know the institutions that have demonstrated and have... practical examples, and a history of commitment to that. And I have to say York University [is] one of those that clearly has an access initiative that only one university in
the whole of the country has… and it’s phenomenal. And having been
on the interviewing panel, [seeing] poor students entering York
University through the access initiative… it’s one of a kind… There’s a
lip service that’s attached to [social justice education], but it really
isn’t integrated or implemented in any true way…” (p. 4)

Kiranjoyt also receives no personal support (for her own mental and
emotional wellbeing as she does her work) from the system; in fact
it’s “None. Zero. Nothing. From the Education system, zilch…” It is
here she is most explicit about how the education system’s initiatives,
the mission statements, the visions, “the future we want”s and the like
are all lip service.

Kiranjoyt identifies teachers’ fears of social and collegial repercussions for
being engaged in social justice projects. Owing to this fear, some peers
with contribute to their equity initiatives behind closed doors but will not
publicly endorse social justice projects.

They are “afraid of being connected with the South Asian
conference”. Why? They love it, they want to be a part of it. They’ll
come to my house and meet with me and tell me that...yet they’re afraid that if within that school they mention they’re involved in anything South Asian, then all of a sudden, they [are] sort of demoted in that hierarchical level, in an abstract way... (Kiranjoyt, p. 9) I’ve kind of tried the subtle route of just handing out articles and discussing it for five minutes in staff meetings, but I find it just kind of “Well yes, that was very valuable, thanks.” That’s it. (Kiranjoyt, p.8)

Tara also identifies a certain measure of lip service. While social justice may be embraced by the board it is not engaged at in the individual school level. Instead, people say what they think you want to hear when discussing social justice issues, thus making it difficult to get people to talk openly and honestly about their views. The committee she works on, therefore, has as its immediate goal:

To get people talking honestly about their views. The long term goal is curriculum implementation and get people changing their strategies .... [but] my goal right now is get people to be honest, because we are saying, “Oh yes, I was part of this and I’m so and so” ... [but they] look down on certain groups, make comments to the staff about
certain cultures and the fact that “Oh, I can’t understand him. He doesn’t speak proper English.” So my main goal right now is to get us at the point where it’s authentic honest dialogue, and it’s really hard.

(p.7)

William joins them in experiencing the lack of political will and support from the school board, society, the community as a major impediment to social justice work. This widespread lack of support affects every aspect of educational programming: teachers, student success, student and teacher retention, quality of learning, school atmosphere, etc. There is a lot of lip-service for equity but rarely does anything substantive get done.

If our province really cared about at-risk youth, like they do all this lip-service right, and they put money into their own pilot project, so it looks like they’re doing great things, so they create Pathways, [when] this is what we, our school has been doing for 20 years, right? Rather than coming to us, the experts, and saying, ‘What do you guys need to be more successful?’ and maybe increasing the program that we’re already running, they create these pilot programs and say ‘Oh, look, we’re doing this…’ [If only] that funding went into the schools that are
already doing a good job…so that they can expand. And, you know, so the Pathways program, most of [its] classrooms, it was a 10:1 teacher, student ratio [sic]. Why the hell am I teaching in an 18:1…so it’s stuff like that. We have a social worker that’s only available to come by two mornings a week, which is great support, but it would be great if there was also a child and youth worker, [and people] doing all that other support, doing that guidance, doing that…you know, let me help you to find some housing, let me get you some counselling, let me get you a gym membership so that you’re not on the street here…you know, let me help you get that extra 100 bucks from Ontario Works so that you can put a roof over your head. So, I mean, that’s the kind of stuff that I find really frustrating…I’m lucky if I teach two hours a day… The rest of the time I’m an administrator, or doing all of these other roles. And I think that really impacts, you know, my ability to be the best teacher I can be, and the best support, and I don’t know…” (William, p. 21)
The Personal Costs and Consequences in Leading for Social Justice

Participants identified personal costs as barriers to leading for social justice. In particular eight participants – Anise, Kiranjoyt, Narinder, Bill, William, Gail, Tara and Larise – reported that leading for social justice had put them into precarious positions that included emotional entanglement, isolation, social ostracism and even having to face death threats.

Anise reports having to constantly be in defence mode with administration and others within the university community; this constant battle has been exhausting for her.

How come other things just get money, get set up and they exist, and how come we have to prove ourselves first? …So when we had the event on gun violence and Black Women it was packed room, there was nowhere to stand. We have to – it’s kinda like my program – I have to excel; I had to go beyond the targets and the numbers to be noticed and to be validated. That’s what we have to do with this, and it’s an exhausting role to be in. I mean you are constantly not given what other people are given, then you have to spend your whole
energy trying to prove that you should be given something that other people just get and then once you get it you still have to keep working (Anise, p.13)

As a result of the exclusionary environment at the university, Anise has been devalued and alienated within the university community.

No one talked to me. There was no one to have lunch with me, people devalued what I was doing kinda like it was “Oh that little program for those people”, and those people are me. So I found that really a hard place... I could be in my office all day and no one including my boss would even say good morning, or good afternoon or hello or nothing. And even when I hired Constance, she started, a month after me she said to me, she said “Doesn’t anybody here talk to you?” We talk in groups; we talk like when you pass you stop and you genuinely ask somebody how they are doing. And I found that really, really hard to not get, until I hired people, so everybody around me gives me that. (Anise, p. 13-14)

Kiranjoyt has had her commitment to social justice misconstrued as a
personal, self-serving exercise. This is in sharp contrast to other administrators in the school board. Kiranjoyt has experienced a lack of personal and professional support from administrators, whereas others have been mentored and guided by these very same administrators. Cliques develop and ostracism ensues as a result of teachers being pitted against each other.

My superintendent was talking about, “Oh, I’m taking 5 or 6 of the teachers down to the cottage this weekend.” …[I was] never ever, never ever [invited]. It’s just for the elite, it’s for that certain clique, and it’s for that certain type of people that would go down. No question. [In contrast], I can’t even sit down with the superintendent without being labelled as a person that is self-centred, is self-serving, is single-issued…(Kiranjoyt, p. 10 & 4)

Kiranjoyt identifies personal stigma, hostile perceptions, and labelling as major blocks to her goals as a leader for social justice.

…so if there are perceptions that you’re self-serving, that you’re self-centred, that you’re only thinking about you, and that really it’s got
nothing to do with the South Asian issues, or...if those are the perceptions amongst administration and the white Euro-centric leaders then unfortunately, during their term, you’re not going to make it very far…it doesn’t matter where you go.” (Kiranjoyt, p.16- 17)

Due to the system’s failure to support her, Kiranjoyt feels overworked and under-recognized. Her different roles as interpreter, counsellor, and mentor – and the extra work they require - are never recognized or taken into account. Nor is this viewed as a catalyst to change the system.

“I mean, I feel overworked sometimes when all of a sudden I’m being used as an interpreter and yet I’m never recognized for my language skills. I’m being used as a counsellor, and yet, Euro-centric counsellor is okay…” (Kiranjoyt, p. 18)

Kiranjoyt is frustrated by the lip service and lack of mentorship. She states that the “future is supposed to be about supporting equity”, and “retaining minority staff”, but nobody in her entire teaching career has “actually reached out in any way” (p19). Collective failure to reach out to new minority teachers will delay or risk the realization of equity in schools.
Tara reports that she has become consumed with leading for social justice, leading to her being emotionally drained.

I get emotionally wrapped up in a lot of the issues, so I’ll go home with a headache a lot of the times. I’ll go home and complain to my husband for a good hour or two hours, and he is supportive but when I catch myself I realize that’s all I’m talking about instead of how’s your day, or let’s go to a movie. We just talk about what’s going on, so in that sense it’s been a cost. (Tara, p. 26)

Tara has also endured isolation and alienation from fellow staff members.

In terms of the school I would say it’s more a cost but I’m so used to it now that it doesn’t really faze me. The isolation of fighting the battle by yourself and I would say there maybe two other staff members in my opinion that will go out as far as I will, and risk the ostracization, but for the most part you are kind of alone and you are passionate about it so you are not going to say well you know I’d rather socialize with everyone else and get along. You can’t do that so that’s a huge cost. (Tara, p. 26-27)
Gail reports that she loves her work and finds it meaningful, but that it is very stressful and as a result she loses herself and that her commitment to social justice work has been taxing on her health.

You know obviously it’s because it takes up all of my time it’s, it’s just obviously stressful, and I lose myself in it… so I love it, I love my work it’s not… I know that I’m going to be involved with youth and working in education for as long as I can think of, but, you know, it’s made me… not think of myself so I’m healthy or not exercising or being totally burnt out stressed all the time… waking up with you know 100 things to do, going to bed with 100 things to do so that, that constant, the constant stress is, is really frustrating. (Gail, p.13)

Since Gail is constantly dealing with students in crisis she doesn’t think about herself or her future, and acknowledges that before she can help others she needs to help herself, right now she lacks balance.

Finally after five years of teaching it took this year off to realize that O.K., I really need to think of myself a little bit more, you know so you turn 31 you know you have given of yourself so much to these
students, but like in 30 years from now look, you know I need to have a balance as well… I have always been in the immediate, cause of students’ lives have been really immediate and kind of dealing with the crisis situations that are at hand all the time and not necessarily thinking of the future… so that’s been a cost… People do balance it, social justice work, with their own lives, right?

I think that that was one of my goals this year too was to kind of take a step back breathe and realize that to be able to do the work well, and to really truly help others, I need to make sure that I’m helping myself, completing myself, and feeling myself, and so that’s what this year was about as well . . . (Gail, p.17)

Gail has also coped with backlash from teachers because of her insistence to lead for social justice.

And so by seeing what I do… having Remembrance Assembly that’s looking at the culture of war and society versus the culture of peace and then receive huge backlashes in school by other teachers about you know, “What are you doing?” And you are… a radical and you are you know, here is the Social Justice Department and this
tyrannical department who is on their soap box. . . trying to influence and brainwash, and these type of things so I think some of the risks to the work is pressures, constraints of . . . others seeing it as too radical and then getting backlash for it… (Gail, p.18)

Gail’s commitment to social justice has led her to be off balance, as she sees it. As a result of this lack of equilibrium, she attributes the following to her over commitment to her students and social justice work: being single, her divorce, health issues and severe stress.

…the cost to health, cost to relationships ,right? …because I dove so deep into this work and into the lives of students, I went through a divorce through it right… just because of not being present for my partner and it not working out… and its not a hundred per cent attributed to that but , he was , an immigrant from Ecuador actually and so coming here and me focusing so much on school and putting school and students before our relationship just was a big downfall, so again in terms of costs, that’s been a big it’s there has been a lot of those costs but I don’t know for me I think that the lot of that is again that’s why this year is about thinking through how to balance.
…I don’t think that it has to be that way… and students would always, students have always said to me that… they recognize how available I am, right? And that they say that I do need to think of myself… They would, say, be doing a team practice and they would walk by my room and it would be 5:00 clock and I’d still be there and they would you know, wait for me to leave and drag me out of the school, big thing you know…( Gail, p.19)

Larise discusses the need to think critically about what we are asking people to sacrifice when we ask them to do social justice work. Her insights stem from her activism in Jamaica where her involvement with the socialist movement resulted in major losses by some of those in the movement.

…You have to be careful, and we didn’t think about it at that time, when we ask people to make the sacrifices that they make. We have people who have committed suicide, for the movement, people have cancer, the stress because in the heat of moment of the battle you put people in danger, you put them in places and spaces and you have to remember that equity does not happen outside of the human body. They are people, we have lives, we have kids, we have
relatives we have relationships we have all of those… and I think sometimes when the conversations are happening it is so driven that people forget (the consequences) and I have lived it. Where people have lost their jobs because of the movement and you need to do this and you need to do that… losing house, we had marriages break up and having children living without fathers. Where if you had just been under the understanding of the complexities, recognizing that this journey is going to go on after you and me, and that this is a journey—not a destination. (Larise, p.26)

Larise adds another point that contributes to stress: the fact that social mobility is contingent on how one is perceived by their administrators. If they are perceived as not challenging the status quo they are informally approached and “tapped” on the shoulder and invited to be mentored and/or assisted by their immediate administrator into a leadership position. Whereas if they challenge the status quo there can be severe negative consequences to their social mobility, this is commonly known throughout the board and has been termed Career Limiting Move (CLM). Larise suggests that “being forthright with your commitment to social justice can be career limiting.” (p27)
Larise goes on to describe the emotional risks to leading for social justice, especially where leaders come with the historical pain of marginalization.

There are emotional risks that we all know and think about everyday, when you are a racialized minority in the school. We come historically with the pain and there is pain and trauma in doing this work in terms of seeing the amount of kids I have seen in handcuffs in my office, in the back of the police car, the mom coming in, there is pain and trauma and guilt because you keep asking yourself “What more could I have done?” There is a risk to your wellness, this needs to be part of the discourse and also needs to be a part of the systems goal, no longer can we say that you have work from 5am to whatever time it takes and burn yourself out. Those are risks you internalize and take on… (Larise, p.28)

There are also literal costs – educators deal with the financial instability of committing to a field that is much more rewarding than lucrative. William’s commitment to social justice led him to leave a more financially rewarding and secure job for administration, serving queer students. As a result of this change, William had to claim personal bankruptcy and is trying to repay
student loans on a pretty low-average teacher salary in a high-stress job. It is clear that William’s life and work are inextricably linked.

…So there was sort of personal financial loss. But, I mean, I’ve spoken about finance a couple of times, but it’s really not, I don’t care anymore. It’s funny, I’ve shifted so much that, as long as I have a roof over my head and food in my belly, I’m pretty happy. I’d like to be able to travel a bit more cause it’s a life passion, but I can’t really do that right now cause I’m just trying to get school debts paid off… cause although you declare bankruptcy, student loans… don’t really get impacted…[money] can be a big distraction cause I owed like 55 thousand dollars still, and you know, when I’m making, less than 50 grand a year, it sort of always seemed something that’s impossible to pay off. You know…so that’s one impact. I think the fact that you’re giving so much to these youth all the time, really gets at your soul. And I know the couple of times that I feel like I’ve given everything and the youth hasn’t gotten anything, or they just seem so, fucked up…I can’t think of any other way to say it, like you feel like you failed somehow… that really takes a toll.
Narinder and Bill identify the costs of doing social justice work to be their lives.

Bill discussed a case where he faced death threats for implementing equitable processes: “then they realize that they’re going to be out of a major contract, which means no more money coming in – they threaten your life.” (Bill, p.28).

Narinder spoke of the personal and emotional liabilities associated with social justice work, and that one risk is the highest possible – your life.

Just doing this work, the risk at the end of the day is your life. The risk is your family. The risk is your children. The risk is friendships. And the risk is depending on how much you want to deal with it on the day-to-day and some of the everyday experiences of feeling violated can first of all put your own personal mental and emotional health at risk, because you would be functioning within a deep sense of despair which is not healthy. And then at another level if you want to try to address it in every single circumstance and try to kind of challenge everybody at every single level you’re bound to lose your partnership if you’re married to somebody. You’re vulnerable to losing
your family, your parents, your siblings, your friends and that’s just within that circle of the person doing it. You want to speak up, you might lose your job. You might not get a promotion and depending on what level you take it they can get killed—Malcolm X, Martin Luther King. You can be jailed for 35 years of your life or longer—Nelson Mandela. (Narinder, p.26)

**Ideological: Bankrupt Notions of Equity**

Participants identified competing notions of equity as presenting difficulties. In particular four participants, namely Anise, Bill, William and Narinder, reported that inconsistent ideologies of equity presented barriers to leading for social justice.

Anise discusses how limited conceptions of equity actually hinder leadership for social justice engagement. Here she identifies a director in the university setting who espouses equity; however, this director’s approach is short sighted in her capacity to engage First Nation communities. The director does not understand the significance nor the credence of First Nation approaches to engagement, and as a result has
dismissed fundamental opportunities to engage with this community and its people.

…she was the Director at first, and she is white and she had some clashes with other people. Her epistemology [and] ways of thinking [were] not with the other [marginalized communities]…And that was the clash. They [First Nations people] are more community focused, more, “O.K. what can we do… let’s talk about the issues – she is more like “Let’s do this, this, this”. It’s a different way, it’s kinda like when you meet with Aboriginal people, you have to take the time to greet each other and to welcome each other in and to debrief and make sure everything is O.K. It’s quite different… (Anise, p.13)

Bill identifies educators’ dispositions to equity as barriers to leading for social justice. He identifies educators’ ‘attitudes’ as critical in reproducing inequities.

Well I really believe that, first of all, we have to change teacher attitudes, because the teachers don’t create the opportunities, or where the teachers have pre-conceived notions about students, we
have to address those issues and students are not stupid – they know, they can read what the situation is. (Bill, p.6).

William identifies individualism as an obstacle to leading for social justice. He also identifies the “myth of scarcity” (of jobs, opportunities) as a barrier and constraint to achieving equity goals. In response to this hyper-reliance on individualism and this myth of scarcity, William identifies the important role that communities and classrooms of difference make.

That’s when you create… communities of difference, classrooms of difference, where everybody can be different, yet find similarities and share. It’s sort of this collective consciousness where really rather than trying to say “I’m the most important person here, and I have agency and I have authority and I’m going to strive to be the best I can be”…not only am I going to do that but I’m also going to be concerned about the agency of the group…and that everybody’s successful and that everybody has an opportunity and sort of getting away from those myths of scarities [sic] that there won’t be enough jobs for everybody that there won’t be enough places in post-secondary education for everybody… You know, to start breaking that
down because there yes, there is place for everyone and everybody
can be part of this collective. Right? (William, p. 9)

Narinder identifies neo-liberal underpinnings of (in)equity as a barrier to
leading for social justice. More explicitly, he identifies the misunderstanding
between equality & equity. Here he recounts how a leadership program for
visible minorities has been met with opposition within the school board.
This exemplifies how “common sense” approaches to ‘equity’ issues have
been deprived of critical sense.

There’s oppositions [to] even saying that we’re going to have a
separate leadership program within the school board for visible
minority teachers. …part of the position that most people take to
resist this type of work is that they have what we called a traditional
or common sense approach to social justice issues that lack the
critical understanding of it. (Narinder, p.12)

Narinder identifies a common belief by people that “they are good people
incapable of being implicated in discrimination” as a barrier to social justice.
This belief in one’s goodness prevents them from being self-reflective and
And the challenge is that we all like to believe ourselves as good human beings—good natured, good intentions, good motives and what have you. And so to challenge everything you’ve been validated for in life for the ones that hold power and privilege and tell you to check in on that, a very difficult journey that no one has ever done in any capacity whatsoever during their whole livelihood.

….And we hear terms of unlearning for the ones who are doing social justice because they’ve gone through a whole process about learning. Imagine if every single human being had to go through your same process. Is that an easy process? (Narinder, p.15)

At the socio-political level, Narinder perceives a “war of public perception”. This is in particular regard to the gains that racialized people have made, leading to stereotypical images of the gains made by racialized people as adversarial gains, and not as a social justice movement.

And so what happens is that while the community might take pride in saying yes, …this is an obstacle we’ve finally overcome and can play
an active role in serving, protecting our country both at the national level and [in] the RCMP or just everyday in any city as part of the provincial and municipal police forces; but then there’s the war of public perception who says ‘A-h-h, they stuck it to us’ and ‘why those diaper heads’ and all of the rest of it… and that’s huge…. (Narinder, p.20)

Narinder identifies “equity” jobs as highly risky positions within an organization. These positions become further complicated and perilous when those that you report to have a superficial understanding of equity and do not support you, as a result of their limited vision of equity.

And then if… the manager or supervisor of that person in that position is not in tune with these issues, then it’s the worst case scenario because you are actually having to battle upwards rather than doing your daily work across the system, of trying to explain, justify, rationalize; whereas, in fact it should be that person doing it, and has your back as you’re going out into a so-called war zone… (Narinder, p.8)
Narinder raised several critical issues concerning the ideological underpinnings and foundations of social justice. In particular, he identifies contemporary use and practice of social justice as a Eurocentric practice. Narinder’s’ insights concerning social justice lead to critical questions about how it has been defined through a Eurocentric lens, raising the question of ‘who’ is able to define social justice for which purposes and toward which ends. Such hegemonic conceptualizations of social justice do not include or privilege alternative definitions and form of action to redress inequities.

Social justice on the most part has been framed through white lens and we’re constantly battling a lot of issues through the framework of a white lens. And what I mean [by] white lens is that they both define the systems, the issues, the problems and the solutions…(p.4)

So when we look at positive space gays and lesbians, bisexual and queer issues, those are still relatively difficult still [for] some people because of the faith issues, it is still seen and accepted through white lens, the same thing with disability, the same thing with ages… Aging population and the first frame of reference is [the] aging white population. So gender, and we can see it in most of the work places
and stuff that while there still sometimes is a glass ceiling for women the majority of women that are in higher positions [are] predominantly white women. So although we might have achieved and lessened the gender gap when it comes to employment not when it comes to quality of life and real employment and who gets what type of job, so that racial divide and line is still present in any one of those social justice issues. (p.5)

We have [a] false sense of language here in Canada using the term multiculturalism and these words of integration, assimilation …they get framed and used by the dominant culture. I remember listening the other day and said it’s great we want to talk about integration and how people should integrate and they get settlement classes and all the rest of stuff, but does anybody have any classes for so-called “Canadian” or the whites to help them integrate? …who is going to give me the certificate saying I’m now integrated? And multiculturalism allows us to mask racism… and then having to be in the back corner try and defend the very little that we’ve achieved through enormous, enormous battles. These rights were not just given because Canada is open and welcoming to diversity.
Here Narinder identifies the unfair treatment, examination and integration of programming and practices that do not adequately engage with issues of race and racialization. In comparison to other ‘isms’, racism is the most poorly examined issue.

...Why do we still talk about the same issues and why is there still that issue and why is there for example in respect to the TDSB, an achievement gap for black students? And while we might want to say poverty and socio economic and family and language, well then let’s look at that through a different lens of social justice. When female students were not going into math and sciences no one said well how are we going to address that because there’s family issues, there’s single parent moms, there’s poverty issues, there’s socio economic, there’s language barriers and stuff like that... No one brought up any of those other issues... but you bring it up to the race lens and all of a sudden they add those other variables and factors, which don’t play a role. They may influence them but don’t play an actual role in addressing the issue in and of itself. And if that be the case then why
in every single category of socio economics level are white kids out-performing black kids? (Narinder, p. 5-6)

Narinder explains that race and racism are “embedded in educational foundations of power and privilege” (p12), [and] that [people] have major issues in engaging with systemic racism. In order to exemplify the systemic nature and the societal reality of Canadian racism students endure, Narinder discusses the successes of international racialized students versus that of Canadian racialized students. The illustration is testament to how race and racism are embedded systemically within our society and educational system. However, instead of dealing with race and racism, we are mute on the subject resulting in foreign racialized students (Black and South Asian in particular) excelling (because they do not face the same race barriers in their home countries).

...We’re having Blacks attend universities in Canada more from the outside than probably born here or educated here....And yet sometimes people say “Hey, I’m from what you have defined as a Third World country or developing country… and I’m here. Why can’t your kids who grew up here and have the educational opportunities
and schools that’s afforded to every kid that lives in Canada not make it?” It’s that race piece. But the race issues for South Asians, Blacks and stuff is not in Africa and not in Indian and Pakistan… That becomes an issue when they come here. And it shows itself… in very traumatic and bad ways in all segments of society. …When are we going to be able to address this race issue? It is still the number one social justice issue across the board. (Narinder, p.17)

Narinder explains how racialized communities and their gains in fighting for equity are routinely scrutinized by mainstream communities as resistance to joining the mainstream.

You can always hear it at dinner tables as an issue: “How much do they want” and, “They don’t want to change…when they come to our country”… We’re talking about 2007 there was a [high-profile] gentleman from… the radio host in Vancouver who is part of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Committee, saying “There’s a door open if you don’t like it leave…” These types of things still happen on a regular basis. …I can pretty much in any given year show you an issue… the kirpan issue or anything else, show you a flood of comments and e-
mails that would be so disturbing that you would not think they’re real, that happens on a regular basis, every single day. (Narinder, p.19-20)

Narinder exposes and analyses “the myth of color blindness” as a major barrier to examining race and racism.

Because then people say… “Yeah, I just respect everybody and I’m colour blind” and these types of statements which are very, very dangerous and actually do more harm than good… because they’re not recognizing or acknowledging my existence as a person of colour—as I walk around this world and as I exist. It’s like me saying I’m gender blind. It’s not recognizing anything about you being a female and your experiences or anything else and that’s not fair… I’m disability blind so I don’t see people in wheel chairs so I don’t treat them any differently, I just expect them all to climb the stairs… So it’s when you get to those and say ‘Hey listen, what are we really talking about here?’ Give me a break….it comes back down to that issue [of] race [being] the hardest one for people to get their minds around. So we’re asking people to check in with issues of power and privilege and the hardest one to get to is that race one. (Narinder, p.22)
Participants examined the breadth and depth of the barriers to social justice. In this section, participants shared their angst, frustration as well as their passion to challenge the barriers using direct and even subversive routes. In the following chapter participants give insights into the supports for leadership for social justice.
Chapter Eight: Supports for Leadership for Social Justice

This section outlines the available supports for leadership for social justice as articulated by the participants. All but one participant identified supports for their social justice work. William was the only participant who could not identify any supports for the work that he does with students who endured systemic and blatant homophobia from society and the educational system. The rest of the participants identified a variety of supports for their work. These supports where reported to exist at the school board level, in peer supports and; within the community.

Board and Administrative Supports

Critical-hierarchal Administrative Supports for Social Justice:

Administrators Above Administrators

Participants reported that administrative support was critical to mobilizing their social justice efforts. Four participants – namely Anise, Gail, Narinder and Larise – reported that their work was supported by the individuals that occupy administrative positions.
Anise is the director of a large and successful university initiative called the “Engaged Mentorship” (EM) program. Her work with the EM program has received considerable support and positive responses from the Dean of student services. Anise reports that the Dean was critical in securing funding for the EM program.

[The Dean of student services has given the program] ...100 per cent support. We have written a lot of proposals we have had proposal funding, but [the University] is definitely contributing to it...So yeah because it fits with NACE, which is the National Surveys Student Engagement and it fits with university trying to improve quality and innovation. So it fits right now with their strategies (Anise, p. 17)

Gail is the head of her department and also invests a considerable amount of time working with students and their communities in order to build capacity. Gail reports that she has a very supportive principal who has not questioned or challenged her or her department in their social justice work. Rather, the principal supports their work by supplying economic and human resources when possible. While Gail is critical of her administrator’s capacity to support social justice – stating that as principal she could make
initiatives recognizable school wide — Gail recognizes that the principal does not intentionally interfere with her department’s school-wide (even within all the home schools) programming and initiatives.

...having a principal who was really supportive in the last five years, she was someone who would she never would challenge me on what I was doing, she would provide support if possible, economically or whatever. ...What I wished, what we tried to get happen which didn’t happen, was to make the social justice focus that we were doing in our department to be more school wide... and she could have done more, in that way . . . so what she did do...was help in the sense of not hinder[ing], but she didn’t necessarily promote, right? (Gail, p.15)

Narinder is the manager of equity in a major school board in Ontario. He manages a team of 12+ personnel and is responsible for equity initiatives board wide which impact over 500 000 students. Throughout his interview, Narinder dwells on the necessity of a socio-political climate at societal and educational power structure levels. In his current position, Narinder has been able to impact and lead critical program initiatives board wide. Here
he reports that this position and the work he does is a reflection of the administrators above him providing such opportunities. For Narinder, people in formal positions of power need to understand equity and its implications. *What has to happen is the people in the positions of power and privilege are the ones who have to get this and do something about it—bottom line.* (Narinder, p. 16)

For Larise, support is found in her immediate supervisor’s philosophy. If the philosophy of the principal (whom Larise reports to) embraces social justice, Larise is able to continue with the work she is committed to.

> It depends on the principal. As a principal you get to implement your philosophy. And so as a vice-principal, a place of support is… you and your principal shar[ing] the same philosophy, in terms of how should schools function and the needs of students. (Larise, p. 30)

**Board-wide Supports**

Three participants reported that board wide support of “equity” galvanized their efforts for leadership for social justice. Three participants – Tara, Gail
and Kiranjoyt – while critical of their boards’ limited involvement in equity programming, reported that even this limited involvement did indeed support the work they did in schools.

Tara is an equity officer at her school. She reports to her superintendent who has made equity a central focus for a family of schools in a major urban city. Tara reports that while the school board has created and hired her as the equity officer, this position – while necessary -- is not sufficient to enforce and account for all equity measures. Here Tara acknowledges the board’s support for equity initiatives… and her work, yet critiques her superintendent’s limited involvement as “lip-service”.

They support the equity initiative. If it wasn’t a focus of the family of schools I don’t know that they would support it as much. They support it from a back seat of ‘yes, let me know what I can do to help’ but ‘no, I’m not going to stand up in the staff meeting and address the importance of it to the staff’. And I’ve asked [administration] and the discussion was no, it can’t be a top-down. It needs to come from the grassroots. But if you are trying to implement a school-wide focus I can’t do that as the equity officer. And the accountability that the
superintendent is asking for I can’t enforce… as the equity officer. So in that sense it’s ‘yes, I support you – but good luck to you’. (Tara, page 26)

Gail is the head of her department in her school. She is also very active in working with her students and their communities. Throughout her work she has also been consistently working with the school board and the personnel in various departments. At the time of this interview, Gail had proposed and been interviewed for a position at the school board that would be responsible for connecting NGOs and community action with schools at the Board level.

…There is so many community groups that are involved in so much social justice work, and it’s thinking through how to incorporate those. …One of my ideas has always been to… create a position for someone like myself to have an office… because I have been involved enough with NGOs to know that Non-Governmental Organizations have lots of programs that have curriculum documents, they have education and action campaigns, but sometimes they either have trouble linking to the right people at schools, or…
understanding which courses or which curriculum documents... are most easy to be connected to. And so to be kinda that person who helps the community groups liaise with schools [and] vice versa... if you were a teacher and you were doing a unit on human rights you would call me and I would give you a list of all the organizations that could help you out... (Gail, p.10)

Kiranjoyt has been a vice-principal for over 9 years. While the school board supports equity programming on paper, Kiranjoyt states that the educational climate must also support such initiatives. She has been with the school board for over 29 years and has witnessed how the climate has drastically changed, depending on the agenda of the Director of Education along with the socio-political climate of the province. Here she discusses the critical need for a climate of endorsement and recognition. So while financial support is required for social justice efforts, so too is endorsement and the recognition of a job well done. This expression, for her, would go a long way:

Just encouragement from the principal that this is a wonderful thing
that you’re doing and we really need it in the school and it’s important to our kids, and it impacts student learning…and it supports school success. (Kiranjoyt, p. 9)

Policy

One participant, Gordon, reported substantive equity policies at the board level as supporting his social justice initiatives, and how they have assisted in improving results-based planning.

Well I do think the [board’s] policy is quite a good one, and I do think they’ve put a lot of effort and time into it. I think it moves things along faster...something that you can use to follow up on people and say that should be part of your school improvement planning. How you are addressing equity and issues of equity in your school? Don’t just tell me, show me, right? And so now I’ve got the policy to back me up when I would come to visit your school… (p.13)
Unions and organized groups

Two participants – Kyle and Narinder – acknowledged organized groups as supporting their social justice work. These men felt that organized groups in the forms of unions and work groups assisted and supported their social justice efforts.

Kyle, as a self-proclaimed anarchist, sees the role of unions as sites of agency in mobilizing movements for social justice that extend beyond “diversity”. However, Kyle also recognizes the limitations of the union.

I say the union… what the union fights for, I totally support because you know, God knows what the unions had to do. But that doesn’t mean that the union shouldn’t recognize that the actual system is quite repressive and oppressive to youth and the union should be the ones leading the charge on the dismantling. But the thing is the idea of dismantling – it would mean the dismantling ultimately of the union. But what I’m saying is ultimately that [sacrifice even unto death] does happen in revolution. Certain things that you are accustomed to must die (Kyle, p.31)
Narinder reported that work groups were critical in facilitating social justice programming, especially in mobilizing and presenting a platform for voices of the communities. Like Kyle, Narinder also recognizes the limitations of these work groups in that while the ‘work groups’ support social justice programming, they do not impact or support the social mobility of those in equity positions.

Sometimes in some effective space within these positions you can have work groups that have community input. …We have an employment equity working group, which has representatives of our different employee groups and associations and memberships and community members to allow some feedback, input and stuff, but they’re not responsible for my job description, they’re not responsible for my yearly goals or what have you, but [they] can be there and acting as a semi-buffer in terms of seeing are we actually doing [and] what we’re saying we want to do and stuff like that. So there are some spaces for that but like I said, usually it’s the community that really calls for these types of positions in organizations. (Narinder, p.11)
Peer Supports and Building Critical Masses

Participants reported that peer supports were important to their social justice work. Four participants, Anise, Tara, Gail, Narinder and Bill, identified who they considered their “peers”, and how they supported them in their efforts to lead for social justice.

Anise reported that being able to hire the people she works with is very rewarding and that it assists in creating a diverse environment with multiple lenses and insights on issues of social justice. She spoke affectionately about the voices in her department, from around the world and around the professional spectrum, and how it is “a learning environment” (p29).

[the environment in my department is]...very different, we have got Peter who was the Director of Multicultural Affairs in the States; he is doing his EDD here, so he gets it... there is Vera, Chinese girl, who knows very little about Equity and Diversity work and that’s an area that we are trying to work with her, but she is obviously receptive to it and just understanding how to like how do you say, how to do social justice, and what the training modules pedagogy how it needs to be
set up, so that it’s a learning environment with the groups that we are working with...Nimi, was a student in my program for four years, and then I hired her last year, she is also a Muslim from Dubai, India originally, and she is new so she was an immigrant so she has her own but her insight is also valuable, then we have Mary that has worked in the university system for seven years, and her insight working in three, four different departments she is very important to us. (Anise, p.29)

Tara reports that she has had strong support from teachers for her equity initiatives even when they themselves do not understand equity.

…I showed a clip to the Equity Committee [from the tape Blue Eyes] and the majority of the staff was supportive… I said what do you guys think? The clip itself is very raw, no hold[ing] back. She lays it out there, and she talks about homophobia. She talks about class. She talks about gender. She talks about racism — everything. And the majority of those at the meeting were very supportive. The majority of them said ‘Yes, we definitely need to show it [to administrators and students]’. (Tara, p.5)
[There is a] handful of staff who not necessarily support what I do but support me. That makes a huge difference – huge, huge, huge. I have a couple. Like one teacher he doesn’t get the equity thing….it’s like “Yeah, I understand. I see the need for it,” but at the same time he said “You know what, you’ve got some balls girl… You keep it up.” …The handful of teachers who just support me as an individual – I try to do the same for them. That helps a great deal..(Tara, p. 23-24)

Like Anise, Gail too reported that owing to her leadership position, she has the ability to choose likeminded people to work with – and that this has meaningfully assisted her social justice work.

But really I’m the Department Head of the Canadian World Studies Department. And what that means there is some of the bureaucratic jobs in terms of textbooks, [and] …supplies, and [I am] kind of the go-to person in terms of I am the one who goes out to all the meetings and shares and also brings information back. But it also means that it’s allowed us to create kind of a collegial environment in… our department so I, sure I have the role as assistant curriculum leader,
but in terms of leadership amongst the department we all do our own thing, and we all trust that we are all doing good work and we are all part of creating kind of a social justice environment in the department, trying to integrate courses together, trying to ensure that we are engaging in projects that meet students needs ... social justice and connecting... (Gail, p.3) So being on the same page with [other teachers in my department], always being able to talk, plan things, work together, as totally helped me to do my work right? (Gail, p.14)

Narinder reported that having the capacity and intention to build support networks of allies supports his psycho-emotional determination, and in doing so facilitates his social justice efforts. In particular he had the positive experience of receiving appreciation upon announcing that he was leaving a previous equity post at a university.

Yeah you build allies; you try to make these small gains. At the end of the day sometimes you are happy to be able to make a difference in people’s lives. (Narinder, p.29)

As a senior official at his school board, Bill was able to hire people into
critical positions of leadership. Here he emphasizes the importance to hire a “critical mass” of administrators on his board to support an equity agenda.

...we had about five or six administrators who were of minorities, which was a significant, critical mass in terms of the overall... today, I mean, after within two years of my leaving, they were probably down to only about one or two... (Bill, p.8) Supports in the form of a network, people that they can talk to, balance ideas off, people who might be in other jurisdictions but in similar circumstances so they know people that they can talk to and get good information from, or, White administrators who were supportive of the type of thing because they thought it was the right thing to do. So you created networks for them. You sent them away in professional development sessions, where, from time to time they will get reinforced, they will get good information, they will be able to show that they were on top of things and give them opportunities to, and strategies to build support on their own work, because they could always tell people who worked with them who were keeners and who understood what it was all about while you build a critical mass of people around you who became your support, who will tell you what
the potential problems were or who the potential troublemakers were.

So, there’s a variety of strategies to try to build supports, helped them to communicate better, because communicating to people around them is a critical thing in building support for yourself. If you’re not a good communicator, that could work against you, so that was very important (Bill, p. 16-17).

**Community Supports for Social Justice**

Participants also identified connections to the community as supporting their social justice efforts. Three participants – namely Tara, Kyle and Narinder – reported that the community was critical in furthering and supporting their work within schools.

When Tara was challenged by educators in her school concerning equity subject matter, she was able to point to parental supports as approving the equity programming she implemented.

A couple of the teachers on the Equity Committee one came up to me and said “I don’t think we should show that [Angry Eye, the previously
mentioned film] to staff, and I hope you are not showing that to students, are you?” And I’m pretty sure he walked by when I was showing it. I said “Actually I did show it to the class and we talked about it”. So a couple of teachers are not pleased, but the parent community is very supportive… (Tara, p.13)

Five years ago when Kyle decided to open the Freedom School, he relied on parental and community supports to do so. He found these supports in grassroots organizations.

To me that is a democratic right in a democratic society. I as a tax-paying citizen I want to find a democratic school, I can’t find one for my children. I think that needs to be addressed. And I know there are other parents that would support that. I don’t think a heck of a lot right away, we’d be pioneers . . . (Kyle, p.26)

I was interested in actually starting a free democratic school, but I said “Oh my God that’s going to be too much work”… I was part of a couple of listservs of home educators and I got an e-mail once… saying “home educating parent and a couple of other educators are having meetings discussing trying to find a separate free school, and
I went “Oh my God”, and not only that it was like down the street from where I lived. (Kyle, p.31)

Kyle also identifies his wife as a critical motivator in opening and maintaining the freedom school.

Yeah, I mean she (my wife) is heavily involved in the Freedom School. She has always for the most part been on the Board of Directors, she is our current pretty much accountant, bookkeeper… certainly an active parent member and… helping out wherever it needs to be so I mean she supports it 100 per cent as well. (Kyle, p.37)

Narinder finds the support for social justice outside of the organization. He credits external organizations for putting pressures on the board for social justice initiatives. This pressure forces them to be accountable for social justice programming.

...because most of the pressure on social justice issues comes from the outside. It comes from parents’ groups. It comes from the
community. It comes from the trustees… (Narinder, p10)

**Summary**

Participants’ detailed responses have demonstrated that leading for social justice is complex and multilayered, at times contradictory – both challenging and rewarding. In particular, participants have identified personal experiences as grounding their steadfast commitments to social justice\(^{20}\). They also identified working in varied and differing conceptions of social justice including: anti-racism; Freirian; inclusive leadership; anti-oppression; and participatory democracy\(^{21}\). Participants provided varying examples of social justice\(^{22}\) (that included systemic implementation; engaged civic and political action; transparent approaches to programming; mental emotional and spiritual congruence; and subversion) as demonstrating possibilities for the implementation/integration of social justice in schools and schooling. And finally, participants described the barriers and supports for leadership for social justice\(^{23}\). In the following

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\(^{20}\) These experiences are included in the section of this chapter “Interconnectedness Between Lived Realities of Educational Administrators and “doing social” Justice”

\(^{21}\) These conceptions are identified in the section of this chapter “Leadership for Social Justice: Educational Administrators Conceptualizations”

\(^{22}\) These examples are described in this chapter in the section “Examples of Social Justice Practice: Leadership and Social Justice Praxis”.

\(^{23}\) The barriers and supports for social justice are described in this chapter in the section “Barriers to Social Justice”
discussion chapter, I will present my analyses of the data description and where plausible, make connections to current educational administration literature.
Chapter Nine: Discussion Chapter

Introduction

There are five issues which recur throughout the data presented in chapters four through eight that are relevant to our understanding of leadership for social justice. In particular:

A. that the acknowledgment and understanding of the demographics, social and political contexts of the education institution are critical in understanding how they impact leadership at all levels as well as how these demographics impact those who occupy leadership positions;

B. that traditional and most contemporary leadership approaches and strategies do not substantively engage with indigenous and non-traditional approaches to leadership and power organization;

C. that systemic and structural constraints do not allow for leadership for social justice and in many cases actually arrest social justice movements and developments altogether;
D. that **participants’ lived realities and first-person experiences**, more than any other factor, inform their conceptualization and application of leadership for social justice and;

E. that **power relations are in constant motion** and impact the personal and collective well-being of those resisting oppression, and that such power relations also have real material implications as leaders continue to seek promotion, social mobility and interface with others.

These five dimensions demonstrate that leadership for social justice is a complex phenomenon that centres the personhood of the leader within the context in which they lead. In particular, the complexities of leading for social justice contribute to a phenomenon I have termed “arrested developments”. This term refers to the seemingly universal acceptance of social justice and critical consciousness raising as a moral imperative, yet while in pursuit of social justice *means and ends* efforts are thwarted and oppressed. Usually these efforts are negated for multiple reasons including one or more of the dimensions articulated above. The use of the term “arrested developments” offers a literal and figurative manner in which to
understand the plight of the administrators leading for social justice. It also helps to examine the disconnect between theory and practice, and assists in the evaluation of leadership for social justice in diverse contexts.

Traditional and current leadership theories do not fully engage with these five dimensions and do not examine the leader’s personhood as significant in the examination of power relations and their implications in leading for social justice. Failing to examine personhood leads to only a cursory understanding of the organization of power as well as the silencing of oppression and discrimination as experienced by those in leadership positions. As such, these dimensions were interwoven throughout participants’ discussions concerning leadership for social justice. Using the learnings from the data chapters, this chapter will examine leadership for social justice in the following three areas: “Interconnectedness between lived experiences and leading for social justice”; "Leadership for Social Justice: From Conceptualization to Arrested Developments”; and “Barriers: The Politics of Committing to Leadership for Social Justice”.

Participants’ experiences in leading for social justice were contextualized within the education institution and the communities in which they served. Consequently their personal experiences, conceptualizations,
educational programming and initiatives and their barriers and supports were engendered in their historical and socio-political locatedness as individuals and leaders, so that their experiences were mediated by the social constructions and material implications as attached to the multiple workings of race, culture, class, sex, sexuality and gendered identities. In this way, the examination of leadership for social justice has demonstrated that there are not necessarily clear distinctions between personal experiences and institutional experiences of leading for social justice; but rather that participants, whether intentionally or not, led with their personal identities, their personal understandings of leadership and social justice and as such experienced leadership for social justice *through* this conduit as they interfaced with educators, students, parents, communities and society writ large.
A Personal Journey: from navigation to the disruption of Racialization

Who’s Black? I’m Black?

I am Black: Brown skin...and the psychosis of who owns what pigmentation continues…

(personal journal, 2009)

A few years ago I attended a prominent American conference. I was looking forward to meeting with like minded academics and having the opportunity to engage in cross-border dialogues on issues of leadership and equity. The agenda was rather dry with only a few presentations piquing my interest; however, I would not let this distract me from attending other key events, especially the keynote given by Gloria Ladson-Billings and also a informal gathering for Black academics. This would be the first time that I would hear Ladson-Billings talk. The conference room was pin drop silent as she presented on the reality of doing equity work and its critical importance for students. Her presentation was followed by a well-deserved standing ovation. I was beside myself; as a young academic who often felt suffocated by academia and its sanitized approaches to issues of marginalization and social justice, Gloria Ladson-Billings was absolutely inspirational. After this session I felt my presence in academia affirmed. I
saw myself reflected in Ladson-Billings and her work. I carried this same
spirit as I went to attend an informal gathering for Black academics.
Thinking that such affirmation would continue and that finally I would meet
like minded academics, I walked downstairs and went to the room where
the informal gathering was about to begin. I was alone and probably came
across a bit hesitant as I approached the entrance into the rather full room
of Black academics. Just as I approached the door a prominent Black
scholar stopped me and said “...This is a informal gathering for Black
scholars.” I replied saying, “Yes I know that is why I am here”...I went on to
explain how empowered I felt listening to Gloria Ladson-Billings, I went on
to say how I wanted, and even needed to attend the informal gathering.
There were a few other Black students there that smirked with others who
just glared at me as I insisted on attending the chat. This prominent scholar
interrupted my praises about Gloria Ladson-Billings stating that “...this is
only for Black students”. At this point I felt the humiliation enter my bones,
making them brittle. I looked her in the eyes and asked her, “Where should
I go?” She looked at me as though she did not even hear my question and
instead just repeated herself “This is only for Black students” and then
abruptly rolled up the poster announcing the informal gathering. She
entered the room and closed the door behind her. I stood there for a few
moments, humiliated and seething with rage not because of what this scholar had done to me, but rather what I did to myself – I had let my naiveté get the best of me. I was enraged that I had let the emotions of empowerment felt after Ladson-Billings talk fool me into thinking that I was legitimated within the academy and that somehow I too was entitled to enter spaces in hopes of finding mentorship and solidarity with other students. This experience has stayed with me for a long time. When I think about it I am not angered, but rather find myself reflecting on the historical and socio-political workings of our collective and individual psyches in which this incident took place.

**Fast forward to October 2009:**

I was contacted by several social justice agitators from within the education and service sectors. These agitators were working on the UK’s national strategy for increasing Global Majority representation across sectors. They had invited me to deliver a keynote address focusing on Black leadership from a South Asian perspective. I had accepted their invitation and found myself sitting on a panel with extremely distinguished speakers from around the world, several of these speakers were
recognized nationally and internationally for their contributions to the field. The attendees were mostly Black and South Asian global majorities and represented 6 sectors from across the UK. While I was presenting there was pin-drop silence, there was no movement in the room, no one walking, no cell phones going off and not even the sound of a piece of paper turning. At one point I thought I had lost the audience completely. Midway through the address I paused and looked around the room; Ah ha, they were listening, way back in the corner there was a South Asian woman in her salwar kameez with tears rolling down her cheeks. The attendees were not disinterested; rather they were astutely listening to the Seva-centric model of leadership (Singh, in press) I was presenting. The Q&A that followed was rigorous and insightful. As I listened to the others on the panel present and the fervour of Q&As that followed, I found myself feeling legitimated and my work given heightened significance. It was as though I

I had later connected with her and she told me about how this was the first presentation in her 25 years within the education sector that actually resonated with her professionally and personally. She had also completed her masters and was now going through the OFSTED process in England that would certify her as an educationalist and inspector.

My conception of Seva-centric leadership is grounded in the indigenous philosophies of “service” from India. In particular this conception of leadership is centred on Sikhism and its conception of leadership as service to the community. Seva-centric leadership is selfless service rooted in critical analyses of context, moral courage and socially just action. Seva centric leadership requires us to lead with spiritual integrity and moral courage so that we are socially just in our actions, are able to persevere and conduct ourselves authentically in the service of humanity and thus Lead for social justice. We also must be clear that by ascribing to seva-centric leadership we are committing to moving beyond the hierarchal and superficial ordering of power relations. Seva-centric leadership entails engaging with the most difficult issues of society that lead to marginalization (including racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, mental health issues and so forth).
could finally exhale; I was among peers with whom I did not have to explain why current approaches to leadership was not compatible for the diverse communities that we were responsible for serving. Instead, we were hungry. We were all so hungry to listen, share and engage with new culturally responsive approaches to leadership that served the growing diverse cities. At the end of the event, attendees continued to ask questions about the Seva-centric model of leadership (Singh, in press), its application and offer their thanks for legitimating their leadership from an indigenous perspective.

Our conversations carried late into the evening making cross-connections between this and other culturally responsive models. I was so invigorated by this event that when I returned to my hotel room I could not get to sleep. I was so conflicted between this inclusive experience and the exclusive experiences like the one in the United States. While having deep roots in Uganda, Africa, the American academics did not see it fit to invite me into their “informal gathering for black scholars” in contrast to the international invitation by the UK National Black Leadership Initiative. For the American academics I was not “Black” while I represented “Black” in the UK, two completely opposing experiences that can only be understood
through an examination of the historical socio-political contexts of each nation, its peoples and its struggles in leading for social justice. While such an examination is crucial, it goes beyond the realm of this thesis. Suffice to say that Black and *who is legitimated as being black* is intimately interwoven with social justice movements that must necessarily be examined as going beyond navigating the status quo. Instead such social justice movements must be examined in their approaches and effectiveness in interrupting and disrupting the status quo, and must move toward reconceptualizing the purpose of power and the organization of that power.
Interconnectedness between lived experiences and leading for social justice.

What was of particular interest in this research study was why participants lead for social justice and how they became involved and committed to this approach to leadership. When asked how they became oriented to social justice, each participant returned to an early experience in their lives that exemplified the importance of such a commitment, some recalling experiences as early as 7 years old. These early recollections, all of which occurred well before taking on a leadership position, can best be referred to as critical incidents. These critical incidents exposed participants to injustices and informed them of their rights and social responsibilities. These experiences left the participants with the expectation that they would have to take action to remedy injustice. Participant responses were coded and organized into four primary areas including: life experiences, familial experiences, faith, and giving the guidance that was not provided to them.

The participants demonstrated that leading for social justice is mostly a visceral phenomena and commitment. In the identification of critical incidents, participants had identified particular experiences that instilled an unwavering commitment to equity and a sense of obligation to social justice. It was these incidents that had motivated and cemented their
commitment in leading for social justice. Seven participants recalled life experiences as being pivotal to their orientation to social justice. Three of the participants (Kiranjoyt, Tara and William) stated that it was their experiences of marginalization that informed them of the need and value of social justice. One participant, Gail, referred to the opportunity to live and work in a different context (South America) that was in sharp contrast to Southern Ontario; this experience had informed her about the need for social justice. Two others, (Gordon, Gail and Kyle) reported that learning through educational experiences oriented them to social justice. What became evident in the examination of these three subsections of life experiences was that those who experienced marginalization did so based on differences that have historically (and continue today) been targeted for discrimination. This included Kiranjoyt, Tara and Anise’s experiences of being discriminated against based on their race (racism) and William’s experiences of being bullied as a queer student (homophobia/heterosexism). Each of these participants recalled these violent incidents of discrimination and made an explicit connection between the experiences of these hate crimes and the commitment to lead for social justice.

\[26\] Gail became oriented to social justice through educational learning. It was these educational insights that led her to become active in teaching overseas (South America) an experienced that she noted as being the most influential in defining and solidifying her commitment to social justice.
justice. As the participants shared their stories, many emotions began to flow; there was anger, pain, distrust, feelings of betrayal and neglect. Their emotion surprised both of us in the interview, with each of these interviews in particular bringing us both to tears. They had expressed that this was the first time they were asked to reflect on this and did not realize just how deep seated these experiences of discrimination were. The participants had not healed from the torment of the discrimination that they had experienced many years prior, yet their commitment was a visceral one cemented by experiences of discrimination and despite not having had formal avenues for retribution and/or healing from the traumatic experiences of discrimination they continued to lead for social justice.

The life experiences of marginalization differed greatly in comparison to participants who became oriented to social justice from living in different contexts (Gail) and learning through educational experiences (Gail, Gordon and Kyle). The greatest difference is that the marginalization was an inescapable negative experience that damaged the very core of the participants’ well being, versus the others who were in many ways voyeurs of pain and became inspired after learning of the experiences of others’ hardship. This “voyeurism of pain” is a critical issue that serves as a foundational difference between those who have endured heinous
marginalization versus others who have not, and as such cannot be taken lightly. Those who responded as being oriented to social justice through living in different contexts and through education were all white heterosexual participants who did not experience discrimination first hand but rather became oriented to it at a distance, through spectatorship and educational training. Similar to “unpacking the invisible knapsack” (McIntosh, 1988) is the need to acknowledge the privileges of white administrators committed to leadership for social justice. McIntosh’s recommendation of “a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege…” necessitates a close examination of the personhood of especially those committed to social justice. Currently social justice within the mainstream society is sexy and chic, so that anyone who wants to be seen as doing cutting edge work must also carry these labels in excess, whether they grasp them or not. Until this point these participants were steeped in their privileges as white heterosexual citizens, not making the critical connections between their personal privileges and social justice. So it was not until they had become externally oriented to injustice and became conscious of it, that they were compelled to do something about it. In this way, these participants did not have the same deep seated and visceral connection to the work as those who were oriented to social justice through
personal experiences of marginalization.

Instead, these externally oriented participants understood and were committed to leading for social justice as a moral imperative. The current discussion of moral imperatives in educational leadership has been popularized by the works of Michael Fullan (Fullan 2003; Fullan 2005). Similar to Fullan’s emphasis on system change and in adhering to leadership for social justice, these participants used their dispositional power and the existing avenues within the educational system to lead for social justice. While the use of these existing avenues within the educational system to further leadership goals and educational reform is similar to the recommendations given by the moral imperative guru, Michael Fullan, they differ in significant ways. In his conception, Fullan examines moral leadership as critical to educational reform and believes that the culture of the school needs to be and can be changed by educational leaders as significant system-wide contributors. On the surface level it seems that this is what the participants of this study have demonstrated. However, the culture that Fullan is concerned with is the *culture of a school* that is made up of beliefs, behaviours, morals, values and attitudes that are far removed and independent of human rights issues (racism, sexism, ableism, classism and homophobia) or analysis.
Moreover, Fullan’s conceptions of moral imperative as based on the three assumptions that all students can learn, that the gap between high and low performance can be greatly reduced, and that learning enables successful futures, is problematic. While these three assumptions themselves are not in question, what is in question are the assumptions of the leaders trying to achieve these ends. For example, while we can all agree that “all students can learn”, there are definite inequities related to how students can “access” learning resources, how they are taught and whether or not they are legitimated within the system. For instance, if the resources that all students are to learn from are eurocentric and thus essentially omit the lived realities and contributions from Global majority people, queer communities and indigenous perspectives, Fullan’s’ assumptions (that all students can learn; the gap between high and low performance can be greatly reduced and learning enables successful futures) become severely undermined. Similar to the structure of Fullan’s’ examination of moral imperatives, participants’ conceptualizations and applications of moral imperatives remained at the procedural level and did not fully engage with substantive issues of equity and marginalization. Furthermore, Fullan elaborates on a morally based knowledge society as a matter of fact and focuses our attention on the moral imperative of an educator as the
purpose which guides and drives their efforts and which goes beyond “individual heroism to the level of system quality” (Fullan, 2005, p.13). This is problematic, as if all diverse peoples approach a morally based knowledge society in the same way. Here Fullan fails to examine such basic questions as “Whose morals?” and “What are you to do when your approach to personal morals and moral imperatives is in conflict with others’?” I argue that leadership for social justice requires that people live in these tensions and develop new terrains in these often contested and unexplored spaces, which Fullan simply fails to do. While advocating for system wide reform and championing such recommendations as “leaders developing leaders”, Fullan makes the grave error of omitting the power relations in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of current and aspiring leaders. Fullan’s narrow conception and lack of such an examination of differing personal morals and moral imperatives is steeped in ignorance of the diverse realities of educators, students and community within the education system.

Once oriented to social justice, Gail, Gordon and Kyle each spoke of their mainstream privileges in the education system as white heterosexual persons. It is also important to draw attention to the fact that the educational system, from its curriculum, to pedagogy and its leadership
approaches is eurocentric and in this way supported these participants and facilitated their educational success and their experiences of legitimacy, validation and social mobility (Dei, 1996; Dei et al., 2000; McCaskell, 2005; Ryan, 2003; Ryan, 2006). In this way, white heterosexuals (men and women especially since education is now a female dominated profession) are groomed, legitimated and supported through the system leaving little dissonance between their ontological and epistemological realities and their everyday (Graveline, 2004; Price, 2001; Shahjahan, 2005). These are luxuries not afforded to the marginalized, especially those who insist on living and being from their traditional and indigenous roots.

Participants also reported familial experiences (Kiranjoyt, Bill, Tara, Gordon, Larise and William), faith (Gordon, Tara and Narinder) and giving the guidance that was not provided to them (Anise and Kiranjoyt) as key experiences in orienting and committing them to leadership for social justice. In their responses participants spoke proudly about their connections to family and faith. It became apparent that family and faith were sites of agency and learning. These participants recalled vibrant memories of their family and themselves being engaged in socio-political movements. Some participants reported that their family members were social justice agitators and heavily involved in historical protests and
uprisings and even involved them in the movements, some at the age of 7 years old. Such experiences informed their understanding of social justice and its value. These participants witnessed and understood that social justice was a socio-political activity that required civic engagement and action. It was in this same spirit of understanding social justice and its value that Anise and Kiranjoyt made explicit that they would offer others the guidance that was not provided to them. While Anise and Kiranjoyt saw this sharing of advice as their responsibility, they too expressed the hardship of having to learn the information the “hard way” without mentors, peers or friends to assist them.

While participants’ interconnectedness between their lived realities and leading for social justice had multiple roots, it is important to acknowledge how differing power relations operate in such experiences that led participants to be informed and committed to social justice. Within each category of life experiences, familial experiences, faith, and giving the advice that was not given to them, it became evident that their orientation to social justice is predicated on the power relations based on ‘isms’. Those who became oriented to social justice through the struggle against imposed markers (that led to participant experiences of marginalization) understood social justice not only as a moral imperative
but more substantively as a visceral phenomenon and commitment. In this regard, what is most alarming about the interconnectedness between the lived realities and leading for social justice is the intertwined and visceral referents of life experiences of marginalization in determining to lead for social justice. While a devastating reality, these experiences of marginalization have demonstrably served as critical incidents in cementing participants’ commitments to leadership for social justice. Similarly, in their article (EAF, 2007) “Teaching and Leadership for Social Justice and Social Responsibility: Home is Where the Struggles Starts” Duncan Waite, Sarah Nelson and Miguel Guajardo examine how their autobiographies can be used as vehicles to explore, learn, teach and inform ontological reality and pedagogical space. However, they do not examine the impact of their autobiographical experiences and their implications in interfacing and disrupting oppression in leading for social justice. Those participants who identified experiences of marginalization had violent and traumatic experiences of being discriminated against, with no formal recourse, legitimation or validation of their struggle. What is remarkable and a testament to their commitment is the fact that they have come back to the same place where they endured the discrimination—the school—to make a difference, to eradicate injustice. This commitment both demonstrates
moral courage and personal risk. Using moral courage these participants become paramount actors and role models in the system, understanding and committing to leading for a social justice that works to eradicate discrimination. However, there is potential for enduring personal risk, including entering an educational institution that has not systemically, personally or publicly acknowledged its role and responsibilities in eradicating injustice in any substantive way.

By entering an institution (this includes any government institution) participants who have experienced and understood social justice in a visceral way have potentially exposed themselves to the very same mayhem and abuse based on imposed markers. The imposition of such markers also results in leadership for social justice as a high stakes position, making the commitment a very personal investment and struggle. This high stakes position is a double edged sword (especially for those who struggle against the imposed markers of marginalization): while it motivates and serves as the historical reality and triumphs of the marginalized, it also asks them to relive their painful histories, so that their histories and experiences of oppression become their foundation. While this has served many movements it is also dangerous, since it sentences people to always being on trial with little or no avenues for retribution, legitimation and
validation. The examination of the interconnectedness between the lived reality and leadership for social justice demonstrates that the personal IS political. While a slogan from the second-wave feminist movement from the 1960s-1970s, “the personal is political” demonstrates the need for continued analysis of imposed markers, isms, stereotypes, power relations and the realities of those who benefit from them (Dei, 1996; hooks, 2000; hooks, 1984; McIntosh, 1988; Wilson, 2006; Zou and Trueba, 1998). To always be working and fighting for social justice, when in reality the experiences of discrimination and oppression are muted in discussions of how they are manifested and operationalized in institutions, is in fact setting our leaders up to always operate in constant defensive mode, to burn-out or fail.

**Leadership for Social Justice: From Conceptualization to Arrested Developments**

**Conceptions of social justice**

Participants used a variety of terms to assist in defining their conceptualization of social justice, in particular they identified four labels including anti-racism, Freirian, inclusive leadership and anti-oppression. While unintentional in the participant selection process, eight of the ten
have completed their Master’s degree in education, with several having completed or nearly completed their doctorate. Fully nine of the participants stated that their studies and in particular, their graduate studies equipped them with the language and furthered their analysis and understanding of social justice from their identified theoretical frameworks of social justice. Bill was the only participant that did not identify any graduate training in this area. Bill is also the eldest participant in this study; however, he did have extensive training and experience within the school board and became oriented to an anti-racist conception of social justice while involved in policy development at the board level.

While participants identified theoretical labels from their graduate studies and work in the field, it became apparent that their choice and/or adherence to these labels had personal connections. These connections included their personal dispositions in the form of race, gender, sexuality, political advocacy and embodied experiences. Of those (Kiranjoyt, Anise, Bill, Ann and Narinder) who adhered to the theoretical conceptualization of anti-racism, all had identified personal experiences of racism that had informed them of this injustice and its historical and socio-political rootedness in society. Gail’s orientation to social justice was a learning experience in a classroom and specifically through the readings of Freire.
This reading of Friere inspired her to go to South America where she implemented Frierian conceptualizations of social justice in programming and leadership initiatives. Gordon made connections between his childhood experiences of learning about *justice and equality for all* from his father to Rawls and Ryan’s theoretical conceptions of inclusion. Gordon’s formal orientation to social justice through his graduate studies was cemented in his learning about and analysis of difference through the theoretical framework of inclusive leadership theory. Tara and William used the theoretical label of anti-oppression to identify their orientation to social justice. Both used the anti-oppression label and stated that they did so to articulate the intersecting oppressions including race, class and gender. Tara was clear in articulating her focus on racism, class and classism as they had direct connections to her experiences as a Black student raised and attending school in a working to lower-middle-class neighbourhood. Whereas William also identified the anti-oppression label, his experience differed as a white queer male. In self-identifying as a white queer male, William made direct connections to growing up in a single parent household in a rural Ontario, homophobic town. These experiences gave both William and Tara the critical awareness of the intersecting points of race, class and sexuality at a very early age. Finally, Kyle identified the Sudbury Model, a
democratic and participatory approach to leading and schooling as having
direct connections to his experiences of the school as “bullying” and
“dictating” the directives to students. In order to combat this oppressive
order of schooling, Kyle committed to building a school that integrated the
democratic and participatory approaches to leadership and student
engagement in their fullest senses (Greenberg, 1987).

These personal connections to the theoretical labelling of social
justice demonstrate several critical insights. Firstly, participants connections
to their theoretical labelling of leadership for social justice is intimately
intertwined to their own personal dispositions and respective relations to
the power and privilege matrix (Collins, 2000). It became clear that the
bodies of the participants continue to be scripted by the mainstream and
society at large, resulting in differential treatment and experiences recalled
by participants as early as age 7. Secondly, race is a critical dimension in
the power and privilege matrix and as demonstrated in participant
experiences is a primary factor in differential treatment (Calliste, et al.
2000; Collins, 2000; Dei, 1996; Dei et. al, 1997; Dei et.al. 2004; hooks,
1984; hooks, 2000;). In particular, white heterosexual participants (Gordon,
Gail and Kyle) examined their theoretical conceptions of social justice as
external to their personhood. These participants referred to social justice as
a lofty goal, a ‘human right’. While such goals are critical in the advancement of human kind and are recognized and much needed for overall societal social cohesion, these ‘human rights’ were not necessarily denied to them personally. Thirdly, the personal experiences of discrimination (racism, homophobia, classism and neglect) endured by participants served as both the participants’ primary orientation and defining referents to social justice. In this way, marginalized bodies conceptualized social justice from a position of the denial of human rights. For these participants (who experienced marginalization) this resulted in conceptualizing and later operationalizing social justice from charged emotional referent points that demonstrated their personal vested interests in leading for social justice. What is of particular significance is that these participants, while having endured discrimination, have intentionally come back to lead for social justice in the very institutions and climates that had discriminated against them in the first place. For instance Kiranjoyt, William, Anise, Narinder, Larise and Tara described vivid and tragic memories of discrimination based on race, class and sexuality in their schooling and social experiences that had mentally and emotionally scarred them at the core of their being. However, despite being scarred each of these participants would “successfully” go through the schooling
process and later return to the school to make a difference and lead for social justice. These participants conceptualized social justice in a way that required and/or compelled them to return to the space in which they were marginalized with the intent to undo injustice. In this way the emotional referent points of marginalized leaders include: reclaiming their human rights as equal citizens, passion as intertwined with rage, and operating from the unhealed wounds inflicted by hideous hate crimes so imperturbably categorized as simply discrimination. As such, these experiences led to the identification of marginalized bodies as continuing to be read as defective by the mainstream and as consequence these marginalized participants conceptualized and operationalized their definitions of leadership for social justice from these endured experiences of discrimination.

Furthermore, there were two participants who identified being born and raised into activism. Both participants, Bill and Larise, identified growing up in the Caribbean during a hostile socio-political time where Blacks faced the brunt of discrimination from white imperialist rulers. For Bill and Larise, who were from the black community, this often resulted in their immediate loved ones being targeted and suffering as a result of the pigmentation of their skin. Bill and Larise were from two different countries
in the Caribbean, but both experienced similar histories in relation to white imperialist rulers. Both Bill and Larise’s families were a part of uprisings against the oppressive ruling. They also witnessed and took part in the formidable task of successfully resisting the domination of these rulers. These experiences directly informed Bill and Larise’s conception of social justice from an anti-racist perspective. Bill and Larise conceive social justice not just as a lofty goal, but rather as explicit activism, with clear directives and outcomes in the eradication of discrimination and the upholding of justice.

In general, participants’ conceptualizations of social justice were limited. Participants examined social justice from their identified lenses of anti-racism (Dei, 1996); Frierian (Friere, 1970); inclusive leadership (Ryan, 2006); Sudbury Model (Greenberg, 1987) and; anti oppression (Kumashiro, 2000). The participants made contributions toward more socially just leadership, going far beyond neo-liberalism as they attempted to revise curriculum towards inclusion, engage students and community in programming, and even engage in outright activism as they stood alongside community and lobbied provincial and federal governments. Participants were passionate about their labels of social justice, they did not critique or question these labels, but were rather confident and even proud
that they espoused these conceptions. However, like the neo-liberals, they too succumbed to the classic fallacy of lack of insight. The participants did not substantially interrogate their own practice or their conceptions of social justice with regard to intersecting and interlocking sites of oppression.

While each of the theoretical conceptions of social justice carry the promise of revolutionizing education and emancipating those on the margins, their conceptualizations are limited in that they do not substantially interrogate the intersecting and interlocking phenomenon of marginalization (for further examination please read my review of the leadership and social justice literature in chapter two). Thus, it is not surprising to find that the participants who adhere to such conceptualizations were also reproducing limited conceptions of social justice. In this way participants demonstrated the ability to lead for social justice as a navigational tool that at best interrupted the current climate but did not disrupt the current organization of power or lead to its re-conceptualization.

While I understand that the short-sightedness of the conceptions of social justice can be chalked up to the fact that this is a relatively new area of study, the fact remains that it is severely under theorized with unnecessarily exclusive categorizations of oppressions. This also points out that conceptualization alone is not sufficient and that rather leadership
for social justice requires an examination of its application and processes. Nonetheless, each approach is critical in the understanding and furthering of social justice; what is lacking and much needed is further articulation, examination and troubling of the intersecting isms. While the previous connections between personal experiences, scripted bodies and the theoretical labelling of social justice were made, what remained unclear was whether these connections furthered the conceptual understanding and application of social justice.

**Arrested Developments in Leadership for Social Justice: Examples of Social Justice**

A critical assessment for the conceptual understanding and application of social justice can be appreciated in the examples that the participants identified as demonstrating their conceptualization and practice of social justice. Participants described a myriad of ways in which they had manifested their leadership for social justice within the school. This included: 1) systemic implementation of social justice programming; 2) engaged civic and political action; 3) transparent social justice approaches to programming; 4) mental, emotional and spiritual congruence and; 5)
Participants’ labelling of their approaches to social justice varied widely. While participant responses were grouped within the above five categories, there were still variances within these categories. So that although each participant identified one of the aforementioned theories, their understanding and application of these theories widely differed from leader to leader. It also became apparent that social justice programming was very much a context specific phenomenon that required these educational leaders to read their historical and socio-political school contexts. Such readings varied depending on the context in which they led; dimensions included: the changing demographics, municipality, administration priorities and school boards. In schools that had high percentages of global majority populations, leaders – and in particular racialized participants – were committed to hiring a reflective workforce, developing inclusive curriculum, providing equity oriented professional development and overall educational programming committed to community and capacity building.

In particular Anise, Narinder, Kiranjoyt and Bill took the reins to develop policy, programming and mentorship for educators and students. While their initiatives were productive and often visionary, the measures of these initiatives were narrowly defined. In particular, successful initiatives
for educators were measured through efficacy and job satisfaction, whereas initiatives developed for students were narrowly measured by academics and the successful completion of standardized tests. Participants identified transgressive approaches to implementing programming for social justice; however, there were no assessment or evaluation methods to measure the effectiveness of “social justice”. Rather, participants were able to continue to do “social justice” as long as it did not interfere with meeting traditional measures of employee satisfaction and school success. This echoes McKenzie et al. (2008)’s application of social justice in educational programming that argues that social justice is achieved when marginalized students are able to pass standardized tests. This article does not problematize standardization or the implications of such testing on the trajectories of marginalized students, but rather espouses that it is a moral imperative of social justice governance. In contrast, in the current research study participants critiqued standardization and reported having to support students in order to meet government standards as a necessary evil, to ensure that students would be able to succeed in securing their education; while participants assisted students they too critiqued the process and its checkpoints. For William, who is an administrator at school for LGBTQ students, his emphasis is similar to the
global majority integration (hiring a reflective workforce, developing inclusive curriculum, providing equity oriented professional development and overall educational programming that was committed to community and capacity building) with the difference being the emphasis on LGTBQ contributions. This mirroring of leadership from sites of marginalization demonstrates the need for an integral approach to leadership for social justice that examines the interlocking and intersecting positions of oppression.

What is of particular significance was the capacity of participants to understand and read the changing context of schooling and the experiences of educators and students. These participants made personal and intellectual connections to the students and educators they served (Dei, et al. 1997; Portelli & Vibert, 2002; Portelli, Shields & Vibert, 2007; Price, 2001; Shahjahan, 2005). Specifically, those leaders who had experienced discrimination had a significantly deeper understanding of the challenges that students and educators endured from marginalized groups (Dei et. al., 1997; Shahjahan, 2005; Zou and Trueba, 1998). Subsequently, these leaders developed educational programming, policies, curriculum, professional development and other initiatives to counter discrimination and provide new possibilities for marginalized groups. In this way participants
demonstrated an ability to read their students and their challenges more effectively since they themselves had an intimate understanding of oppression and its manifestations. Having such an intimate understanding of oppression, the participants saw that both students and educators’ experiences were couched in a context of isms. What became difficult for the participants to articulate and then program for was the intersecting/interlocking experiences of the isms. Participants were able to distinguish between students who had “behavioural problems” versus those students who were frustrated and in the process of educational grooming were not having “behavioural problems”, but were in fact resisting the oppressive educational regime that was “pushing them out of school” (Dei et al. 1997; Portelli et al. 2002; Portelli et al. 2007). These leaders who had experienced discrimination used their personal experiences and the insights it gave them as vehicles to capacity build and inform and further educational programming.

Participant conceptions of social justice as described demonstrate the awareness of the perpetuation of the status quo and the need to navigate it. The examples of social justice provided by the participants demonstrate their understanding and need for this navigation. While reviewing the plethora of examples given, it became apparent that there
was a wide range of implementation, programming and application of leadership for social justice. Participants identified a wide range of programming and actions that could be classified as awareness raising efforts with other examples fostering emotional centeredness, reflective curriculum and leadership, and yet there were other examples that were organized efforts in policy making and civic and political engagement that interrupted that status quo. However, there were too few substantive or robust examples of leadership for social justice that could be recognized as a movement for social justice. While the participants emphasized issues of context, these examples do not necessarily exemplify the disruption of the status quo or create new meanings, nor do they fracture the system in any substantive way, as mirrored in my definition of social justice as the requirement to reconceptualize the organization, meanings, and purposes of power. More explicitly, such a reconceptualization of power would include the redistribution of power to major stakeholders, the elimination of hierarchal ordering and the welcoming of leaders from non-traditional paths to teaching.

Initially, I was mostly dismissive of the participant’s examples of the integration of social justice. Too few of the examples did much to shift power from the imperialistic mainstream elite (that being the hierarchal
organization of power found in administration) in the service of empowering, enabling and supporting representation from other groups including global majorities and LGBTQ persons. However, there yet remains unanswered questions: What do these participants reported initiatives actually teach? Are they pedagogically and equity sound? In particular, I wonder what are we engaging students and educators in? Do these examples teach and reward students for emulating imperialism and assimilation versus integration? And even more puzzling is the inquiry of whether integration is even a realistic hope given the seemingly high stakes climate for marginalized populations. Where there were commitments to develop reflective and social justice oriented programming, participants reported facing entrenched barriers and obstacles within the educational system. In addition, the majority of the examples provided by the participants at best interrupted the status quo, but did not demonstrate or call for a reconceptualizing of power (hooks, 1984). Their examples worked within the confines of the existing system with their mandate for social justice as articulated within existing policies. However, there was one example, namely Kyle’s leadership with the Pine Alternative School, which attempted to engage in the reconceptualizing of power. In particular, the mandate of this school was centred on the Sudbury Model of leadership
that centred participatory democracy. Using this model, Kyle along with teachers and students aimed to make the entire school framework and its operations as democratic as possible. On the ground, this meant that students were responsible for the hiring staff, deciding on disciplinary measures, conducting curriculum review and were critical brokers in deciding all aspects of the educational programming. This model was very intriguing, especially since the students still had to meet Ministry standardized testing (which they did so successfully) and the school had to follow other Ministry mandated requirements. While Kyle moved toward engaging the reconceptualizing of power, his examples and conceptualization of social justice were limited in that they did not account for issues of marginalization, and in particular race and racism. There were no measures, analyses or discussions of issues of oppression beyond the understanding of mainstream schooling as “bullying” and the waiving of tuition for students whose families could not afford it. Kyle’s engagement with the participatory democracy model neither accounted for nor examined the differential power afforded to those from marginalized groups within the school and in society at large.

While my gut reaction was to dismiss the majority of these examples as “attempts” to do social justice, I could not dismiss the contexts within
which these participants led. My early dismissal of these examples was due to examining these initiatives without fully contextualizing the participant responses in the historical and socio-political contexts of schooling. Particularly in Ontario, leadership for social justice is a high stakes commitment given that under the Harris government in the 1990s, anything remotely founded on or connected to equity was abolished, including many critical policies, hiring and retention programs as well as the equity branch itself, which was seen as not important and simply no longer needed (Kerr, 2006). The elimination of the Ministry’s commitment to equity had a rippling effect throughout the entire teaching profession. This was only one of Harris’s seeming attacks on the integrity of the teaching profession. This is an important piece of the Ontario landscape that sets the context in which these participants lead for social justice. All of the participants were employed in the educational system and either witnessed or experienced firsthand the impact of having such critical equity commitments dismissed. What became apparent in the illustrations provided by the participants was that leadership for social justice is an arrested development. While the participants provided a wide range of examples, their initiatives were often short lived and often dependent on the commitment of the individual. This meant that if the leader left or, as commonly reported, burnt out, so did the
initiative. The resulting high stakes context in which these participants lead is further exacerbated by the barriers they identified in leading for social justice; these barriers will be further discussed in this chapter.

**Barriers: The Politics of Committing to Leadership for Social Justice**

What was most troubling about the findings of this research was just how burdened participants were as a result of committing to leadership for social justice. Participants identified multiple obstacles and barriers that ranged from systemic and practical application of the dimensions of social justice to outright discrimination from colleagues and administration. These obstacles and barriers included racism, lip service, ideologically bankrupt notions of social justice, and systemic and structural constraints. What was especially alarming was the personal costs and consequences identified by participants. It became apparent that participants’ commitment to leadership for social justice in the forms of a moral imperative and/or visceral commitment was largely ignored by the system, its constituents and administration. Such costs resulted in participants leading in often precarious conditions and enduring the consequences of their commitment, including emotional entanglement, isolation, alienation, being socially
ostracized (Calliste and Dei, 2001; Dei, 1996; hooks, 1984; Waite, et. al., 2007; Zou &Trueba, 1998) and in one instance, enduring death threats.

**From systemic commitments to differing conceptions of social justice**

In general, participants defined social justice as a collective process. However, it was also apparent that participants used their positional power and authority in order to develop a platform for leadership committed to social justice. In this way, the leveraging of positional power dictated the limits of social justice. For instance, principals had increased autonomy to set the agenda within their schools, whereas vice-principals reported having to operate within the confines of the principal’s agenda. This was also reported at the board level and within the post secondary setting, where the capacity for participants to lead for social justice was determined by whether the governing administration deemed it as an institutional imperative or not, and to what degree. Often there was lip service (by the administration, educators and peers) paid to social justice evidenced by the lack of materialized institutional commitments, assessments, or any accountable and evaluative measures conducted by governing administration. Thus the capacity for administrators, and even more
significantly for executive administrators, to lead for social justice was arrested by the governing administration, leading to a pyramid of power held by its gatekeepers of a higher ordering that was further compounded by the overall neoliberal milieu of the institution.

What became apparent in relation to their capacity to lead for social justice was the onerous-individualized-responsibility of doing the work. Participants were often the sole instigator of these initiatives and as such led in a high stakes environment. If their initiatives and educational programming were successful, the institution received the accolades. However, if there were issues and their programming met resistance and/or failed, this failure was directly attributed to the leader and not to the system or its constituents. This is an obvious double-edged sword in which the leader at best will not be deemed responsible for a job well done and at worst will be seen as the reason for failure. Further to this double-edged sword is the carrying of the social justice portfolio. Since the nature of leading for social justice is seen as an individualized phenomenon, this portfolio follows the participant from position to position and an explicit commitment to social justice can be deemed a “CLM” (a career limiting move) that can substantively thwart any upward social mobility.

Participants also reported that explicit commitments to social justice
programming was often perceived as an “add on” rather than an integral component to leadership and educational imperatives. The perception that social justice is an add-on to the duties of leadership and education meant that social justice was not at the core of educational programming and any attempts to integrate social justice was deemed secondary and often dismissed by others altogether. This perception by colleagues and administration not only thwarted integrated approaches to leadership for social justice but also ensured that such imperatives were not rooted within the system or its framework, thus aborting all possibilities of long term commitments to social justice.

What also became apparent was participants’ limited understanding of other social justice agendas. Participants worked within their identified theoretical camps: those who identified with antiracism, Freirianism, inclusive leadership and anti-oppression (as articulated as queer theory by one participant and anti-classism by another) remained confined by their understandings of these theoretical camps. While participants understood their own theoretical camps, there were few substantive understandings or connections made to other theoretical frameworks. In the instances where participants did make connections with other theoretical approaches there was a lack of understanding about intersecting oppressions and virtually no
discussion of the embeddedness of these oppressions as *interlocked*
phenomena rooted within North American society with a particular socio-
political history (Bhattacharyya & Small, 2002; Calliste & Dei, 2000; Dei,
1996). This resulted in participants having resistance toward and even
resenting those committed to differing agendas of social justice.

Unearthing participants’ understandings of social justice agendas, it
became apparent that participants committed to their particular theoretical
approach perceived that their theoretical approaches were in competition
with other conceptions of social justice. So that the perception of
womanizing the teaching and administrative workforce was deemed by
some as substantive progress toward social justice, whereas, for example,
educational programming committed to supporting queer or racialized
educators, administrators and students were not given the same
heightened priority by others. Participant perceptions of “competing” social
justice agendas led to the fragmentation of social justice movements that
have yet to be rooted within the educational system. This fragmentation in
the understanding of social justice agendas as “competing” is a major
threat to the organization and unification of those committed to eradicating
marginalization. The operationalizing of “competing” social justice agendas
is reminiscent of the imperialistic and sadistic ventures of slave owners and
their deliberate actions toward the division and conquering of the minds of those they enslaved. By creating an environment which supports such fragmentation and sets the stage for opposing social justice agendas, thus institutionalizing exclusionary mentalities, programming approaches and hierarchies that the basic tenets of social justice rebuke. Participants’ commitments to their conceptualizations of social justice, along with their understandings of differing social justice agendas, demonstrate the disparity between the conceptualization of leadership for social justice and its implementation, as well as the threats to its sustainability.

**Politics of Race**

The participants in this study were racially diverse. This was an intentional part of the research design as I wanted to explore *whether* and *how* racially diverse leaders, including those from the mainstream, led for social justice. What became apparent was that all the participants identified issues of race, racialization and racism as critical issues in leading in diverse contexts. However there were differences in how such critical issues were understood. Participants referred to issues of race, racialization and racism in multiple ways. They often spoke of the lack of
reflection within curriculum, educational programming and a reflective workforce. There was an emphasis on the omission of diverse bodies and representation with specific regard to engaging students, their parents and communities. However, the language differed between mainstream white participants and the Black and South Asian participants in this study. White participants offered a cursory examination related to issues of race, racialization and racism as they were connected to marginalized students and their communities. The omission here was that these participants did not acknowledge that white is a color and that by being White they, white students and mainstream society alike, had been given privileges that were not afforded to marginalized educators, administrators, students and their families and communities. In this way the discussion focused on the “challenges that those (racialized) people” endured and did not focus on the responsibility of white mainstream society (Bhattacharyya & Small, 2002; Calliste & Dei, 2000; Dei, 1996; McIntosh, 1988; Rezai-Rashti, 2003). It was apparent that where white participants discussed issues of race, racialization and racism their engagement was limited to a bird’s eye view without taking personal responsibility for examining and/or interrupting white privilege.

Black and South Asian participants examined race, racialization and
racism in multiple ways. Like white participants, they too referred to the lack of reflection within the curriculum, educational programming and a reflective workforce – the difference being how their bodies were read within the system. The reading of their bodies led to insurmountable obstacles, barriers and experiences of racism. Despite being leaders within the system, GM participants reported being undermined by colleagues, peers and the governing administration. In this way, GMs reported that racialization, along with emotional distress, prevented them from fully engaging their conceptions of leadership for social justice. This was further compounded by the fact that GM leaders were constructed as a threat by others within the system. In general, leadership for social justice as centred on integrating social justice imperatives with particular regard for eradicating racism led to educational programming and actions that were seen as transgressive by GMs and as aggressive, even hostile, by many white27 educators, peers and community. In this way, global majority participants were constructed as self serving because they were marginalized bodies in positions of power serving other marginalized populations. While some of the global majority participants prioritized the eradication of racism others did not. However, GM participants did not have

27 Participants supporting marginalized students, educators and administrators had their programming further undermined due to the lack of ethnic data that would support their experiential knowledge.
the opportunity nor the resources to correct false assumptions by white peers and administrators when they were accused of having a “raced” agenda (Tara, Larise, Bill, Narinder and Kiranjoyt). The construction of GM leaders (and their commitments to eradicating racism) by the mainstream as “self serving” demonstrates the entrenched racism, not only within the educational system but also within the psyches of those that hold such perspectives (Bhattacharyya & Small, 2002; Calliste & Dei, 2000; Collins, 2000; Dei, 1996; hooks, 2000; McIntosh, 1988; Rezai-Rashti, 2003).

The construction of GM leaders as self serving and having a “raced” agenda is significant; none of their white counterparts discussed enduring racialization and racism as barriers to leading for social justice. It is evident that white participants did not encounter the same barriers as their GM counterparts. In this way, there is a seemingly deferred power to white patriarchal imperialism and its legitimacy (Collins, 2000; hooks, 2000; Wilson, 2006) in leadership for social justice. Upon further examination, white participants who were committed to social justice did not experience having the pigmentation of their skin persecuted by others or deemed as a legitimate reason for undermining the work they were committed to. The exception was William, a white queer-identified leader who identified similar struggles of being a queer leader who endured homophobia from
colleagues, peers and administrators. Of significance is the deferred power of white patriarchal imperialism as manifested with the educational system that actually sustains the status quo without substantively interrupting it and by default supports and legitimates white heterosexual participants in leading for social justice. So when white heterosexual participants were explicit about their commitments to eradicating injustice it was deemed an almost altruistic by others and as such these participants were promoted, seen as experts and their championing for inclusivity and social justice were seen as heroic and perhaps even divine. This is a complete role reversal for those global majorities (and William who was marginalized based on his sexuality) doing the same work whose intentions were constructed as self serving; these were far from seen as “social justice experts”. This injustice in leadership for social justice is that white heterosexual administrators are privileged and rewarded whereas those from oppressed groups, who lead in these same institutions, are further marginalized and deemed self serving.
Personal Locatedness in Leading for Social Justice

It is evident that leading for social justice is a highly politicized position to take in educational leadership, especially for global majority and other marginalized leaders. GM participants in this study also identified as marginalized leaders and often found their intentions and the very core of their beings put on trial for legitimacy by others. The constant delegitimizing by colleagues, peers and administration meant that marginalized participants (marginalized more so then their white heterosexual counterparts) endured constant questioning of their integrity and capacity to be a leader. In this way participants not only struggled with navigating systemic and structural barriers, but also experienced further barriers as compounded by the incessant violence unto their personhood due to discrimination. This incessant violence has real material consequences; leading for social justice has been termed in one school board as a “career limiting move(s)” (CLM). Marginalized participants report that explicit commitments to leading for social justice can have severe consequences that act as an iron clad ceiling to upward social mobility. The marginalized and scripted body that openly champions a substantive social justice stance is met with much resistance within the current climate of education. In one instance a participant was clear that a CLM may not materialize in
overt forms of discrimination but rather manifest itself in lost opportunities, for example not being “tapped”\textsuperscript{28} for hiring administrative positions.

Currently, within the educational sector potential leaders must be referred to by their governing administrator for promotion. This process of being chosen comes in the form of being figuratively tapped on the shoulder by a higher manager who deems you fit to apply for such a position. However, this is problematic for those who have differing and even competing notions of leadership. Those who are marginalized, delegitimized and passed over do not have any recourse by which to have their credentials recognized, meaning that explicit commitments to social justice by those from marginalized groups can be CLMs that exclude them from being tapped. Such situations rendering them the options to either disengage (or burn out) altogether or to outright refuse to engage with these demeaning politics and/or to “perform as per the status quo” in order to be rewarded in the form of social mobility. Whatever the route, participants reported experiences of isolation, alienation and further marginalization within a system that is manufactured to bully them. This

\textsuperscript{28} Participants defined being “tapped” as the hidden politic of being recruited into a leadership position. This includes being approach by an administrator and being “tapped” on the shoulder and asked whether they are interested in pursuing an administrator position. Participants identified this process of promotion as problematic since if their governing administration did not embrace substantive notions of social justice these participants would not be “tapped” on the shoulder for such positions, given their explicit commitments to leadership for social justice.
also leads to the need for participants to be constantly legitimated, a real issue since society and the system have de-legitimated them; participants need to feel and be legitimated within the system so that their struggles to lead for social justice will not have been in vain. This manifests itself in several ways, for example white guilt, privilege, the belief in the boot strap theory and so forth. Recognizing the problematic of leading for social justice from wounded referent positions, we must make concerted programming efforts to de-individualize leadership for social justice. The fact that the system does not legitimate participants’ lived experiences, their knowledges and their histories, along with the violence that they experience, leads to a very exhausting and toxic environment within which participants lead. Several participants burnt out because of this, signalling a requirement for an intentional move from the conversation of “leadership for social justice” to an examination of organizational commitments to leadership for social justice.

*Diluted Supports*

Leadership for social justice was reported as having overall linkages to broad stroke educational objectives, mission statements and policies.
However, participants reported that these links were often weak and were not substantively materialized or accounted for. While participants reported going to great personal lengths to ensure that their conceptualization of leadership for social justice was substantiated, it became evident that their efforts were often not rewarded and met with little support. Such limited supports included: board and administrative supports; unions and organized groups; peer supports and the building of a critical mass; and community supports for social justice. It was as if in unison that all the participants pointed to the school boards’ overarching policies, program funding and initiatives that addressed issues of difference as being general supports for social justice work. In particular, by outwardly supporting social justice initiatives, school boards signalled to others within the system the significance of such work. However, by the same token, participants also critiqued the school boards for not integrating social justice into all educational and organizational programming.

Participants also reported that unions and other organized groups assisted and supported their social justice efforts (Rottmann, 2008), yet their discussion of such groups point to the lack of direct impact that such groups have on the everyday dimensions of leading for social justice. Participants also identified peer supports and the building of critical masses
as vital in supporting their leadership for social justice. In particular, it became evident that the “peer support” and the “building of critical masses” was the responsibility of administrators who intentionally did so. There were no pre-made networks, allies or critical masses with whom these leaders simply carried on. On the contrary, participants were wholly responsible to develop, maintain and sustain such supports.

Finally, participants identified community supports for social justice, stating that such support was critical in informing, guiding and giving pressures to ensure that social justice initiatives were given their due importance by boards and schools alike. In her article, “The Ethic of Community”, Furman defines community “...as the responsibility to engage in communal processes as educators pursue the moral purposes of their work and address the ongoing challenges of daily life and work in schools” (Furman, 2004 p. 215). While offering a minimalistic and cursory overview of the ongoing challenges, Furman does not engage in the examination of the concept of community as a highly politicized and often problematic practice, especially for those who are marginalized. Common (mis)conceptions in educational administration literature fail to analyze differing conceptions of morals and does not examine the role of power relations in the examination of moral purposes and (ill-defined) definitions
of *community*. The failure to acknowledge and inform processes with the understanding that those within the “community” are not equal in voicing and acting on their concerns, is an explicit denial of historical and current patterns of discrimination and marginalization.

Even in the best case scenario, when a strong representation of the “community” is present, there are still issues related to the concept and engagement of community. For instance, when does the *use* of the community become *ab-use*? It seems that there is an over reliance on community supports and often such platforms for community input are simply checkpoints where the “community” are not given substantive power to impact social change. Furthermore, calling on the “community” for insight, guidance and input on programming requires an investment (of time, energy and resources) from the community being asked – this is nothing less than *consulting* – except that the community is not paid for their input or the time they invest. This bamboozling of the community leads to resentment with the marginalized populations not wanting to engage in the charades of leadership for social justice.
Chapter Ten: Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

Leadership for social justice is messy, complex and exhausting work. Barriers and personal consequences implicated in such work far outweigh its supports, especially for those from marginalized groups. Yet, these barriers and consequences did not deter participants in leading for social justice; instead, they attempted to navigate such obstacles. When participants were successful, justice was reached for and when the obstacles became overbearing they burnt out. The work of these leaders demonstrates that leadership for social justice is not only an intellectual enterprise contextualized by history and socio-political circumstances. It is also an adrenaline-charged roller coaster of embodied experiences, resulting in the fragmented implementation of initiatives that were ultimately leader inspired, leader contingent and at the socio-political mercy of the changing educational climate(s).

hooks’ critique of the lack of reconceptualization of power by the feminist movement urges us to examine current power relations within organizations as well as the barriers to reconceptualizing power. In

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29 For a detailed examination of hook’s reconceptualization of power, refer to the section “Black Feminism:
particular, current power relations continue to only be examined as they are constituted by existing practices. This current of examination of power is confined to the analysis of current power relations as ultimately interconnected and interdependent on existing societal terms and conditions. However, what is urgently needed is the reconceptualization of power toward equity and equitable relations. Which requires the re-imagining and actualizing of power relations that go beyond the current structures of the educational system. As articulated by hooks, what must happen in order to reconstruct society, is a conceptual shift in defining the purposes of power:

As long as the United States is an imperialist, capitalist, patriarchal society, no large female majority can enter the existing ranks of the powerful. Feminist movement is not advanced if women who can never be among those who rule and exercise domination and control are encouraged to focus on these forms of power and see themselves as victims. The forms of power that these women should exercise are those that will enable them to resist exploitation and oppression and free them to work at transforming society so that political and economical structures will exist that benefit

Reconceptualizing Power” in chapter 3 of this thesis.
women and men equally (hooks, p.94,2000).

We must reject the notion that simply obtaining power within the existing social structure and social order will advance a social justice agenda and end oppression. Just because social justice oriented leaders gain entry into the current power structure does not necessarily mean that an organization is working toward equity, or that equity has been achieved, and/or there has been an end to injustice. Those in positions of power must also consciously act, plan, program and lead for social justice. This is true of current educational administration. Due to many constraints and especially in haste of narrow conceptions of accountability practices and discourse, educational administrators find themselves in reactive positions and having to act without foresight, supports or guidance in tenuous circumstances. Due to the lack of foresight and preparation educational administrators are often forced to rely on traditional paradigms of leadership, conflict identification and resolution (Argyris, 1962; Bass & Avolio,1994; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, Rutherford & Van Der Vegt, 1987; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994; Taylor, 1947; Vroom, 1964). The field of educational administration serves as fertile ground for a discussion of how the rigid adherence to hierarchy within an organization and its consequential power
relations demonstrate that “leadership for social justice” is impossible. This underscores the need for further research that primarily focuses on how power is wielded and how differences within current (in)equitable power formations interlock. Such “fractured implementation”30 paralleled with inadequate supports (as evidenced in participant experiences from across school boards, elementary and secondary panels as well as within the post secondary sector) has illustrated that leadership for social justice is unsustainable within the current confines31 of the educational sector.

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of administrators leading for social justice. The major research question for this study was: How do equity minded administrators lead for social justice? The sub-questions of this study examined several areas critical to the examination of leadership for social justice: (a) how participants became oriented to social justice (b) how educational administrators conceptualize leadership for social justice (c) what were the barriers and supports that participants experienced in leading for social justice in diverse contexts and

30 By “fractured implementation” I refer to the lack of overall organizational programming, visionary foresight, human resources and financial commitments to integrating leadership for social justice throughout the organization.

31 By the “current confines” in education I refer to the lack of autonomy of educators and leaders; the increase in standardization and the eurocentrism in educational programming and curriculum (Dei, et al. 1997; Portelli & Vibert, 2002; Portelli, Shields & Vibert, 2007; Price, 2001).
(d) what are some (participant-identified) examples of how these administrators led for social justice. In this chapter I articulate conclusions based on the findings and discussion chapters in this thesis. In particular I concretize the conclusions in the areas of: 1) Re-conceptualizing the means and ends of power in Leadership for Social Justice; 2) Making the Connection: Lived Realities and Leadership for Social Justice; 3) Power relations and the Politics of Leadership for Social Justice.

Re-conceptualizing the means and ends of power in Leadership for Social Justice

I found it intriguing that while participants discussed the need for “a level playing field” they did not discuss the moral implications of leadership (and ultimately the operationalization of power) as a playing field. This research study did not find participants playing, nor did it conclude that leadership for social justice is a pleasurable experience. On the contrary, participants clearly articulated that their commitment to leadership for social justice was a visceral connection and that their leadership approach was conducted out of a sense of urgency and duty. In this way, their approach to leadership for social justice requires our collective (and often
eurocentric) understandings of power\textsuperscript{32} to be ruptured. Abandoning the idea of *levelling the current playing field* and/or *developing a new playing field* requires us to instead unearth and do away with the current playing field altogether and move toward a morally sound framework that takes civic and socio-political engagement seriously with an intentional reconstruction of power and accounting of our global, local and socio-political responsibilities. An alternative metaphor for leadership for social justice could be spokes of a wheel, each of the spokes representing the multiple and complex conceptualizations of social justice, its multiple and interlocking theories and applications. And as with any spokes on a wheel, the purpose is to carry an important responsibility, in this case, that being the education of our citizenry. Within the current capitalist and hierarchal power structure there can only be one driver, however the aim would be to develop multiple controls for every seat in this imaginary vehicle. So that the social responsibility is divided, integrated and accounted for, from multiple positions.

\textsuperscript{32} When I use the term eurocentric I am specifically referring to the euro- North American conceptualization and working of educational administration as outlined in the literature review in chapter two. I emphasize “eurocentric” to articulate the fact that my analysis of leadership for social justice is specific to the power matrices that are particular to the North American context.
Inherent in my conceptualization and definition\textsuperscript{33} of social justice is the necessity for an analysis of power relations. Heeding bell hooks’ call for a reconceptualization of power (hooks, 2000), this analysis also requires re-conceptualizing the fundamental purposes of power as, the \textit{power to end domination}. The participants of this study were passionate about their commitments to social justice and in their strides, they too, were using \textit{power to end domination}. This was evident as interviews went on for several hours. At times, participants were so enthused by their work that in the course of these interviews we were both moved. Other times there was great laughter but mostly there were serious discussions concerning leadership for social justice. In general, participants identified particular labels and theoretical camps which served as their foundations and filtered their lenses for understanding social justice and how they applied these

\textsuperscript{33} For this research study I have defined “leadership for social justice” to mean that equity minded administrators have critically examined and reflected on the situated context of the school and their schooling practices. In addition, they have \textit{intentionally} taken an engaged and integrative approach to remediing injustice as evidenced in their engagement with the socio-political contexts of the school, programming, curriculum and/or instruction that inhibit democratic and civic engagement. This engagement with injustice may include, but is certainly not limited to, addressing conditions that perpetuate racism, sexism, classism, ableism, disregard for the environment, homophobia and other historical and disenfranchising conditions in Canada. Further, my definition of “leadership for social justice” requires the administrator to take a deliberate position for justice on issues of inequity, thus necessitating these leaders to be social justice advocates and even agitators that are deliberate in their vision of leadership, educational programming and practices. This definition of “leadership for social justice” centres on exposing, addressing and eradicating marginalization, its processes and systems, which perpetuate it. My definition of leadership for social justice along with leading for a radical change in our societal and global fabric, anticipates the emancipation of one’s’ own conditions and also strives for empowerment and agency for the purposes of social and spiritual agency (both within the self and communal) with a core sense of responsibility to oneself, community and global community (for further examination please refer to the literature review in chapter 3)
understandings to leadership. Participants’ understandings were mostly single issue oriented to the deference of human rights and the eradication of discrimination. While participants made personal connections to leadership for social justice, there were few explicit references to how their conceptions informed their everyday activities as leaders. The possible disconnect between the conceptions of social justice and its application is a serious issue that requires further work to bridge the gaps between theory and practice, so that future theoretical conceptions are based on the everyday experiences and realities of living and working in diverse contexts.

Yet there are several challenges in bridging these gaps. Firstly, participants did not offer any reflections as to why they decided to become leaders in the first place. This lack of discussion made me wonder whether participants were entangled in the noose of imperialism that hooks refers to as “the basic dilemma”, wherein people groom themselves into the belief that in order to engage in social change one must obtain money and power in the current system so as to be more effective in facilitating emancipation that would lead to liberation (hooks, 2000). The second challenge is closely related to the first in that the current climate of education rewards those (in the form of hiring, retaining and promotion as well as social acceptance)
who emulate narrow neo-liberal conceptions of accountability and performance. The neo-liberal conception of leadership breeds a standardized form of leadership that rewards those who mimic imperialistic norms as measured by mainstream notions of leadership. In this way the standardization of leadership continues to marginalize students, educators and leaders alike, as well as obstructing critical actualization and practices of leadership for social justice. Thirdly, that the current climate in education has propagated and perpetuated a divide-and-conquer mentality in leadership for social justice. This mentality is further perverted by the insistence of marginalized groups who, instead of becoming unified under the common experiences of discrimination, have instead ignorantly fallen into the trap of competing for support for social justice programming and the scraps given to them by their governing administration. And lastly, that leadership for social justice ultimately navigates and at best interrupts the eurocentric paradigm, instead of disrupting it altogether. While participants identified differing conceptualizations of social justice (anti-racism; Frierian; Sudbury model; inclusive) their conceptualizations solely centred on western constructions of power and power relations. While there is no denial that the participants are leading in the west, it is a narrow and often racist assumption not to examine other approaches to leadership,
especially those from indigenous roots\textsuperscript{34}. This is especially pertinent given the changing demographics in southern Ontario and the statistics Canada forecasts of increased immigration in the future. Indigenous knowledges have the capacity to challenge our mainstream eurocentric and imperialistic educational system. It also has the capacity to radically dismantle the rigid hierarchies of power and to replace these hierarchies with critical and engaged approaches to social justice, thus deliberately moving the social justice discourse from that of critical conscious raising and/or culture sensitization to significant power redistribution.

We must go beyond the single issues and orientations to social justice. Instead we must move toward examining the troubling intersections and interlocking phenomenon of discrimination. In this way, the conceptualization of leadership for social justice must include the review, analysis and study of other, even competing, conceptions of social justice from critical pedagogy including: post-structuralism, queer theory, Black feminism, critical democracy, (neo) Marxism and so forth. Each critical approach to pedagogy offers invaluable insights into the monopolies and workings of power. In addition, we must be cognizant of not getting lost in

\textsuperscript{34} While the examination of leadership, power and power relations from indigenous perspectives is rarely invoked in the examination of educational leadership I have come to realize that it (indigenous perspectives) is an incredibly critical resource to begin to examine and re-construct the field of educational administration(Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Graveline, 2004; Shahjahan, 2005; Zou&Trueba,1998)
the abstractions of theory. We must make concentrated efforts to put flesh and experiences to these often abstract conceptions of justice. A simple example of this would be to examine the historical and socio-political circumstances of past and current justice movements from around the world.

Making the Connections: Lived Realities and Leadership for Social Justice

One of the key sub-questions of this research study was around how participants conceptualized social justice and what their personal connections and orientation to such an approach was. What I had not anticipated was the overwhelming embodied/visceral connections these participants had with their practice and their willingness to share these experiences and other critical insights with me. What was particularly significant was how each participant returned to an earlier experience, well before taking on a formal leadership position, to articulate their orientation to social justice. All of these participants recalled experiences from their childhood and early adulthood years that taught them significant lessons about power imbalances, consequential injustices and how such learning
sparked their intrinsic commitment to identify and rise up against injustice. In this way, participants echoed hooks’ (1984, 2000) insights that we learn about the expression of power in our early years, even stretching back to our childhood years learning that effective and legitimated power is demonstrated in the domination of others.

As such, participants did not differentiate their narratives and other lived experiences from leadership for social justice. Rather their values that related to social justice permeated all facets of their lives, from personal relationships to their commitments of leadership for social justice. Their visceral connections to their leadership approaches proved to be a double edged-sword. When the educational climate connected with their social justice values, participants were invigorated by their positions and leadership approaches. However, within an increasingly neo-liberal educational context (Apple, 2004; Portelli & Solomon, 2001) that further compounds the high stakes of leadership for social justice, participants identified insurmountable barriers that resulted in detrimental effects on participants’ emotional and mental well-being with even concerns for their personal safety. In several cases, participants reported that they had become so inundated with the demands and the barriers that it had a direct impact on their relationships with loved ones and family, with three
reporting separation and/or divorced as a result. The connections between the participants’ lived realities and approaches to leadership for social justice demonstrated the complexity of power, positional power and the shifting quick-sand-like climates, as contingent on shifting educational priorities.

Another significant research gain made by this study was the examination of leaders from designated marginalized groups. Racialized and queer-identified leaders understand discrimination and its multiple intersecting and compounding ways from firsthand experience. Having such an intimate understanding of discrimination informed how participants led, and led differently, especially for those students who endured similar discrimination. Drawing on their personal and professional experiences, leaders developed responsive, curriculum focused and other programmatic dimensions centred on leadership for social justice. What remained apparent throughout was that social justice leaders took up policy and programming opportunities differently than those who did not identify with personal experiences of marginalization.

However, while participants discussed their experiences of marginalization, they themselves were mimicking the current operationalized ordering of power. Participants operated within the same
imperialistic confines of the educational system that cemented their hierarchical and positional power and informed its politic; so that while participants were recalling very real experiences of exclusion and discrimination, the participants themselves were carbon copies of the system, by focusing on processes and meeting predefined notions of success and benchmarks as set by the Ministry. This replication of the current processes in the educational system is partly due to the lack of time, resources and priorities given to the re-imagining of power and social justice. As a result, participants fall back on current processes and traditional workings of leadership as identified in the research literature, so that the participants too were “performing” the constituted leadership role. However, their performances do not exist in a vacuum but rather are part and parcel of current trajectories for most leaders in the current educational climate. What must not go unacknowledged is the deliberate grooming of current and aspiring leaders that engulfs even the most socially just and transgressive amongst them. In a similar vein, Narinder discussed critical connections to the civil rights movement and its influential leaders that resisted all insurmountable barriers and obstacles (Narinder, p.19). While the personhoods of the participants and their approaches to leadership for social justice are critical – and in several cases provided cutting edge
applications – participants’ grand visions and conceptions of social justice have only made small stabs at integration, with little to no sustainable capacity. For instance, Black history month, employment equity and mentorship programs for visible minorities are seen as major movements, when in actual fact they are not, given our history of oppression and our laudable commitments to human rights.

Power relations and the Politics of Leadership for Social Justice

Significant to this study of leadership for social justice is the mapping of power relations that demonstratively became evident as being contingent on the personhood of the participants. While none of the participants explicitly discussed their lure to the positions of leadership as being motivated by finances, prestige or increased positional power, all participants did identify with struggles of legitimation in these positions by peers and administration. Participants identified several notable challenges to their legitimation as educational leaders. Firstly, their challenge to being legitimated was rooted in the assumption that as a leader, they too, were entitled to have their insights and leadership directions followed by others. This of course is how traditional leadership works: leaders dictate and well,
followers follow. Explicitly, participants articulated their frustration with the mostly unanticipated consequences based on the correlating assumption that as a leader I can impact change. Another challenge to the legitimation of leadership for social justice was that while peers agreed in principle to social justice they were resistant to its implementation and sustainability. Implementation and sustainability required their peers to forgo their sense of entitlement while fostering an inclusive environment for others. While agreeing in principle, peers resisted application of this commitment. Their resistance to forgoing their entitlement was especially turbulent in those settings wherein retribution approaches were championed for those from designated marginalized groups within the system. Thirdly and the most troubling challenge to leadership for social justice was the defective reading of marginalized bodies (this will be examined in the following section).

The Marginalization of Marginalized Leaders

The discussion concerning marginalized bodies is multi-fold. The intrinsic core of this discussion rested on the duality of the pigmentation of skin that was divided by participants into two camps: the white mainstream body and the racialized global majority body. The incessant dialogue
concerning racialization was most troubling once I realized that participants were talking about the white mainstream body as devoid of color and thus removing it from the discussion of marginalization altogether. However, the white mainstream body and whiteness is core to the discussion of racialization—albeit having grand privileges, being fostered and supported in their entitlements and reflected in the current ordering of power hierarchies (Dei, 1996; Gillborn, 2006; McIntosh, 1988). Their grand privileges included experiencing the least resistance from their peers, administration and the external community in embedding their leadership for social justice agenda within their schools. What is perhaps most troubling about the white mainstream body being read as devoid of color is the excuse for our white counterparts to not engage, to opt out of their responsibilities in supporting retribution efforts and programming, and to thus not bear the brunt of hardship in the struggle for leadership for social justice. Further, the reading of the white body as devoid of color was used as an excuse by GM bodies to not put strategic pressures on the white mainstream body to be responsible in supporting and furthering social justice efforts. In this way, hooks examination of the traditional patriarchal value system (hooks, 2000) is echoed in that the imperialistic organization of power and its consequences have gone unchallenged, resulting in the same bodies,
theories and practices as uncontested by those who continue to reap the benefits of embracing hierarchal power (Dei, 1996; Dei, et. al., 2002; Dei, G., Karumanchery & Karumanchery-Luik, 2004; Dei, Mazzuca; McIsaac & Zine, 1997; McLaren & Dantley, 1990). This unchallenging of the value system --as compounded by experiences of discrimination-- is a major stumbling block to leadership for social justice. For the GM body it is a particularly difficult position, as the white mainstream body does not substantially challenge the rigid ordering of power, thus requiring the marginalized bodies to endure leading in a high stakes environment, especially since their bodies are overtly and covertly read as defective.35 Furthermore due to their experiences of alienation, isolation and the realization that there was no critical mass to connect to, global majority and queer bodies found their circumstances often unbearable and unable to navigate or interrupt their marginalization.

In this way, leadership for social justice was demonstratively contingent on the power relations embedded in the discrimination against leaders’ personhood. So that the more ism’s, historical discrimination, and the more

35 It is important to note that when I speak of marginalization it includes those who are discriminated based on race, ethnicity, adherence to differing and competing ontologies and epistemologies, sexuality, gender and all of their intersections (I do not include a more extensive list of sites of marginalization since these were the primary ones as provided by participants and conducted through thorough analysis. However, a more extensive analysis including the examination of class, ability, and spirituality is required for a more robust understanding of the impacts of power relation in leadership for social justice.)
robust a notion of social justice, led traditionally marginalized leaders to further marginalization. Thus demonstrating that those who endured multiple sites of oppression also endured the hardest brunt in championing leadership for social justice. So the global majority body was seen as self-serving while their white counterparts were seen as benevolent, compassionate and in tune with progressive pedagogy since their white mainstream heterosexual bodies did not preclude them to leadership for social justice.

**Summary of Conclusions**

My analysis of participant experiences demonstrated that the given power relations within the educational system significantly impacted the multiple forms of leadership for social justice. In my view, current conceptions of leadership do not substantively analyze *how* leadership is contingent on power relations and *how* such power relations and its consequences are drastically impacted by discrimination (Collins, 2000; Dei, 1996; hooks, 2000). Furthermore, participants did not offer explicit
analysis nor purposeful approaches to reconceptualizing power and its consequences. Hooks (2000) identifies several movements that attempted to redefine power positively with new organizational strategies: rotating tasks, consensus, and an emphasis on internal democracy. Such approaches resonate with certain elements of leadership for social justice as articulated by the participants. However, the participants did not seem to have support for the implementation of such strategies in a sustainable way. Rather, leadership for social justice was mostly an independent initiative that lived and succumbed depending on the educational climate, governing administration and trajectory of the individual leaders who championed it. What needs to occur in leadership is an *intentional choosing* to re-conceptualize power and leadership so that it serves to liberate and empower (marginalized) populations from the oppressive conditions of class and race hierarchies and other oppressive structures within society.
Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study point to the need for a critical examination of the structuring of educational administration. the need for a complete restructuring of educational administration thought & practice. These findings echo and is further supported by the existing educational literature that also calls for restructuring within the educational system (Apple, 2004; Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Dantley 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; 2005d; Dantley, 1990; Dei, 1996; Dei et.al., 2002; Dei et. al., 1997; Friere, 1973; Foster, 1986; Furman, 2004; McLaren and Dantley, 1990; Portelli et.al, 2005; Ryan 2006; Ryan 2003; and Zou and Trueba, 1998). Such restructuring cannot be limited to only those on the frontlines and those pining in the ivory tower. The restructuring of educational administration thought & practice must focus on capacity building, be multifaceted and include all critical stakeholders that impact the service and delivery of education, including students, families, and social services and organizations. I have included my recommendations for these major stakeholders the five sections below, including: From Acclamations to Accountable Servicing: the Role of Governing Bodies in Educational Equity; The Hiring, Retention and Promotion of Leaders Committed to Social Justice: A Reflective Workforce…reflecting what again?; The Education of
our Educators; The Role of the Academy and its Professors/Researchers; and The Critical Role of the Community, Students, Parents and Trustees. Implicit in each of these sections is assumption that the restructuring of educational administration thought and practice must include the critical analyses of power relations and its implications for informing and leading social change.

From Acclamations to Accountable Servicing: The Role of Governing Bodies in Educational Equity

The findings of this research study concluded that governing bodies are critical in supporting leadership for social justice. While such supports are necessary, governing bodies must also seriously and substantively take into account the lived realities and administrators’ experiences of leading for social justice. GM participants and others who experienced marginalization based on historical discrimination (racism, sexism, classism and so forth) reported leadership for social justice from visceral referent points. These visceral referent points mostly stemmed from the wounded experiences of

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36 By “governing bodies” I refer to all bodies that have supervisory, agenda-setting, and/or evaluation oversight into the operations of the educational system. These include but are not limited to the administrators of: the ministry of education; school boards; schools; policy makers and unions.
discrimination that had yet to be examined and (were mostly not) healed. Acknowledging the critical importance of these visceral referent points, I recommend that governing bodies invest in “mandating” spaces for well-being. Towards this end, governing bodies must continue to advocate for the well-being for all staff and in doing so constructively develop opportunities for staff engagement centred on the critical analyses of marginalization, empowerment and social change. Further supports include: the development and sustainability of networks and alliances committed to social justice, and the mandating of policies and curriculum that are centred and/or infused with social justice imperatives.

Another critical finding is the challenges to leadership for social justice caused by the perception of competing social justice agendas. The articulation of social justice agendas as competing is reminiscent of the “divide and conquer” ideology used to weaken resistance and also demonstrates participants varied understandings and applications of differing conceptions of social justice in their leadership. The application of differing conceptions of social justice has been experienced as a hierarchy of conceptions of social justice, with anti-racism being mostly embraced

37 I do not use the term “mandating” in its narrow sense of monitoring. Rather, I use “mandating” to identify the boards commitment to the well being of its staff as evidenced by the allocation of materials and resources to such efforts.
and critical approaches like queer theory and anti-classism as secondary. However, given the diverse communities of which we serve and lead in the privileging of one social justice conception/practice over another is problematic. Rather, governing bodies must make constructive efforts to dispel the myths of competing social justice agendas and instead embrace critical approaches to leadership for social justice. A metaphor for such an integrative model is the “spindle approach”\textsuperscript{38} by which critical approaches to social justice are relevant and contextualized to an equity audit that identifies the needs of the demographic being served.

In addition to embracing critical approaches to social justice is the need to identify common elements of social justice that must be included, accounted and measured for by governing bodies and its administrators. Governing educational bodies should embrace an approach to the leadership for social justice that requires its leaders to perform an equity audit so that there is the identification, examination and pragmatic planning towards the eradication of discrimination. While the equity audit and its required action steps to eradicate discrimination will be an indefinite project, the purpose of ongoing equity audits is to document and critically reflect on the actions taken for leadership for social justice and its impact.

\textsuperscript{38} As examined in the section : Re-conceptualizing the means and ends of power in Leadership for Social Justice
The Hiring, Retention and Promotion of Leaders Committed to Social Justice:

A Reflective Workforce…reflecting what again?

Leadership for social justice requires the development of a pipeline of practitioners who have an evident disposition toward and/or experience in leadership for social justice. There have been incessant references made to the need for more dialogue. While reciprocal dialogue is important we need to move beyond it and into engaged action regarding our concerns for a representative workforce in a substantive way. What is needed now is a substantive and critical mass of diverse bodies, experiences and ideologies of those who are social justice focused in positions of power.

While governing bodies have made laudable commitments to equitable hiring—with some bodies implementing specific recruitment measures—there is still a wide gap in the diversity of administrators within the educational system. Much of the efforts for diverse recruitment focus on narrow conceptions of diversity, which include hiring those from designated groups, this becomes problematic for leadership for social justice when those from the designated groups have not critically explored or understood their locatedness in relation to social justice analysis and action. In this regard, I suggest that governing bodies expand their definitions of
diversity\textsuperscript{39} to not only include those from the designated groups but to also couple this inclusion with \textit{evidenced} commitment, a personal disposition to critical conceptions and/or experiences related to social justice. This commitment has specific implications for those marginalized bodies who reported leading for social justice viscerally as it related their experiential and historical experiences of discrimination.

While the recruitment of diverse leadership is critical to the furthering of leadership for social justice, this is not to state that it will not be without its challenges. For instance, while the hiring of a critical mass of GM females will disrupt the status quo in multiple ways, it may also pose challenges and added responsibilities to those in these positions as they continue to navigate and disrupt racism, sexism and hegemonic practices of traditional leadership. Rather than revert to traditional models of leadership, I suggest that the profession anticipate such challenges and in its anticipation strategize methods, resources and supports to assist leaders who will undoubtedly encounter such challenges.

\textsuperscript{39} In addition to the expanded definition of diversity, I also include the recruitment of educators from non-traditional paths to teaching and leadership. This includes the dramatic changes in the educational requirements of those wanting to enter the teaching profession and also the duration of the bachelor education and additional qualifications program.
The Education of our Educators

A critical catalyst for the dramatic reconstruction of educational administration thought and practice can be found in the education of our educators. While educators and researchers alike argue for the inclusion of our diverse student realities in all facets of education (including curriculum, role models, classroom pedagogy and application) we tend to ignore the locatedness of educators and administrators in relation (and consequential power relations) to their students and their significant role in embracing and facilitating such inclusion. In acknowledging the critical role of educators and administrators and their power relations in working with peers and students, we must begin with the examination of the bachelor of education and the additional qualifications curriculum and its instructors that are responsible for equipping new teachers and administrators in the field.

Critical to the examination of the bachelor of education and additional qualifications curriculum and its instructors is the multifaceted foci of social justice that begins with the candidate’s personal lived reality. Echoing the participants’ intuitive responses to leadership for social justice as rooted in personal experiences, the curriculum for teachers and administrators requires a focus on locating candidates and their experiences within the
matrix of power relations. While a simple request, the examination of one’s’ locatedness within a power matrix is incredibly complex, especially since such an examination is not a usual component of mainstream education, thus, requiring expert facilitation and insight in the education of educators towards this goal.

In addition to the critical and reflexive analysis of one’s’ personal locatedness is the critical social analysis of the educational institution and its opportunities and challenges in embracing social justice. Towards this end is the need for curriculum that is centred on social justice as an integrated learning outcome(s) as infused within the educational experience (for educators, administrators and students alike) of new teachers and administrators.
The Role of the Academy and its Professors/Researchers

The educational system, similar to other pillars of society, is impressive with its infrastructure and its organization of processes and protocols. I am often in awe of its luminous and often seemingly impenetrable operationalization. It is the penetration of the educational system that researchers and professors are so uniquely positioned to critique and make space for possibilities. In this regard the responsibility of researchers and educators must center on engaging with the moral and philosophical purposes that underpin the educational system. Along with the critical examination of the moral and philosophical purposes of education is the need for the careful examination of those who occupy educator and administrative positions, their challenges and success in integrating social justice into their everyday practice. It is important to note that the examination of these spaces requires researchers who are equity centered, critical and reflexive in their examination of the educational system.

Another critical responsibility for educational researchers and

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40 The critical examination of educational administrative thought and practice requires the acknowledgement of the field as currently being an eurocentric domain. While there is emerging literature that counters this hegemonic phenomena it mostly remains under studied, leaving much to be desired.
professors is the need to sincerely engage with the reconstruction of educational administrative thought and practice from critical perspectives. Currently critical educational administrative theory remains in its infant stages of analyses and implementation. While transgressive conceptualizations of social justice and equity are emerging in educational literature, the application of such conceptualizations are far from integrated within the educational system in a substantive way. In particular too few research studies examine the discursive implications and application of social justice and social responsibility and its critical junctures in the educational system and society writ large.

In correspondence to the examination of the discursive implications of social justice in education is the need to bridge major theoretical gaps between the abstractions of social justice theory and its application in education. Serious efforts must also be made to dismantle the practice of constructing equity agenda’s as in “competition” with other equity agendas. This includes going beyond the laudable claims to the democratic ends of equity and the narrow focus on singular issue- oriented deference to the ism’s.

Instead I argue for an integrative approach toward a pedagogy of “leadership for critical-social justice” with an emphasis on the
conceptualization of social justice as centered on the examination of the intersecting and multiple sites of oppression. Such an examination of oppressions with its emphasis on the multiple sites of oppression deflates any hierarchal positioning of oppression and instead focuses on the compounding impact of oppression. Further to pedagogy of “leadership for critical-social justice” is the need for the examination of the workings of positional power and powerful positions; strategic use of the system and its structures; social responsibilities and civic engagement; interrogation of privilege and oppression within a matrix of domination; and the examination of new ways of creating sustainable social change (eg. Social political and economic agency).

**The Critical Role of the Community, Students, Parents and Trustees**

Often mentioned in a tokenistic way and substantively removed from the examination of leadership for social justice in educational administrative thought and practice, is the inclusion of community, students, parents and trustees. The recommendation here is simple: engage these major stakeholders in a substantive manner which includes giving them site based decision making power that cannot be vetoed by governing
educational bodies. Further to this is the need to mandate leaders to capacity build beyond the confines of the educational system and build alliances with formal and informal groups that represent the interests of those they serve within the institution. This would often require that leaders should be encouraged to lean into their discomfort zone and make alliances even if it is far from their own lived reality and/or traditional norms of educational leadership.

**Limitations**

While critical in its contribution to the field of educational administrative thought, there were several limitations to this study. While there was a range of educational leadership positions and the participants of this study were diverse, the sample size (of 10) was small and does not allow for generalized conclusions from their experiences as administrators leading for social justice. Also, this study is limited to the voices of those participants in this study and as such this study does not account for the experiences of leadership for social justice of those who are not in formal positions of leadership and/or have not had the opportunity to occupy one.
**Further Research Areas**

There is a plethora of further research areas to suggest. Leadership for social justice is not and cannot remain an individualized responsibility. In this regard, organization and systemic analysis is much needed to examine the constraints and supports for leadership for social justice. Also, several of the participants discussed working in centric schools and/or within alternative school settings. The examination of such schools with their often transgressive approaches to education is a prime area for the examination of leadership for social justice. Further is the need to examine the lived realities of historically disadvantaged groups in education and their experiences within the system, such an analyses should include not only administrators and educators but also students, communities, parents and trustees.
Appendix A

Semi-Structured Individual Interview Questions

1. What is your current role in your institution?

2. What are the demographics of your school? Describe the context of your work.

3. How did you become oriented to social justice? What were your experiences of social justice?

4. What are some examples of your work that you consider to be social justice?

5. What are the barriers in leading for social justice?

6. What are the supports in leading for social justice?

7. What are the rewards of leading for social justice?

8. What are the risks of leading for social justice?

9. Are there any other points you would like to share?
Appendix B: Consent Forms for Preliminary Interview

[Date]

Dear Administrator:

I am a Ph.D candidate in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). I am requesting your cooperation as a voluntary participant in my doctoral research *Leading for Social Justice: An Examination of Administrative Roles as Potential Positions of Resistance for Social Justice* in which I will examine the lived realities and experiences of administrators leading for social justice in schools.

This research has a number of objectives, including: to document examples of administrators experiences with social justice leadership in schools and school systems; to document administrator’s understandings of social justice work; to describe and document the contexts of such work and; to document social justice administrators’ commitment to social justice work as evident in their work histories and beliefs that inform the work; to examine supports and obstacles to the work, as administrators see them; to identify administrators’ perceptions of the costs and rewards
of such work.

This study invites school administrators, system administrators, heads of departments and curriculum developers whom are attempting to lead for social justice for an interview. Participants will be selected to maximize diversity of representation (gender, race, stage of career, rural/urban location, etc.). The research will consist of an interview of up to one hour. Topics include your professional background and conceptions of social justice in schools. All interviews will occur outside of working hours at a time and neutral location convenient to you.

Interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. All data generated during the study will remain confidential. Your name will not be used in the published study, and only I the researcher will have access to the data. All data will be stored in locked filing cabinet in my office, to which only I will have access. All data will be destroyed one year after the study is concluded. You are free to raise questions or concerns with me or the research team at any time, and may withdraw at any time if you choose, without negative consequences.

There are no known harms associated with your participation in this research. Anonymity and confidentiality measures, and the fact that
research participation takes place outside of working hours and away from work sites, are intended to address concerns you may have about potential career repercussions should some research findings prove critical of official policies. Participating in this study is worthwhile professional development because it allows time to reflect on their practice and views.

Participation is completely voluntary. If you are interested in participating in this research or if you have any questions about it, please contact me at 416-230-4780 or by e-mail at hsingh@oise.utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

________________

Herveen Singh
Ph.D Candidate
University of Toronto
416 230 4780
Leading for Social Justice: An Examination of Administrative Roles as Potential Positions of Resistance for Social Justice

CONSENT FORM

I, ________________________________, agree to take part in a study on Leading for Social Justice: An Examination of Administrative Roles as Potential Positions of Resistance for Social Justice

I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in an interview. I understand that my employer will not be informed as to my participation in this study. I understand that my specific answers and comments will be kept confidential. I understand that my name will not be identified in any report or presentation, which may arise from the study. I understand that only the researcher will have access to the information collected during the study.

I understand that by participating in this study I will examine the lived realities and experiences of leading for social justice in schools. I also understand that participation in this study provides me with a professional
development opportunity through reflection on my own practice. I understand that I may request a summary of findings once the study is complete.

I understand what this study involves and agree to participate.

I have received a copy of this form for my records.

Name of Participant __________________________  Date:

________________

(Please Print)

Signature of Participant: __________________________

Date:

______________
### Appendix C: Frameworks of Leadership for Social Justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>Critiques</th>
<th>Critical Gaps</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Furman and</td>
<td>“Leadership of Place”</td>
<td>Does not articulate what the challenges are to implementing sociological</td>
<td>To date all approaches and responses to issues in educational leadership are eurocentric.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gruenwald</td>
<td>Social justice as embedded in a larger ecological framework based on</td>
<td>justice</td>
<td>Access to the hierarchy of power is contingent on sociopolitical and economic locatedness of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>five parameters:</td>
<td>Does not concretize the working of ism’s and its eradication.</td>
<td>an individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Theoretical perspectives of Socioecological justice and a critical</td>
<td></td>
<td>Historically disadvantaged people and those discriminated against at best navigate the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pedagogy of place.</td>
<td></td>
<td>but are not the fabric of the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Critical pedagogy of place.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Moral, transformative and communal perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Leadership for social justice action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Communal stance toward leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Leadership for social justice and equity: Evaluating a Transformative</td>
<td>Does not make reference to leader(s) personhood and responsibility.</td>
<td>Cannot measure ones being in term of test. Especially in terms of ism’s and experiences of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Framework and Andragogy</td>
<td>Does not define social justice</td>
<td>ism’s.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“Tripartite theoretical framework”</td>
<td>Primary focus on students orientation to social justice and not</td>
<td>Leadership is not neutral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three interwoven pedagogical strategies of:</td>
<td>administrators/educators/community</td>
<td>Personhood permeable and impacts the private and public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Critical reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders must examine their own locatedness. Their personhood must be critically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Rational discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capper, Sebastion and Theoharis</td>
<td>&quot;Toward a framework for preparing leaders for social justice&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mckenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro</td>
<td>&quot;A proposal for educating leaders for social justice&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Policy praxis

- Relies on rational discourses to test the validity and objectivity.
- Examined as it has implications for informing equity programming.
- Context is critical: historical, social, political, cultural and demographic information required to make informed decisions.

This framework is guided by three questions:

1. What are the common themes in the literature on preparing leaders for social justice?
2. How can this framework serve as a guide for developing ...a program to prepare leaders to lead socially just schools?
3. How can this literature and conceptualization inform future scholarship in administration preparation?

The emphasis in this framework is to orient students to social justice.

- Uses terms like power relations but does not examine the implications of power relations in leadership.
- Does not delineate social justice in terms of contexts.

A strong focus on examining administrators dispositions and knowledge of social justice is required in leadership.

- Power relations are critical in locating leaders in their context of leadership.
- Power relations have critical implications in leader(s) interactions with others.
- Power relations have critical implications for leadership and educational programming.

Leaders identity have implications for leadership for social justice.

- Do not define “social justice consciousness” but use it often.
- Their needs to be an introspective analysis done by leaders onto themselves this introspection would include an
Capper, Dantley, Maria. 

being activist are required to do the following:

1. Raise academic achievement for all students
2. Prepare students to live as critical citizens
3. Assign students to inclusive, heterogeneous classrooms that provide all students access to a rich engaging curriculum.

- definition of social justice only serves the privileged and not the marginalized.
- Recommends that leaders become expert across student differences. This is impossible to become an expert on student differences. This article does not account for their lived realities and the impact of ism's.
- Standardized tests and "high achievement " on these tests cannot be conflated with social justice.
- Neo-liberal approach to leadership for social justice. They identify ism's as issues but do not examine of concretize what this means or its implications.
- Does not examine school as a living organism.

- examination of one's privileges and marginalization.
- Administrators critically reflective examination of oneself as well as their relationship to their context and society.
- Administrators must define for themselves through an examination of experiences and Knowledge's " a social justice orientation".

This framework does not discuss the lived realities of the leaders themselves from perspectives of historically disadvantaged and marginalized populations and their internal/external struggles (cultural conflict, sexism, racism, ableism, low ses, and gender) as educational leaders for social justice.

The school is a living organism that is that is impacted by its context. Thus, it too must be contextualized in terms of its school climate, structure, history, demographics, and its larger socio-political discourses (eg. Accountability discourses).
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