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## **Editorial:**

# **Liderazgo Escolar, un Elemento Clave en la promoción de la Educación para la Justicia Social**

## **School Leadership, a Key Element promoting Education for Social Justice**

## **Liderança Escolar, um Elemento Sinque na promoção da Educação para a Justiça Social**

F. Javier Murillo\*  
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Liderazgo escolar para la Justicia Social como uno de los enfoques emergentes del liderazgo educativo, uno de los enfoques síntesis del siglo XXI, como proponía Murphy (1999).

Liderazgo escolar como elemento fundamental para la consecución de centros educativos más justos que trabajen por conseguir una sociedad más justa.

Se justifique desde el liderazgo, o se justifique desde la Justicia Social, entremezclar ambos conceptos en la investigación y la práctica para conseguir mejores escuelas que hagan una mejor sociedad, no es una buena idea, es una idea necesaria.

Efectivamente, por un lado, este siglo XXI nos han dejado una buena cantidad de propuestas de liderazgo: persuasivo, sostenible, distribuido, pedagógico, para el aprendizaje, resiliente, moral o inclusivo (Murillo, 2006). El liderazgo para la Justicia Social es una novedosa aportación que recoge muchos elementos de estas propuestas, pero orientado hacia una visión más ética y política. La educación, y su liderazgo, no es una cuestión técnica, es esencialmente intencional e ideológica (Murillo, Krichesky, Castro y Hernández-Castilla, 2010).

Pero, por otro lado, la escuela se debate entre jugar un papel de legitimador de las injusticias, de reproductor de las desigualdades o de motor de cambio social. El papel que desempeña cada escuela individual es producto de las acciones que la comunidad escolar desarrolla. Pensar en una escuela para la Justicia Social requiere un liderazgo que suscita cambios organizativos y estructurales, pero sobre todo una cultura de compromiso. Una cultura de la escuela que conlleva una dimensión claramente social que promueve el bien común. Es un liderazgo cada vez menos individual e individualista y más de un grupo, una comunidad.

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Como decíamos, se justifique desde el liderazgo, o se justifique desde la Justicia Social, pretendemos explícitamente que esta sección monográfica del volumen 3 número 2 de la Revista Internacional de Educación para la Justicia Social sea, ante todo, una provocación al intelecto. Con una mezcla de investigación empírica, de teoría y un buen soporte de prácticas, buscamos contribuir a una reflexión informada que desemboque en la toma de decisiones que genere una escuela justa para una sociedad justa.

Mochila ya llevamos. La iniciativa parte del trabajo de un grupo de investigación cuyo tema es el Cambio Educativo para la Justicia Social ([www.gice-uam.es](http://www.gice-uam.es)), una de cuyas líneas de trabajo es el Liderazgo que se refleja en el proyecto I+D+i desarrollado “Liderazgo educativo para la Justicia Social” (ref. EDU2010-18224) que tuvo su continuidad en el Proyecto I+D+i “Escuelas para la Justicia Social” (ref. EDU2011-29114).

Los objetivos de este número de RIEJS son claros, situar en la agenda política educativa pública el concepto de Justicia Social, y destacar la importancia del liderazgo educativo como una pieza clave para convertir a los centros educativos en motores para el cambio social. Y el camino para conseguirlo es nítido, contar con la participación de algunos de los máximos especialistas en la temática. El resultado de este esfuerzo ha sido un conjunto de diez artículos, creemos que atractivos y muy sugerentes para la reflexión y la toma de decisiones.

Trece artículos componen este número de RIEJS, una decena forman parte de la sección monográfica y los tres restantes son de temática libre. A ellos hemos de añadir dos reseñas. Dedicamos unas palabras a presentarlos individualmente.

Liderando escuelas justas para la Justicia Social, de F. Javier Murillo y Reyes Hernández-Castilla -Universidad Autónoma de Madrid-, es el artículo que abre el número. Parte de una profunda y larga reflexión sobre el propio concepto de Justicia Social, así como el trabajo de investigación realizado a través del proyecto I+D+i “Escuelas para la Justicia Social” (ref. EDU2011-29114). Aunque en este artículo no se presenta la investigación como tal, si se fundamenta en ella. Recoge un concepto de Justicia Social contemplado desde la teoría de las tres R: Redistribución, Representación y Reconocimiento. Esencialmente tiene dos partes, qué es una escuela para la justicia y qué hacen los líderes que trabajan para lograrla.

El segundo artículo está elaborado por dos reconocidos investigadores de la Florida Atlantic University (EEUU) Ira Bogotch y Daniel Reyes-Guerra. Estos autores realizan una profunda revisión de la literatura desde una perspectiva histórica y nos presentan una investigación vinculada al desarrollo del currículo para la Justicia Social. Se plantea como un trabajo que supera lo que podríamos denominar “llamada a la acción”. Es principalmente una “llamada a la reflexión” sobre el papel del liderazgo para redefinir sus objetivos y su papel en la sociedad más allá de alcanzar los estándares requeridos, y lo que el control por parte de los gobiernos demanden a los propios líderes. En este sentido, los autores pretenden identificar y desarrollar una comunidad de líderes que están comprometidos y son eficaces erradicando las condiciones de injusticia social. Aquellos que están experimentados en el trabajo con los jóvenes; persiguen y promulgan investigación dedicada a evaluar e identificar las mejores prácticas que permiten a los estudiantes aprender lo más posible y lo mejor; y, prepararlos para vivir como miembros críticos de la sociedad. Con estos fines, reestructurar los centros para asegurar el éxito en contextos socialmente heterogéneos.

Kathleen M. Brown, de la Universidad de North Carolina (EEUU), presenta, en un esperanzador artículo, cómo los líderes actúan en los centros logrando éxitos “contra todo pronóstico”; es decir, que obtienen mejores resultados de los que cabría esperar por el contexto en el que se encuentran. Para su mejor comprensión nos presentan un estudio cuantitativo donde se recoge información sobre el contexto, el proceso y los resultados educativos. Con toda la información, la autora preselecciona aquellas escuelas donde los resultados académicos eran más altos de los que cabría esperar, esto es “contra todo pronóstico”. Finalmente profundiza en el conocimiento de ocho escuelas elegidas a partir de los siguientes criterios: tener un 70% de alumnos con un rendimiento por encima de la media, pero con un rendimiento previo por debajo de ésta; esta mejora debe ser sostenida por al menos cinco años; que su director/a llevara más de tres años en el cargo; que al menos un 66% de los estudiantes pertenecieran a población considerada pobre, excluida o minoría cultural. Los resultados indican que en estas escuelas, el director o directora ha tenido un papel fundamental, logrando el compromiso común y el desarrollo de los docentes. El artículo describe cómo son estas escuelas y cuáles son los elementos “intencionales” y cuáles los “capacidad” que los definen. Brown denuncia en su artículo que determinados segmentos de la población escolar que están en la educación pública continúan teniendo un tratamiento inequitativo, puesto que a aquellos que tienen menos recursos de partida se les da sistemáticamente menos.

María Teresa González González, de la Universidad de Murcia (España), realiza una interesante revisión de la literatura sobre las contribuciones teóricas así como de investigación sobre el liderazgo para la Justicia Social. En el primer elemento, aborda el concepto de liderazgo para la Justicia Social contextualizado en la escuela. Como bien dice la autora, pudiera parecer una tarea simple, y, sin embargo, son dos ámbitos profundos de reflexión y teorización cada uno por separado: Justicia Social y liderazgo. Pero más aún cuando ambos conceptos entran en diálogo. Pensemos simplemente a qué nos referimos cuando hablamos de liderazgo, ¿al administrativo, curricular, dinámicas de trabajo etc.? M<sup>a</sup> Teresa reconoce en el artículo lo novedoso del concepto en el ámbito internacional, pero más si cabe en el ámbito español o hispanoparlante donde es en este siglo XXI cuando ambos conceptos despiertan un creciente interés, quizá promovido por las nuevas realidades escolares y sociales. Por último, se define el liderazgo para la Justicia Social como un liderazgo con un propósito moral que promueve una reflexión crítica y la transformación de situaciones y dinámicas de la escuela injusta, sin olvidar el fin primero de mejorar los aprendizajes de los estudiantes.

El quinto artículo, del profesor estadounidense David DeMatthews, de la Universidad de Texas (EEUU), presenta una revisión de las acciones, retos, dilemas y oportunidades para la equidad en Estados Unidos proponiendo dimensiones del liderazgo para la Justicia Social. Parte de la visión del liderazgo como una práctica políticamente orientada y que se enfrenta a diferentes dilemas. Son líderes que promueven la equidad, extienden las oportunidades de aprendizaje y desarrollo, incrementan los resultados educativos y empoderan a las comunidades marginadas (DeMatthews y Mawhinney, 2013). Delimita en su texto las diferencias y similitudes de las escuelas inclusivas y el liderazgo para la Justicia Social. Una inclusión que se contempla desde diferentes focos: técnico/legal, pedagógico/curricular y de colaboración. En su investigación sobre liderazgo y Justicia Social observa las políticas educativas, su cultura y las expectativas; pero también ha identificado prácticas opresivas e injustas, el empleo de procesos democráticos para comprometer las comunidades marginadas, tanto del claustro como el personal no docente. Asimismo el modo en el que sustituyen prácticas injustas por otras

equitativas y culturalmente adecuadas. Son liderazgos orientados a la acción. Liderazgos con habilidades comunicativas, sensibilidad emocional y hábiles para construir relaciones significativas y de larga duración. Líderes que trabajan con la comunidad en un sentido amplio. Y, que tienen destreza para reorganizar los recursos del centro, desarrollar programas inclusivos y maximizar su recursos promoviendo la colaboración y estableciendo pedagogías culturalmente relevantes. En definitiva, este liderazgo arraiga cuando los docentes y los políticos buscan empoderar a las comunidades. Entonces la escuela puede ser transformada de forma radical siendo inclusiva, cuidadosa, orientada a la equidad y con ello contribuye al crecimiento académico, social y emocional de sus estudiantes.

Una investigación cualitativa, con un planteamiento autobiográfico y biográfico en el proceso de recogida de información al que suma una perspectiva histórica, política y filosófica, se presenta en este artículo para estudiar una pequeña escuela situada en las selvas de América Central. Robert E. White, Karyn Cooper y Wendy Mackey, de St. Francis Xavier University en Nueva Escocia (Canadá), plantean la importancia de conectar la cultura del hogar con la cultura del centro para llevar a cabo unas prácticas docentes relevantes. Abogan por una pedagogía que pueda crear escuelas socialmente justas dentro de un sistema educativo equitativo y socialmente justo. Este trabajo presenta un liderazgo culturalmente relevante en combinación con una pedagogía crítica que asegura un clima organizacional reflexivo y dinámico. El artículo nos introduce rápidamente en la escuela elemental desde su entorno, su aspecto físico, el ambiente de las clases, su decoración..., a través de una lectura amena, que nos hace fácil discurrir por el centro. Parte de una pedagogía culturalmente relevante: actividades significativas para la vida, modos de enseñanza que responden a la cultura de aprendizaje, resultados basados en la enseñanza, técnicas de evaluación auténtica y altas expectativas. Este penúltimo elemento de evaluación o rendición de cuentas sobre el éxito de los estudiantes tiene como fin asegurar que las estrategias educativas son útiles, basándose en los datos. Finaliza el artículo enumerando los retos de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje en el siglo XXI. Siguiendo a Linda Darling-Hammond, los autores consideran que la enseñanza ha de trascender a las aulas, ser más multicultural y ha de preparar para las diferencias culturales presentes en las escuelas. Por último, recuerda las veinte ideas que Paul Gorsky relata para describir un docente más responsable. Dos claves: pedagogía crítica y una enseñanza culturalmente relevante.

El séptimo artículo de Inmaculada Gómez-Hurtado nos presenta un estudio cualitativo en una escuela de Educación Infantil y Primaria en Huelva (España). Este estudio se focaliza en la dirección del centro donde sus prácticas han estado dispuestas a construir una escuela para la Justicia Social. Una escuela que atiende a las necesidades de todos los alumnos y alumnas, mediante un liderazgo distribuido y colaborativo, que incide tanto en la organización del conjunto del centro como en el aula. El estudio presentado se enmarca en un trabajo más extenso sobre escuelas que participan en el Plan General de Educación Compensatoria. En sus resultados muestra el papel del equipo directivo que contribuye a darle identidad, que promueve buenas prácticas, que ha apostado por un liderazgo compartido y que tiene la buena convivencia como base de su acción. En el análisis de documentos se recoge la importancia de la sistematización de las prácticas “inclusivas” a través de planes específicos. Concluye con una reflexión acerca de la tensión sobre si la diversidad debe ser tratada como algo “fuera de lo común” o realmente la diversidad debe estar integrada en los procedimientos “normales” de trabajo en la escuela.



El artículo titulado *Liderazgo crítico aplicado a través de lentes latinas: un enfoque alternativo del liderazgo educativo*, escrito por Lorri J. Santamaría, Andrés P. Santamaría y Lincoln I. Dam, de la Universidad de Auckland (Nueva Zelanda), describe una investigación diseñada para comprender cómo la diversidad de raza (latinos) influye en las prácticas de liderazgo en el contexto estadounidense. Entre los diferentes estilos de liderazgo emerge el liderazgo crítico aplicado (a contextos diferentes). Para llegar a ello realizan una revisión del marco teórico sobre el liderazgo transformacional, la pedagogía crítica y la teoría crítica de la raza (LatCrit). A los resultados se llega a través de un estudio cualitativo realizado durante un curso: mediante entrevistas, observaciones y los documentos institucionales. Para el análisis se ha seguido el proceso de la teoría fundamentada. Asimismo se ha considerado cómo la identidad (en cuanto a raza, género, clase, cultura y perspectivas) de los líderes latinos les afecta en sus metas, decisiones y prácticas. Se observaron sus prácticas y se analizaron cuáles son efectivas y en qué medidas estas estrategias difieren de otros liderazgos recogidos en la literatura de la investigación educativa. Se han manejado tres ejes de análisis: el Multiculturalismo Crítico, el Liderazgo Transformacional y la teoría LatCrit. En definitiva, un estudio muy interesante que renueva las ideas sobre cómo abordar problemas persistentes que ayudan a tener criterios sobre el reclutamiento, contratación y el desarrollo de los líderes escolares.

Madalińska-Michalak, de la Universidad de Lodz (Polonia), nos ofrece un provocativo artículo sobre prácticas exitosas de liderazgo en contextos urbanos desafiantes. Este estudio señala cómo el liderazgo pasa por diferentes fases: a) La creación de bases fiables dirigidas a las nuevas “cualidades”, b) La construcción de una cultura del centro concienciada y de logro, y c) La búsqueda de sinergias para la estabilización y consolidación de los procesos. La investigación está secuenciada en dos fases superpuestas: la revisión de la literatura y el trabajo de campo guiado por una pregunta: “¿Cuáles son los elementos clave de las prácticas de liderazgo exitoso en contextos desafiantes?”. Este estudio se ha llevado a cabo con una perspectiva comparativa ya que recoge datos en dos países: Inglaterra y Polonia. En él participaron escuelas situadas en barrios económicamente desaventajados, pero donde los directores disfrutaban de buena reputación y son reconocidos por los resultados académicos de sus estudiantes. Algunos apuntes de sus conclusiones están en la línea del liderazgo docente y la apertura a la cooperación de la comunidad educativa. La cooperación es una de sus fortalezas puesto que contribuye al desarrollo del liderazgo y a la mejora de la calidad de la enseñanza y de los aprendizajes. En este sentido, el trabajo cierra con los hallazgos de la literatura que muestra que el éxito es posible no sólo con los alumnos blancos, de clase media y de asistencia regular a clase; sino que es factible con estudiantes de diversas razas, diferentes culturas y diferencias por clase social. Sin duda, este trabajo contribuye a identificar, reconstruir y describir prácticas que están asociadas a la Justicia Social, a sus principios y a los modos de promoverla.

La guinda nos la aporta el profesor de la Universidad Roehampton (Inglaterra) Anthony Thorpe. Parte de una idea tan cierta como provocativa: la obsesión de la investigación por el liderazgo y la denigración de la gestión. A través de un análisis histórico y teórico indaga en este fenómeno y concluye con la necesidad de tener un conocimiento muy distinto de lo que significa dirigir escuelas de calidad que promuevan la Justicia Social.

Además, en la sección libre se han publicado tres interesantes artículos. En primer lugar, un equipo de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid nos presenta el “Desarrollo y

Evaluación Psicométrica de la Escala sobre Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación (EAJSE)”. En segundo término aparece el artículo titulado “El mérito y el mito de la democracia racial: temas de debate”, presentado por los brasileños: Alexandre Rocha da Silva y Julio Cesar Augusto do Valle de la Universidad Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (Brasil). Proporciona una mirada sobre la realidad social e histórica de los mulatos y negros en Brasil desmitificando la supuesta ausencia de racismo en el Brasil. Se habla de democracia racial, y sin embargo han sido excluidos de los círculos dominantes. Y, un postrero artículo de Judith Pérez de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México que lleva por título “Construcción de un modelo para el análisis de la discapacidad desde la perspectiva de la vulnerabilidad social” que parte de diferentes modelos, conceptos, dimensiones y experiencias sobre discapacidad, para finalmente aportar un modelo propio.

Cerramos este monográfico con la propuesta de dos libros recientemente publicados Meyer (2014) y Tedesco (2012) alrededor de la educación y la Justicia Social. Un reto, un sueño, ¿realidad, utopía?

Nosotros hemos cumplido, ahora sólo el tiempo y los lectores y lectoras dirán si el esfuerzo mereció la pena.

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## Liderando Escuelas Justas para la Justicia Social

### Leading Fair Schools for Social Justice

### Liderando Escolas Justas para a Justiça Social

F. Javier Murillo\*  
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Partiendo del concepto de Justicia Social entendido como Redistribución, Reconocimiento y Representación (las tres Rs), en este artículo se justifica la necesidad de que las escuelas que trabajen para la Justicia Social sean, de forma simultánea, escuelas que aborden en sus procesos de enseñanza temáticas y enfoques que desarrollen una educación en Justicia Social, y escuelas con una organización y funcionamiento justo (escuelas desde la Justicia Social). A partir de ahí, se aborda desde investigaciones propias y ajenas cómo son estas escuelas.

Los comportamientos y valores de los y las líderes que están el frente de esas escuelas es la temática de la segunda parte del texto: Así se tratan temas como la importancia de soñar, de trabajar por el cambio cultural de la escuela, de potenciar el desarrollo de todos los miembros de la comunidad escolar, de favorecer procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje justos y en Justicia Social, de potenciar la creación de comunidades profesionales de aprendizaje, de promover la colaboración entre la escuela y la familia, y de expandir el capital social de los estudiantes.

**Descriptor:** Liderazgo escolar, Liderazgo para la justicia social, Justicia social, Educación para la justicia social, Escuela justas.

Based on Social Justice concept understood as Redistribution, Recognition and Representation (the three Rs), in this article is justified the necessity of schools that work for social justice are, concurrently, schools that broach issues and approaches an education in social justice, and schools with an organization and a fair inner functioning (schools for social justice). Since there, it is focused from own and others' researches how these schools are.

Principals' behaviours and values who are leading those schools is the subject of the second part of the text: Thus, issues such as the significance of dreaming, of working for cultural change from school, to foster the development are discussed of all members of the school community, to promote fair teaching and learning and in social justice, to develop the creation of professional learning communities, to nurturing collaboration between school and family, and expand the social capital students.

**Keywords:** School leadership, Leadership for social justice, Social justice, Education for social justice, Fair schools.

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Fundamentado no conceito de justiça social, entendido como redistribuição, reconhecimento e representação (os três Rs), neste artigo se justifica a necessidade de escolas que trabalham para a justiça social são, simultaneamente, as escolas que abordam temas e abordagens uma educação na justiça social e escolas com uma organização e uma funcionamento interno direito (escolas de justiça social). Desde lá, é focada a partir de pesquisas próprias e outros 'como as escolas estão em original.

Os comportamentos e valores mandantes que estão liderando Essas escolas é o tema da segunda parte do texto: Assim, as questões: como a importância de sonhar, de trabalhar para a mudança cultural da escola, para fomentar o desenvolvimento de todos discutidos são membros da comunidade escolar, promover a justa e ensino e aprendizagem na justiça social, de desenvolver a criação de comunidades de aprendizagem profissional, para fomentar a colaboração entre escola e família, e expandir a capital de estudantes.

**Palavras-chave:** Liderança educacional, Liderança educacional para justiça social, Justiça social, Educação para justiça social, Escola justa.

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## Introducción

“Las instituciones sociales, o son justas, o hay que reformarlas o abolirlas”. Con estas tajantes palabras John Rawls (1971:17), quizá el más importante filósofo político del siglo XX, destaca la importancia de la Justicia Social por sobre cualquier otro valor. Aunque el sistema educativo no se encuentra entre las instituciones sociales de las que habla Rawls, no hay ninguna razón para no aplicarle ese criterio. Y ello nos lleva a una provocativa reflexión. ¿El sistema educativo, nuestras escuelas y universidades, son justas? No dedicaremos muchas letras a demostrar lo obvio. Pero entonces, ¿las cerraremos o las reformaremos?

Por otro lado, aun es pertinente preguntarse hasta qué punto la escuela es reproductora de las desigualdades sociales, legitimadora, o el más importante motor para el cambio social. Y la respuesta seguramente deba ser aceptar las tres alternativas de forma simultánea: las dos primeras como una inevitable realidad, la tercera como un sueño alcanzable.

Autores como Althusser, Bourdieu, Passeron, Baudelot y Establet ven la escuela como un subsistema que reproduce y legitima las desigualdades, un instrumento para la permanencia del orden establecido, es decir, para el mantenimiento de una sociedad dividida en clases (Molina, 2005). Solo hay que pensar en que nosotros como docentes, tenemos la potestad para otorgar aprobados y suspensos, títulos y fracasos, que legitimarán socialmente los ingresos de una persona y su estatus social. La escuela como aparato ideológico del Estado, como diría Althusser (1974).

Pero no seamos negativos, también tenemos evidencias de que la escuela puede ser el motor cambio social. Una visión optimista nos la aporta el propio Paulo Freire quien decía la frase ya mítica: “La educación no cambia el mundo: cambia a las personas que

van a cambiar el mundo”. Así, por ejemplo, Murillo y Román (2011) aportan evidencias científicas sobre que el nivel socio-económico y cultural, la cuna, puede ser compensado por el trabajo de la escuela en lo que se refiere a la adquisición de conocimientos.

En un caso o en otro, entendiendo la educación como un medio para la reproducción y la legitimación, o como el motor para el cambio social, se asume un papel fundamental de la educación para la Justicia Social y, con ello, los centros docentes, las escuelas. De esta forma, partimos de cuatro premisas:

1. No todas las escuelas son iguales ni se comportan igual, algunas contribuyen en mayor medida a la reproducción de las desigualdades, y otras a la transformación social.
2. Si una escuela no se plantea explícitamente la consecución de una sociedad más justa, contribuirá a la reproducción de las injusticias sociales.
3. Una escuela trabajará por la Justicia Social en la medida que tenga una cultura compartida por la comunidad escolar, reflejada en su visión de la escuela y en sus acciones y comportamientos cotidianos, su lucha contra las desigualdades, a favor de la equidad escolar y social.
4. El líder escolar, con su estilo, actitudes y comportamientos, contribuye de forma decisiva a la generación de una dinámica escolar que trabaje desde y por la Justicia Social.

El liderazgo escolar para la Justicia Social es un nuevo enfoque teórico práctico que busca conocer y desarrollar un liderazgo en las instituciones educativas caracterizado por su lucha a favor de la consecución de una sociedad más justa, a través de lograr una educación más justa.

En este artículo partimos de lo que es (y lo que no es) Justicia Social, continuamos señalando cuáles son las características de las escuelas para la Justicia Social (en y desde) y, por último, analizamos los comportamientos y valores de los y las líderes escolares de estas escuelas

## **1. Qué no es y qué es Justicia Social**

Hay palabras que de tanto ser usadas se gastan, y pierden su significado original para convertirse en expresiones huecas, meras coletillas vacías que poco aportan. Justicia Social es una de ellas: de tanto ser manoseada ya ni sabemos qué significa.

Quizá sea porque no tiene un significado esencial sencillo: está embebido en discursos históricamente contruidos de marcado carácter ideológico no exento de conflicto (Rizvi, 1998). Así, hacemos nuestra la propuesta de Griffiths (2003) que invita a pensar la “Justicia Social como verbo” (p.55); es decir, un proyecto dinámico, nunca completo, acabado o alcanzado “una vez y para todos”, siempre debe estar sujeto a reflexión y mejora (Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2011).

Aunque no resulta muy académico definir por contraposición, queremos empezar distanciando Justicia Social de otros términos con los que frecuentemente se ha asociado y que han llevado a un concepto espurio de Justicia Social. Para nosotros Justicia Social:

1. No es sólo Derechos Humanos. La dignidad de las sociedades implica el estricto cumplimiento de todos y cada uno de los derechos humanos, y una de

las primeras obligaciones de los poderes públicos es garantizarlo. Pero no nos engañemos, es un punto de partida necesario, no un fin. Una sociedad justa es mucho más.

2. No es Igualdad de Oportunidades. Difícilmente podemos quedarnos satisfechos con una sociedad en la que cualquier persona tenga las mismas oportunidades para ser pobre o rica (incluso si esta igualdad de oportunidades no fuera, como lo es en la actualidad, una falacia) (Dubet, 2011). Triste sociedad es aquella en la que uno de cada tres niños están en riesgo de pobreza mientras que algunos guardan sus abultados depósitos en paraísos fiscales.
3. No es sólo distribución equitativa de bienes. Sin desvalorizar un ápice este elemento, en la actualidad existen muchas discriminaciones por razón de género, capacidad, cultura, origen étnico y orientación sexual, insostenibles en una sociedad justa. Conceptos como el reconocimiento o la participación no son accesorios.
4. No existe sólo dentro de un Estado-Nación. No solo se debe globalizar el dinero, también la justicia. Difícilmente podrá haber Justicia Social en un mundo donde las verjas con concertinas separan los que tienen mucho de quiénes nada poseen (Fraser, 2008).

Pero no nos quedamos ahí. A pesar de reconocer explícitamente la dificultad de su definición, en parte por su carácter claramente “político” en sentido freiriano (la concepción envolvente del mundo y del ser humano), creemos que es necesario remangarse la camisa y ponerse manos a la obra para aportar un poco de claridad.

Primeramente y sobre todas las cosas, en la más pura tradición rawlseliana, justicia social implica *Redistribución* de bienes primarios (Rawls, 1971, 2001). Un concepto que se nutre de los aportes de Aristóteles y sigue con Ulpiano y Tomás de Aquino, pasando por Hegel y Marx en la idea de “a cada uno según sus necesidades”. Es decir, con una meta igualitarista mediante un proceso de desigualdad (dar más a quien por sus condiciones o su situación de partida más lo necesita).

En segundo lugar, valorando la legitimidad de las reivindicaciones de los movimientos sociales de los años 90, entendemos Justicia Social como *Reconocimiento*. Es decir, una necesidad de Reconocimiento y valoración de las diferencias culturales, sociales y personales (Benhabib, 2006; Fraser y Honneth, 2003; Honneth, 1997, 2007; Kymlicka, 1996; Taylor, 2003).

En tercer lugar, y complementando lo anterior, entendemos Justicia Social como *Participación y Representación* de todas las personas, especialmente de aquellos colectivos tradicionalmente excluidos en aquellos aspectos que afectan a su vida (Fraser, 2008; Young, 2011).

Es decir, un concepto de Justicia multidimensional basado en lo que llamamos las tres “Rs”: Redistribución, Reconocimiento y Representación (Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2011).



Coincidimos con Iris Marion Young (2011) en su interpretación de que las injusticias tienen un fuerte componente estructural que hace que sea más difícil abordarlo. Entiende Young que:

*La injusticia estructural existe cuando los procesos sociales sitúan a grandes grupos de personas bajo la amenaza sistemática del abuso o de la privación de los medios necesarios para desarrollar o ejercitar sus capacidades, al mismo tiempo que estos procesos capacitan a otros para abusar o tener un amplio espectro de oportunidades para desarrollar y ejercitar capacidades a su alcance [...]. La injusticia estructural se da como consecuencia de muchos individuos e instituciones que actúan para perseguir sus metas e intereses particulares, casi siempre dentro de los límites de normas y leyes aceptadas. (p. 69)*

Young, como Rawls, Fraser o Honneth, no habla de educación, pero en sus palabras vemos con nitidez algunas de las injusticias que se dan en el sistema educativo, y, también, en las escuelas y aulas.

Esta concepción de la injusticia como algo estructural no es incompatible con la responsabilidad personal por la justicia; todos y todas en el ámbito educativo tomamos pequeñas o grandes decisiones que no siempre son justas, o somos testigos de situaciones injustas y las permitimos con mayor o menor indiferencia. Trabajar por la Justicia Social empieza desde las decisiones propias, sigue en la denuncia y trabajo en las situaciones injustas más cercanas, y proyecta la lucha contra las injusticias estructurales.

## **2. Escuelas Justas para la Justicia Social**

Las tres primeras premisas con las que comenzó el artículo hacen referencia a tres aspectos complementarios. En primer lugar, y aunque parezca evidente es necesario explicitarlo, no todas las escuelas son iguales: algunas contribuyen al mantenimiento de las desigualdades, y otras hacen aportaciones significativas a la promoción de la Justicia Social. Ello implica que el papel de la escuela respecto al mantenimiento o reducción de las desigualdades depende de lo que haga la escuela, no es una situación exclusivamente estructural.

La segunda premisa es más exigente afirma que sólo si un centro educativo se plantea explícitamente luchar contra las desigualdades logrará hacerlo. Incluso podríamos llegar más lejos, solo si se plantea luchar contra las desigualdades explícitamente no estará contribuyendo a la reproducción de las desigualdades sociales. Algo así como una barca en un río, que si no rema contracorriente, inexorablemente acabará, más o menos rápido, de forma más o menos violenta, en el mar.

Esta segunda premisa nos empuja a pensar en la necesidad de que la lucha de las desigualdades y a favor de una mayor Justicia Social debería formar parte de los proyectos educativos, de los objetivos que se plantean y, por supuesto, de las acciones que se llevan a cabo.

La tercera premisa se refiere a la cultura de Justicia Social como eje vertebrador de las escuelas que trabajen por la Justicia Social: en la medida que tenga una cultura compartida por la comunidad escolar, reflejada en su visión de la escuela y en sus acciones y comportamientos cotidianos, de lucha por las desigualdades, a favor de la equidad escolar y social.

A partir de estas premisas podemos formular un teorema: Una escuela que trabaje PARA la Justicia Social debe, a la par, trabajar EN Justicia Social y DESDE la Justicia Social.

La idea es sencilla, para construir una sociedad más justa es necesario que los alumnos conozcan esos elementos y tengan competencias y capacidades para modificar la situación, pero también mediante una escuela justa. Para entender esa idea podemos recurrir a la analogía de la educación para la democracia, si queremos una educación que contribuya a una sociedad más democrática necesitamos, en primer lugar, que los estudiantes conozcan cauces institucionales de participación, pero también que sepan expresarse en público para defender las ideas propias, así como actitudes favorables a la participación... entre otras cosas. Pero estaremos de acuerdo que no puede enseñarse democracia con instituciones autoritarias, por lo que es condición *sine qua non* que las escuelas sean democrática, que funcionen desde la democracia.

Veamos ambos componentes de una forma breve.

### ***2.1. Educación EN Justicia Social***

Si se quiere colaborar en la construcción de una sociedad más justa es necesario, en primer lugar, “cambiar las personas”, como decía Freire, hacer de los estudiantes agentes de cambio social. Y, para ello, es necesario incluir en el curriculum temas de Justicia Social desde una perspectiva que parte de las experiencias de los estudiantes y poco a poco va profundizando hacia una perspectiva crítica de lo que le rodea, y hacia una acción directa enfocada al cambio social (Adams, Bell y Griffin, 2007; Cipolle, 2010, Schniedewind y Davidson, 2006; Zajda, Majhanovich y Rust, 2006). Así, solo a modo de mínima orientación, una educación en Justicia Social necesita un proceso que contenga estos elementos:

1. *Autoconocimiento y autoestima.* Se fomenta que los estudiantes aprendan acerca de quiénes son y de dónde vienen. En el aula se cuida la dignidad de su cultura, capital social, capacidad, etnia, religión, color de piel, género, orientación sexual, etc. Los estudiantes aprenden sobre diferentes aspectos de su identidad y su historia. Se trabaja sobre los estereotipos negativos asociados a las identidades de los estudiantes.
2. *Respeto por los otros.* Se pretende que los estudiantes compartan con sus compañeros sus conocimientos sobre su propio contexto cultural. El objetivo es crear un clima de respeto a la diversidad, donde los estudiantes aprenden a escuchar con interés, cercanía y empatía las experiencias de sus compañeros. Los estudiantes “derriban” los estereotipos sobre las identidades de sus compañeros.
3. *Abordan aspectos sobre la injusticia social.* De "celebrar la diversidad" a analizar cómo ésta ha impactado de manera desigual en los diversos colectivos de personas. Los estudiantes aprenden sobre la historia del racismo, el sexismo, el clasismo, la homofobia, la intolerancia religiosa, etc., y cómo estas formas de opresión han afectado a las diferentes comunidades. Buscan relaciones que muestren cómo las raíces históricas de la opresión impactan en las experiencias vitales y en las condiciones materiales de las personas en la actualidad.
4. *Movimientos sociales y cambio social.* Se trabajan ejemplos de acciones en contra de los problemas sociales actuales llevados a cabo tanto por personas emblemáticas como por movimientos sociales. La idea es pasar a contrarrestar el desánimo y pasividad, de manera que entiendan que el trabajo conjunto de gente corriente puede generar cambio.

5. *Despertar la conciencia.* Se proporcionan oportunidades para que los estudiantes enseñen a otros acerca de lo que han aprendido sobre estos temas. Esto permite que se apasionen con estos temas y se conviertan en defensores mediante la sensibilización de otros estudiantes, docentes, familiares y miembros de la comunidad. Es importante reconocer que, si bien la sensibilización es un precursor necesario e importante para la acción, por sí misma no se traduce en el cambio.
6. *Pasar a la Acción Social.* Se facilitan ocasiones para tomar medidas sobre aspectos que afectan a los estudiantes y sus comunidades. Los estudiantes identifican los problemas sobre los que sientan pasión y adquieren las competencias para comenzar a cambiarlos.

Son ideas heredadas de Freire cuando defendía que para que el hombre se educara, se liberara, necesitaba reflexionar sobre lo que es y sobre su situación de tal forma que le lleve a “emergerse” de la realidad para transformarla, realizar y proyectar su esencia sobre ella: humanizarla” (Freire, 1972).

Una interesante mirada sobre las capacidades que debe poseer el docente que trabaja para la Justicia Social la formula Heather W. Hackman (2005). Así, propone la existencia de cinco “herramientas”:

- *Herramienta 1: Dominio del contenido,* que incluye tres elementos: información basada en hechos, contextualización histórica y análisis de contenido de lo macro a lo micro. Tiene en cuenta que la adquisición del contenido es esencial para el aprendizaje y es importante que provenga de diferentes fuentes. Sin esta herramienta los estudiantes no pueden participar positivamente, ser proactivos para el cambio social.
- *Herramienta 2: Pensamiento crítico y análisis de la opresión.* El contenido por sí mismo es insuficiente para crear escenarios democráticos que empoderen a los estudiantes de modo que sean agentes de cambio. La información sin un contexto histórico y un análisis crítico resulta ineficaz. Por sí misma no proporciona caminos para la acción. Requiere un debate y una crítica. Debe proporcionar información sobre la opresión para dar un conocimiento profundo y una orientación hacia la aplicación. Consta de cuatro elementos: focalizar la información, “descentrar” a los estudiantes, analizar los efectos, y reflexionar sobre las posibles alternativas a la situación actual.
- *Herramienta 3: Acción y cambio social,* que contribuya a que los estudiantes cambien el cinismo por la posibilidad. De esta forma, enseñar sobre opresión sin proporcionar herramientas de acción social crea un clima de desesperanza. El aula debe proporcionar la oportunidad de cambiar, y modificar su sentimiento de impotencia.
- *Herramienta 4: Reflexión personal.* Esta herramienta recuerda a los docentes que han de reflexionar críticamente sobre sus cualidades y su práctica. Ser críticos y auto reflexivos. Tres aspectos: los dominantes a) están activamente enseñados para no ver su privilegio, b) ven su situación como lo normal en la sociedad, y c) no han hecho nada para ganarse este privilegio. Hacer un ejercicio de autorreflexión nos lleva a mirarnos como parte de ese proceso opresivo y facilita la creación de un aula socialmente justa.

- *Herramienta 5: Sensibilidad acerca de las dinámicas de los grupos multiculturales.* Nos permite construir las identidades de los estudiantes y docentes. Conocer las dinámicas permite actuar eficazmente en la implementación de estas herramientas. Sin crear un entorno de aprendizaje centrado en el estudiante, que considere las diferentes identidades y perspectivas multiculturales, pierde el verdadero potencial de esta herramienta.

## ***2.2. Escuelas DESDE la Justicia Social (escuelas justas)***

Como decía Rawls (1971) en las palabras que dan comienzo a este artículo, tanto o más importante es que las escuelas sean justas.

La gran mayoría de la literatura, la consideración de una escuela como “buena” -de calidad-, suele atender a criterios internos: si es eficaz, eficiente, relevante, pertinente, innovadora; pero no es habitual prestar la atención en criterios externos, tales como su impacto en la sociedad. Este hecho favorece que el papel de la educación como legitimadora de las desigualdades sociales. Así, muchas de las que consideramos “buenas escuelas” están contribuyendo a mantener las diferencias sociales y las situaciones de injusticia cultural. Las escuelas que seleccionan a los estudiantes (o que ponen trabas a la incorporación de algún niño en función de su capacidad, nivel socio-económico familiar, cultura u origen), aquellas escuelas que expulsan a los estudiantes en el proceso de escolarización, por principio, no pueden considerarse como buenas escuelas, por mucho que su proceso educativo, sus resultados o sus medios sean destacables.

Análogas consideraciones pueden hacerse de las escuelas que en su funcionamiento interno generan situaciones de desigualdad, tanto por acción como por omisión; o que tiene una gestión autoritaria e incluso violenta. Escuelas que no prestan todo el apoyo necesario a estudiantes de diferentes capacidades, que justifican situaciones de fracaso por el entorno familiar, o que no confían -y trabajan para ello- en el máximo desarrollo de todos y cada uno de los estudiantes y hacen selecciones tempranas que marcan el futuro de los adolescentes. Por más que sus resultados en pruebas estandarizadas sean alto, o tengan un buen clima, o ganen premios a la innovación, en ningún caso pueden considerarse como modelos a seguir.

A continuación vamos a hacer una propuesta de elementos a considerar en esas escuelas que trabajan desde la Justicia Social, en lo que venimos a llamar escuelas justas. En la misma, combinamos las lecciones aprendidas de la incipiente investigación internacional (p.e. Lupton, 2005; Symith, 2012; Thrupp, 1999), con los resultados de investigaciones propias. En coherencia con la definición anterior de Justicia Social, organizaremos las características en los tres componentes: Redistribución, Reconocimiento y Participación.

a) A partir de la idea de *Justicia Social como Redistribución*, una escuela justa se define por una serie de elementos agrupados en tres grandes bloques: su cultura, el compromiso de todos por seguir aprendiendo, y el desarrollo de procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje justos. Veámoslos brevemente.

El primer elemento que caracteriza y define las escuelas justas tener una *cultura escolar para la Justicia Social*. Esto se concreta en:

- Poseen unos objetivos explícitos, conocidos y compartidos por la comunidad, centrados en el conseguir el máximo desarrollo de todos los estudiantes y la lucha por la Justicia Social.

- Comparten valores, actitudes y normas que fomentan la inclusión y el aprendizaje de todos y cada uno, evitando toda forma de exclusión, marginación y discriminación.
- Participan de una cultura de apoyo diferencial, de tal forma que gocen de más soporte aquellos que por “azares de la naturaleza” tengan mayores dificultades para conseguir el máximo desarrollo, bien sea por capacidad, nivel socio-económico y cultural de la familia, conocimientos previos, cultura, lengua materna...
- Mantienen altas expectativas hacia los estudiantes, hacia los docentes y hacia las familias conforman la marca definitoria de la cultura de ese centro. Se nos hace difícil imaginar un centro que trabaje por una educación para todos y con todos, no confiando en que todos pueden aprender. Y si tiene altas expectativas, ofrece todos las oportunidades para que los niños, niñas y adolescentes se desarrollen al máximo,
- Trabajan en equipo como forma cultural del centro: “aquí hacemos las cosas juntos, acertamos y nos equivocamos juntos”. La acción solitaria, por muy bien intencionada que sea, difícilmente puede construir una sociedad solidaria y de apoyo mutuo.
- Se comprometen y tienen sentido de pertenencia. Los y las docentes están fuertemente comprometidos con sus estudiantes, con la comunidad en la que se inserta el centro, con la educación, con la sociedad. Sienten el centro como suyo y trabajan duro para mejorarlo.

La segunda característica encontrada en las escuelas justas es el *compromiso de toda la comunidad de aprender* partiendo de los principios de aprendizaje de todos, apoyo y colaboración. Así encontramos:

- Múltiples muestras de apoyo entre docentes y con otras instancias internas y externas al centro. Los profesores piden y dan ayuda constantemente, como muestra de un compromiso colectivo, sobre la forma de abordar un contenido, una metodología, una dificultad, una estrategia para mejorar...
- El Aprendizaje de todos como una estrategia de dar una adecuada respuesta al reto que supone enfrentarse (ponerse frente a) cada nuevo día a estudiantes diferentes. La idea es sencilla, sólo seremos capaces de conseguir que todos los estudiantes aprendan si todos aprendemos.
- Una actitud explícita, en palabras y hechos, hacia la innovación, hacia el abordaje de nuevos desafíos mediante nuevas respuestas. Si la autocomplacencia es un pecado para cualquier docente, en el caso que se trabaja ante el reto de lograr una sociedad más justa, lo es mortal.

La tercera es *el desarrollo de procesos de enseñanza justos*. Ello implica elementos tales:

- La consideración de que la finalidad es el desarrollo integral de los estudiantes, lo que incluye no solo su desarrollo cognitivo, afectivo y psicomotor.
- Cuida el desarrollo de la creatividad y la innovación estética de todos los estudiantes.

- Propicia el pensamiento crítico y el desarrollo de valores radicalmente democráticos en fines y medios.
- Ocuparse muy especialmente de la autoestima y del bienestar de los estudiantes. Como vimos en la educación en Justicia Social el primer paso es que los alumnos se valoren, porque solo así puedes buscar metas más altas y pueden buscar la valoración del otro.
- Hacer que la atención a la diversidad sea un hecho, con de tal forma que la enseñanza y su evaluación se adapte a las características, estilos, expectativas, capacidades, situación previa y necesidades de cada estudiante. Nada hay más injusto que un trato igual para personas diferentes.
- Tener un currículo centrado en la educación de la persona como miembro de una comunidad socialmente cohesionada e incluye en él, como parte visible en todos su elementos, asuntos relacionados con el género, la cultura, la equidad y la etnia.

b) Desde la consideración de *Justicia Social como Reconocimiento* se nos muestra una escuela que busca un cambio cultural en la sociedad: un cambio de valores que suponga la reevaluación ascendente de las identidades no respetadas o sus productos culturales. De esta forma se reconocen, valoran y respetan las diferencias por género, cultura, etnia, orientación sexual... Algunas de las características de las escuelas que trabajan por la Justicia Social partiendo de esta dimensión de reconocimiento son:

- Los y las docentes son conscientes de la importancia de las diferencias por clase social, cultura, género y sexualidad, y la complejidad en lo relativo a valoración de sus representaciones y complejas luchas por el reconocimiento que implican.
- Se trabaja por construir un currículo multicultural que contribuya a transformar las condiciones sociales, culturales y estructuras institucionales que generan esas representaciones. Se valoran las diferentes tradiciones de conocimiento sin menospreciar ninguna de ellas.
- Se fomenta el pensamiento crítico, el razonamiento ético y la denuncia de las situaciones actuales. Como antes decíamos, se pasa de “celebrar la diversidad” a analizarla en su contexto. Se respetan las diferencias pero no se esencializan.
- La cultura escolar se fundamenta en la solidaridad en la diferencia. De esta forma, se empodera a los estudiantes analizar y entender los diferentes puntos de vista y los valores diferentes sociales existentes. De manera que se fomenta la idea de interdependencia y de responsabilidad individual y colectiva por la sociedad y su destino.
- Se estiman los aspectos culturales, lingüísticos, y las experiencias que los alumnos y las familias traen consigo a la escuela. Se valoran y constituyen un material apreciado para trabajar en la clase.
- La estrecha colaboración escuela-hogar es una de las características definitorias. Se trabaja, con humildad y persistencia, por lograr que la escuela y el hogar compartan una misma cultura educativa. Pero no imponiendo la superioridad de una sobre otra, sino conociéndose y construyendo juntos.

c) Desde la consideración de la *Justicia Social como Participación y Representación*, una escuela socialmente justa trabaja para fomentar el compromiso y la participación de toda la comunidad escolar tanto en aspectos curriculares como en la organización y funcionamiento de las aulas y la escuela en su conjunto, de tal forma que implica una modificación de la escuela en su concepción tradicional. Algunas notas características son las siguientes:

- Existe una cultura de respeto a todos los estudiantes como personas responsables de su futuro y que participan activamente en su formación.
- Se cuida la participación de todos y todas, fomentando muy especialmente la implicación y representación de colectivos tradicionalmente marginados.
- Las aulas se organizan democráticamente, con asambleas, donde se discuten todas las decisiones que afectan a su aprendizaje: la forma de organizarse, los contenidos a tratar, las estrategias didácticas, la forma de evaluar...
- La escuela en su organización y funcionamiento se basa en las decisiones de la comunidad escolar en su conjunto: docentes familias, estudiantes, personal no docente. Se potencia que haya reuniones abiertas de forma periódica, de tal forma que no se restrinja a la participación en órganos tales como el consejo escolar o el claustro.
- Se trabaja por conseguir un liderazgo distribuido. Aunque este punto se abordará más adelante, estas escuelas trabajan por fomentar el liderazgo de los docentes y de la comunidad, de tal forma que las decisiones y responsabilidades se reparten y comparten.
- Apertura al entorno es otra de las características. La escuela trabaja con asociaciones locales, potencia el desarrollo de su comunidad, se implica en eventos del barrio, con el barrio y para el barrio...

### **3. Liderazgo para la Justicia Social**

El liderazgo educativo para la Justicia Social es un modelo de liderazgo que pone su foco de atención en la construcción de una organización educativa que trabaje en contra de las desigualdades y por el desarrollo de una sociedad más justa. Murphy (1999) lo consideró como un liderazgo para el nuevo siglo, uno de los tres “grandes paradigmas síntesis” (p. 54). Así, aunque la idea no es nueva, en estos últimos años se están multiplicando las aportaciones teóricas y prácticas para su construcción (p.e. Bogotch y Shields, 2014; Bogotch, Beachum, Blount, Brooks y English, 2008; Bolívar, López-Yáñez y Murillo, 2013; Grogan, 2002a, 2002b; Jean-Marie, 2008; Jean-Marie, Normore y Brooks, 2009; Marshall y Oliva, 2006; Morrison, 2009; Shoho, Merchang y Lugg, 2005).

Tal y como señalamos en nuestra cuarta premisa, el papel que adoptan los y las líderes escolares es clave para conseguir escuelas que trabajen en y para la Justicia Social. Parece claro que el equipo directivo tiene, en última instancia, la mayor responsabilidad en la toma de medidas y en la creación de una cultura para la Justicia Social. Sin embargo, este liderazgo no necesariamente recae en aquellas personas que ostentan un cargo, sino que puede ser llevado a cabo por un colectivo de individuos que trabajan juntos, que toman y comparten iniciativas, y que responden y construyen la

cotidianeidad del centro a partir de este trabajo colaborativo. El trabajo compartido y la acción convergente surgen cuando se reúnen capacidades, conocimientos, experiencia práctica y perspectivas de los miembros de la organización, con vistas a resolver tareas complejas que requieren recursos y plantean exigencias mayores que los individuos aislados. Es importante repetir que las ideas e ideales que contribuyen a desarrollar pensamientos, actitudes y actuaciones equitativas, justas e inclusivas no están ligados únicamente a quien ocupa un rol formal o a un individuo en particular, sino que deben ser abordados con la comunidad educativa en su conjunto.

Muchos autores han aportado una definición de Liderazgo para la Justicia Social (p.e. Adams, Bell y Griffin, 2007; Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Dantley y Tillman, 2006; Evans, 2007; Furman y Shields, 2005; Gewirtz, 1998; Goldfarb y Grinberg, 2002; Marshall y Ward, 2004; Morrison, 2009; Theoharis, 2007), y cada uno de ellos incide en elementos diferentes. Así:

Énfasis de los líderes en la lucha contra la marginación y discriminación (p.e. Gewirtz, 1998; Theoharis, 2007), para lo que deben focalizar el interés de la escuela en cuestiones de clase, género, cultura, discapacidad, orientación sexual y otras condiciones que son causas de exclusión.

Defensa de los derechos; Goldfarb y Grinberg (2002), por ejemplo, entienden ese liderazgo “como el ejercicio de la alteración de los acuerdos de poder institucional y organizativo, involucrándose activamente en reclamar, apropiarse, sostener y promover derechos humanos inherentes de equidad, igualdad y justicia social, económica, educativa y dimensiones personales” (p. 162).

Desde nuestra perspectiva, este nuevo enfoque del liderazgo para la Justicia Social se fundamenta en la idea de que los líderes educativos no sólo tienen la obligación social y moral de fomentar unas prácticas, procesos y resultados escolares más equitativos para estudiantes de diferente procedencia socioeconómica, cultural, étnica, de capacidad, género u orientación sexual, o acabar con cualquier tipo de exclusión o marginación que se da en la escuela, sino que debe trabajar por contribuir a la construcción de una sociedad más justa y equitativa (Murillo, Krichesky, Castro y Hernández-Castilla, 2010).

Este enfoque parte y se retroalimenta de otras propuestas tales como el liderazgo distribuido (Brooks, Jean-Marie, Normore y Hodgins, 2007; Harris, 2009); el liderazgo democrático (Woods, 2005) o el liderazgo pedagógico (Murillo, 2006; Murillo, Barrio y Pérez-Albo, 1999; Webb, 2005). Sin embargo, es importante destacar que un liderazgo democrático, distribuido o pedagógico, por sí solo, no lleva necesariamente a la Justicia Social y a la equidad. Este proceso no es suficiente, para que esté enfocado a la Justicia Social ha de tener necesariamente “contenidos” vinculados a la justicia, a la equidad, el respeto por la dignidad de los individuos, la participación y el trabajo por el bien común.

También hemos de señalar que el liderazgo para la Justicia Social es más un liderazgo ético que técnico (Dantley y Tillman, 2006; Dotger y Theoharis, 2008; Haydon, 2007). Más de actitudes y de influencia, que de técnicas y gestión de recursos, con las implicaciones que eso tiene para la formación de directores (Cambron-McCabe y McCarthy, 2005; Capper, Theoharis y Sebastian, 2006). De esta forma, lo que caracteriza al liderazgo que trabaja para la Justicia Social es tanto el estilo como las prácticas o los valores que se promueven: el interés y el trabajo por el bien común, por lo colectivo; el trabajo para que todos y cada uno de los estudiantes aprendan, el fomento por la



equidad, por la participación, el respeto por el valor y la dignidad de los individuos y sus tradiciones culturales, y la lucha por una sociedad diferente (Blackmore, 2002; Frattura y Capper, 2007; Furman, 2012; Hernández-Castilla, Euán e Hidalgo, 2013; Mahieu y Clyca, 2007; Riester, Pursch y Skrla, 2002; Theoharis, 2007).

Algunas de las prácticas de aquellos líderes que fomentan y logran una escuela que trabaje en y para la Justicia Social son las siguientes:

*a) Soñar una escuela justa y que contribuya a la Justicia Social y ser capaz de entusiasmar a la comunidad escolar y dar los pasos para conseguirlo*

Soñar, por atípico que parezca, es la condición *sine qua non* que debe tener un líder para la Justicia Social. La diferencia entre un gestor y un líder es que el gestor toma decisiones empujado por la urgencia de la realidad, mientras que un líder tiene una visión y trabaja para conseguirla. Pero lo que le hace líder es su capacidad de entusiasmar a la comunidad en torno a ese sueño, y tener los conocimientos para convertir los sueños en acciones.

Los directivos y directivas que tienen una visión crítica acerca de la educación actual, y son capaces de reconocer y denunciar las prácticas en el aula, la escuela y el sistema educativo que favorezcan injusticia y la inequidad, son también los que más pueden modificar esa situación (Brown, 2004).

*b) Trabajar en el cambio cultural de la escuela, para lograr una cultura escolar en y para la Justicia Social*

La cultura entendida como el conjunto de normas, creencias, actitudes y valores compartidos por la comunidad escolar es, como decíamos antes, el elemento clave para ser una escuela que trabaje a favor de la Justicia Social. En coherencia con ello, la tarea más importante del equipo directivo es generar esa cultura.

Así, es clave su trabajo en el fomento del desarrollo y la transmisión de dicha cultura a través de estructuras de trabajo participativo de docentes, estudiantes y familias. Uno de los aspectos más importantes dentro de una cultura que favorece el cambio social es el potenciar valores y actitudes que reconocen en la diferencia una oportunidad para la mejora de los procesos de aprendizaje. En este contexto, el liderazgo se redefine y se distribuye reforzando el sentido de comunidad, de colaboración y de confianza mutua. La necesidad de cambiar prácticas convencionales y de adaptarse a las necesidades particulares de cada estudiante hace que el contexto colaborativo cobre un mayor sentido, ya que facilita los procesos de cambio y mejora (Harris y Chapman, 2002; Kugelmass, 2003; Muijs et al., 2007; Garrison-Wade, Sobel y Fulmer, 2007).

También es fundamental que el equipo directivo defienda la Justicia Social con las palabras y los hechos, sobre todo frente a la resistencia de ciertos docentes, pero también de familias y de la Administración. Desgraciadamente es demasiado frecuente encontrarse a docentes que rechazan la inclusión, que "abandonan" a determinados estudiantes, que muestran inaceptables actitudes de discriminación... Trabajar con los docentes no sólo desde el discurso, sino desde el ejemplo, es el mejor camino.

*c) Potenciar el desarrollo personal, social y profesional de todos los miembros de la comunidad escolar*

Los y las líderes para la Justicia Social tienen a las personas y su crecimiento como la máxima prioridad. De esta forma, generan oportunidades para el desarrollo profesional

mediante múltiples estrategias, dan apoyo individualizado, y aportan un referente adecuado (Kose, 2009). La atención personal de un líder hacia los docentes incrementa los niveles de entusiasmo y optimismo, reduce la frustración, transmite un sentido de misión y, con ello, aumenta de forma indirecta el desarrollo de los estudiantes. El reconocimiento y la valoración, demostrar las necesarias altas expectativas hacia los y las docentes es otro importante factor. La investigación es clara en demostrar que los directores y las directores que se ocupan más de las personas y menos de los papeles son mejores directivos (Murillo y Román, 2013), no solo porque favorecen procesos escolares que contribuyen a que los estudiantes aprendan, sino también porque favorecen las condiciones para construir una escuela justa.

*d) Favorecer procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje eficaces y centrados en una educación en Justicia Social*

La educación se desarrolla esencialmente en el contexto del aula. El papel de los líderes para la Justicia Social es ayudar a mejorar la enseñanza, las prácticas de aula y ayudar a los docentes a desarrollar mejor su trabajo (Canfield-Davis, Gardiner y Joki, 2009). Es especialmente relevante la consideración de distintos tipos y fuentes de conocimiento, para que todos los estudiantes puedan identificarse y encontrarle un sentido propio al contenido escolar trabajado en clase, pudiendo así establecer aprendizajes más significativos. En este sentido, los líderes sugieren permitir a los alumnos utilizar su lengua de origen o promover estilos de comunicación diversos siempre que estos sean culturalmente compatibles. Resultan interesantes algunas escuelas que, a partir del seguimiento de alumnos con dificultades, pudieron generar el desarrollo de estrategias de aula más innovadoras tales como la introducción de cambios curriculares o el agregado de contenidos relacionados con distintas culturas.

*e) Potenciar la creación de Comunidades Profesionales de Aprendizaje*

Las Comunidades Profesionales de Aprendizaje son una estrategia de cambio escolar basada en tres elementos fundamentales: el aprendizaje, la colaboración y el apoyo mutuo entre todos los miembros de la escuela, pero especialmente docentes. Las comunidades profesionales de aprendizaje estimulan el desarrollo de capacidades pedagógicas de los docentes, refuerzan la coherencia del programa de estudios y aumentan el sentido de responsabilidad sobre el aprendizaje de los estudiantes (Krichesky y Murillo, 2011). Resulta especialmente relevante favorecer el desarrollo de la sensibilidad, la comprensión y la empatía entre todos los miembros de la comunidad escolar para lograr un trabajo en y para la Justicia Social. En este sentido, es importante que los líderes consigan que toda la comunidad demuestre un interés genuino por conocer y comprender otras culturas y realidades de los alumnos que la conforman; por promover el desarrollo de la conciencia crítica de los miembros de la comunidad, de modo que éstos puedan modificar ciertos patrones de pensamiento tradicionales que suelen nublar o hacer invisible la existencia de prácticas de exclusión más sutiles. De algún modo, se trata de fomentar “conversaciones críticas” que permitan a los actores enterarse, reconocer, criticar y cambiar algunas de las prácticas invisibles que impiden o dificultan el aprendizaje, la valoración o la participación de todos y cada uno de los estudiantes. En relación con esto, el diálogo aparece como instrumento fundamental para que los profesionales puedan comunicarse e intercambiar opiniones en contextos de confianza, cuidado y respeto.

*f) Promover la colaboración entre la escuela y la familia, potenciando el desarrollo de culturas educativas en las familias*

La investigación y la experiencia han sido consistentes en demostrar la influencia de la familia y su cultura en el aprendizaje de sus hijos e hijas. Así, los supuestos, las normas, las creencias y las expectativas de la familia respecto del trabajo escolar y del futuro de sus hijos es un elemento fundamental que incide en el rendimiento académico de los mismos. Desde esa lógica, los líderes que ayudan a las familias a desarrollar culturas educativas fuertes defendiendo una educación sólida, generan la creación de fuertes y fructíferos lazos de colaboración entre las familias, la escuela y los servicios de apoyo escolar. Tampoco hay que olvidar la importancia de sostener estrechas relaciones con miembros de la comunidad local en la cual se inserta la escuela, invitando a personas externas a participar en las actividades del centro y ofreciendo espacios de trabajo a los alumnos fuera del edificio escolar. Los líderes que optan por este camino suelen tener un compromiso incondicional por la Justicia Social y se caracterizan por sus habilidades para la resolución de problemas y mediación en los conflictos. Son líderes que se esfuerzan por mantener una relación muy cercana con estudiantes y padres y trabajan conjuntamente con los organismos externos a la escuela y con los que forman parte de la comunidad (Canfield-Davis, Gardiner y Joki, 2009). De este modo, los directores y directoras de estos centros buscan la interconexión entre la escuela, los hogares y la comunidad, de tal manera que trabajan por ser una comunidad profesional de aprendizaje, en la cual la colaboración y el trabajo en equipo son actividades habituales que forman parte de la cultura común.

*g) Expandir el capital social de los estudiantes valorizado por las escuelas*

El capital social se entiende como los "activos" (conocimientos, información, normas y valores) adquiridos por las personas a través de sus familias y sus relaciones con los demás. En la escuela, algunos estudiantes tienen acceso limitado a los activos del capital social y otros difieren en sus activos de los que la escuela espera. Los equipos directivos que trabajan por la Justicia Social ayudan a los estudiantes a hacer uso de su capital social e incrementarlo, de forma que aumentan sus posibilidades de éxito académico. Los líderes para la Justicia Social son aquellos que dedican, lideran y mantienen en el centro de sus prácticas y perspectivas a las diferencias de raza, clase, género, discapacidad, orientación sexual y otros aspectos tradicionalmente considerados causa de marginación (Theoharis, 2007). Esta definición se centra en el logro de la eliminación de toda causa y efecto de exclusión y marginación en los centros. Implica un sistema de razonamiento que articula los principios éticos en la toma de decisiones y un modo de interpretar las situaciones, una forma de emitir juicios y una manera de priorizar determinados valores. Para ello, resulta imprescindible favorecer la capacidad del centro por responder a los diferentes antecedentes de los estudiantes, conectar la cultura del centro con las propias comunidades y culturas familiares que lo integran y promover el desarrollo académico, personal y social de los alumnos subrayando sus habilidades para la vida.

Desde la perspectiva más ética es interesante destacar qué valores parecen tener que ver, según la investigación, con los equipos directivos que lideran escuelas en y para la Justicia Social (Stevenson, 2007; Murillo et al., 2010; Salisbury y McGregor, 2005):

1. *Son colaborativos*: comparten el liderazgo con la comunidad educativa en todos los niveles de la organización. Saben que los equipos de personas que comparten los mismos objetivos serán más eficaces que un gestor que trabaja solo. Estos

- directivos buscan tiempo para que los equipos se encuentren, planifiquen y enseñen juntos.
2. *Son accesibles*: están presentes, se implican con estudiantes, docentes y familias para abordar las cuestiones difíciles. Están realmente interesados en involucrarse donde está la acción, de modo que esto les permite comprender los problemas de primera mano.
  3. *Invierten en las relaciones*: hacen un esfuerzo adicional para trabajar con docentes, familias y miembros de la comunidad. Se preocupan y ocupan de cada persona individualmente, buscando su máximo desarrollo. Trabajan con los diferentes miembros de la comunidad escolar para resolver las diferencias y encontrar soluciones viables. Su máxima prioridad es construir comunidad desarrollando confianza y promoviendo cambios compartiendo información con todos los implicados.
  4. *Asumen riesgos*: no tienen miedo a decir “sí” a algo diferente y tienden a comprometerse activamente en promover soluciones innovadoras.
  5. *Son intencionales*: tienen clara la meta de construcción de una escuela desde y para la Justicia Social, y toman las decisiones más adecuadas para conseguirla.
  6. *Son reflexivos*: utilizan la información disponible para desarrollar estrategias bien sustentadas que lleven a la meta. No se precipitan en las decisiones que toman, sino que meditan y piden ayuda para mejor la mejor opción.
  7. *Son transparentes en sus decisiones*: comparten las decisiones y los motivos que les han orientados. Seguros, pero humildes y dispuestos a analizar causas y consecuencias de sus acciones.

## 4. Conclusiones

Desde el ámbito anglosajón, distintos especialistas defienden que la educación para la Justicia Social está siendo el tema de mayor interés y preocupación entre los estudiosos y los prácticos en estos años (p.e. Hyten, 2006; Hytten y Bettez, 2011; North, 2006). En el ámbito iberoamericano, por el contrario, es un reto por afrontar.

Resulta al menos paradójico que la región con más desigualdades del mundo no tenga como tema educativo prioritario la lucha por una sociedad más justa. Y como señalábamos en nuestra premisa 2. “Si una escuela no se plantea explícitamente la consecución de una sociedad más justa, contribuirá a la reproducción de las injusticias sociales”. Suficientemente claro.

Cierto es que en la educación iberoamericana se habla de equidad, de una educación de todos. Pero como antes comentamos, equiparar Justicia Social a equidad es una sobresimplificación de las cosas que solo lleva al mantenimiento de las injusticias estructurales (Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2011). Redistribución, Reconocimiento y Representación son los elementos inseparables que conforman la Justicia Social. Es como si en Iberoamérica no hubiera minorías culturales o étnicas, o como si estuviéramos sobrados de democracia en nuestras sociedades.

Ante tanta injusticia que nos rodea, trabajar por la Justicia Social desde la educación se ha convertido en un imperativo moral. Si queremos una educación que trabaje para lograr una sociedad más justa es necesario el desarrollo de una cultura escolar que acompañe, fomente y estimule estos procesos de cambio que hagan de la escuela un lugar que trabaja en, desde y para la Justicia Social. Insistimos en estos términos, una escuela que trabaja para la Justicia Social debe ser una escuela que aborda la Justicia Social en los procesos de enseñanza, en sus objetivos, contenidos, metodologías y estrategias de evaluación; pero también tiene que ser una escuela justa, que funciona y se organiza bajo los planteamientos de la Justicia Social, con una cultura escolar cuya máximo valor es hacer una escuela de todos y para todos y donde no quede rastro de discriminación o exclusión.

El rol de los y las líderes escolares asume un especial protagonismo a la hora de promover y establecer las condiciones necesarias para poder desarrollar procesos que lleven a una escuela justa. Pero no cualquier liderazgo es válido. Hablamos de un liderazgo ético, moral, con un estilo democrático y distribuido, que busca hacer real ese sueño de una sociedad diferente. Un liderazgo comprometido con las personas, soñador, colaborador...

Los que trabajamos en el mundo educativo tenemos una responsabilidad ética de luchar por un mundo más justo. Es lo que da sentido a nuestro trabajo. Cómo nos organicemos, qué enseñemos, y cómo nos relacionamos con los colegas y con nuestros estudiantes, qué soñamos y qué hacemos para conseguirlo... todo ello contribuirá a la conformación de una sociedad u otra. En nuestras manos está colaborar para lograr una mayor Justicia Social o permitir, por acción o negligencia, el desarrollo de las injusticias.

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## Leadership for Social Justice: Social Justice Pedagogies

### Liderazgo para la Justicia Social: Pedagogías de Justicia Social

### Liderança para a Justiça Social: Pedagogias para a Justiça Social

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The relationship between educational leadership and practices of social justice is now entering its second decade with respect to empirical research studies. There have been three distinct research agendas: the first involves attempts to define the meaning(s) of educational leadership for social justice; the second is the descriptive documentation of school leadership behaviors which address social injustices and inequities within schools; and, the third focuses on the development of leadership preparation programs that include social justice as a curricular foundation. This paper is delimited to a review of literature documenting the relationship between social justice and leadership preparation programs, highlighting specific pedagogies, and building towards a curriculum. We take a chronological perspective moving from early theoretical conceptions of social justice to early studies on preparation programs and then focus on second generation empirical research centered on social justice pedagogies and curriculum development.

**Keywords:** Social justice, Social justice curriculum, Social justice pedagogy, Social justice andragogy, Educational leadership preparation.

La relación entre el liderazgo educativo y la práctica de la justicia social ha comentando una segunda década con respecto a los estudios de investigación empírica. Ha habido tres agendas de investigación diferenciadas: la primera se refiere a los intentos por definir cuál es el significado de liderazgo educativo para la justicia social; la segunda es la búsqueda de descripciones claras de los comportamientos de los líderes que se ocupan de las injusticias sociales y las desigualdades dentro de las escuelas; y, la tercera se centra en el desarrollo de programas de preparación para el Liderazgo escolar que incluyen la justicia social como eje del currículo. Este trabajo realiza una revisión de la literatura que documenta la relación entre la justicia social y los programas de preparación para el liderazgo en las escuelas. Desde una perspectiva cronológica, pasamos a revisar cuáles son las primeras concepciones teóricas de la justicia social y, a continuación, nos centramos en abordar la investigación empírica desarrollada en esta segunda generación de estudios sobre las pedagogías de la justicia social y el desarrollo del currículo.

**Descriptores:** Justicia social, Currículo para la justicia social, Pedagogía para la justicia social, Andragogía para la justicia social, Preparación de líderes educativos.

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A relação entre a liderança ea prática da justiça social educacional tem sido comentando a segunda década em relação a estudos empíricos. Houve três agendas de pesquisa distintas: a primeira refere-se a tentativas de definir qual é o significado de liderança educacional para a justiça social; o segundo é a busca de descrições claras dos comportamentos dos líderes que abordam as injustiças e desigualdades sociais dentro das escolas; ea terceira centra-se no desenvolvimento de programas de preparação para a liderança escolar, incluindo a justiça social no centro do currículo. Este trabalho é uma revisão da literatura que documenta a relação entre os programas de justiça e de preparação sociais para a liderança escolar. Do ponto de vista cronológico, revisamos o que as primeiras concepções teóricas de justiça social, então nós centrmos na abordagem de pesquisa empírica desenvolvida nesta segunda geração de estudos sobre as pedagogias de justiça social e de desenvolvimento curricular.

**Palavras-chave:** Justiça social, Currículo para a justiça social, Ensinar para a justiça social, Andragogia para a justiça social, Preparação de líderes educacionais.

## **Introduction**

In this article, the authors examine how the many pedagogical/andragogical approaches to teaching social justice have resulted in different “ways of knowing” social justice. It is clear that if the goal of education is to provide the opportunity for all students to thrive both academically and socially, then there must be a democratically inclusive value of social justice undergirding any and all educational contexts (Counts, 1932; Dewey, 1888; Freire, 1971). Unfortunately, questions regarding the definition of social justice are easily confused with the educational processes of teaching, learning, and developing curriculum for the preparation of school leaders (Reyes-Guerra & Bogotch, 2011). This confusion is caused by the nature of both education and social justice where purposes, processes, and outcomes are all contextual, thus requiring educators to continuously assess the consequences of leadership actions in terms of social justice outcomes (Bogotch, 2002, 2008, 2014). Within this contextual dynamic, teaching social justice requires that educational leadership professors engage with students (aspiring leaders) to socially interpret and then re-construct school problems, practices and policies. The reality –socially, politically and economically– is that education is always practiced both in and out of schools across disparate material and social circumstances. However, when these disparate realities or unjust educational outcomes reflect patterns of discrimination and injustices in the wider society, it is incumbent upon educators to respond in opposition. Those are our professional, moral and legitimate discourses of practice. It is also what makes education wherever it is practiced political.

### **1. Early works in the development of school leadership for social justice**

Two US publications in 2002 set the stage for the inclusion of social justice into the field of school leadership: a special issue of the *Journal of School Leadership* edited by Margaret Grogan and the 101st Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education edited by Joseph Murphy. A third text, a 2010 edited book by Autumn Tooms (now Cypres) and Christa Boske titled *Bridge Leadership: Connecting Educational Leadership and Social Justice to Improve Schools* provided the field with

personal reflective narratives describing this early stage in the development of leadership for social justice.

It is important also to understand that during this period not just its preparation programs but the field of educational leadership was under severe criticisms by practitioner associations, accrediting agencies, as well as prominent scholars (Levine, 2005). These criticisms created a space for a group of scholars under the leadership of Professor Catherine Marshall from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill to begin a rethinking of the field using social justice as a theoretical lens. Thus, following from the 2002 publications cited above were a number of alternative pedagogical models for the preparation of school leadership for social justice. Not surprisingly, it was another professor from UNC-Chapel Hill, Kathleen Brown (2004) who first addressed the issues of changing leadership preparation program content, course delivery, and student and program assessment. Her curricular and pedagogical strategies were aimed at increasing social justice awareness and the acknowledgement (of injustices) followed by a commitment (a call) to action. Among her classroom strategies were critical reflections (cultural autobiographies, life histories, reflective analysis journals), learning theories (adult learning, transformative, and critical social theory), and policy praxis (prejudice reduction workshops, cross cultural interviews, diversity panels, and activist action plans). Brown sought to engage aspiring school leaders in assignments that required examining assumptions, cultural and epistemological, and learning about competing worldviews.

In an empirical assessment of her effort, Brown herself (2006) studied 40 pre-service leaders looking at the effect of transformative learning strategies on the participants' attitudes toward educational diversity. Qualitative methods were then used to describe how the participants' beliefs and abilities connected to their theories and practices. Based on her findings, she recommended the direct teaching of critical social theory and its influences on re-defining the purposes of schooling. At no time, however, were the more traditional subjects of finance, law, personnel and other school managerial operations removed from the school leadership curriculum.

Also that same year, 2006, Capper, Theoharis and Sebastian published a curricular, pedagogical, and assessment framework for teaching leadership for social justice. Their focus was on teaching of critical consciousness tied to practical applications in a bi-directional way, meaning that program components of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment be taught in an emotionally safe environment. The university classroom needed to reduce the risk for students as they moved through critical consciousness and the knowledge and skills needed for social justice leadership development. As a program faculty, the authors argued that it was important to study student outcomes so as to inform the continuous improvement of the leadership preparation program.

In 2008, Fenwick English asked the following question:

*Beyond making them [aspiring school leaders] historically aware of the policies and practices which have defined, implemented and perpetuated social injustice in schools, what actions would they take to not only undo them, but work towards re-conceptualizing what schools do to create a more socially just society in the future? (pp. 113-114).*

English argued that professors and students needed a deeper understanding of the underlying theory of social injustices. Such a theory, according to English, requires that students and educational leaders engage in discourse beyond school and enter "the larger socio-economic arena to confront social concepts, beliefs and practices which

perpetuate social injustice” (pp. 114–115). That is, it is not enough to acknowledge social injustices (and complain or protest); rather, leadership for social justice has to “root out the mental models which often anchor socially unjust practices” (p. 145) embedded in economic and political dynamics. Thus, English’s call for action is, first and foremost, a call for a theory of social injustice in order to transform schools in society as they currently are – which serves the “the prevailing ideologies, the current politics, and the dominant economic interests....” (p. 145). For without a theory of social (in)justice (Bogotch & Shields, 2014), the world of schooling is all we [i.e., educators] see and experience, making ideas such as democracy and inclusive relationships seem impossible given current politics and educational policies.

English’s (2008) analysis of social power as a theory revealed that any particular injustice was not historically or morally determined; therefore it was neither fixed nor permanent. In other words, the injustices that we experience in our lives can not only be addressed, but also be overcome, politically, economically and socially, by leadership. The same temporal and contextual meanings which Bogotch (2002, 2014) had ascribed to the definition of “social justice” were, according to English, true for “social injustices.” In both instances, the experiences of social justice and social injustice are very real, and therefore subject to human intervention and change.

All university disciplines expound theories and frameworks. But we are still left with the question of how social justice is embedded in educational theory and how exactly should it be taught in universities. Beginning in 2004 and up to the present, Professor Carolyn Shields has advanced ideas on a leadership theory that strives to both understand educational theory and social justice. She wrote in 2014 that what distinguishes her theory of transformative leadership is that “it does not begin with either the leader or the organization but with an examination of the wider society and the material realities (including disparities and inequities) that impinge upon the ability of individuals to succeed within the organization and on the organization’s ability to attain its goals” (p. 326). This is what English (2008, p. 115) called the critical exteriorities which describe the larger societal or beyond school conditions (see also Foster, 1986). These conditions affect (promote or prevent) not only good teaching and moral leadership within schools, but also social justice beyond schools. Shields (2014) wrote:

*Because transformative leadership’s goal is to transform both the experiences and outcomes of schooling and the inequities in the wider society, it is ... the most appropriate vehicle for advancing social justice goals – goals that the theory deems to be foundational to attaining high intellectual and academic goals as well. (p. 326).*

The tenets of transformative leadership, according to Shields (2014:333), have been summarized as follows:

- Mandate to effect deep and equitable change
- The need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate the inequity and injustice
- A focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice
- The need to address the inequitable distribution of power
- An emphasis on both private and public (individual and collective) good
- An emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness and global awareness
- The necessity of balancing critique with promise
- The call to exhibit more courage

Shields argues that these tenets collectively serve as a purposeful guideline, a touchstone upon which to reflect and act as leaders for social justice. For a leadership theory to be truly practical, however, it has to be embedded in the work of school leaders. Mary Green (2014) describes a particular critical incident in her own life as school system administrator in Canada that demonstrates this:

*In the midst of hurried timelines, long days, and strained relationships, miscommunications resulted and mistakes occurred. Some people were left out of meetings they should have attended and there was little time to offer meaning background information and rationale for some decisions that were made. District policies and practices were inconsistent, contradictory, and even unpredictable. Many of us felt we were “flying by the seat of our pants” and struggling to keep some semblances of order for ourselves and others as we attempted to disassemble one system and recreate another. I wanted to care for people, accept their challenges and differences of opinion, and achieve as much “success” together as we could, but achieve that goal was impossible. My perceptions of myself and my priorities were transforming as much as our school system was. I realized back then that I was working in a position and in ways that conflicted with my personal beliefs and values. I was so absorbed in the turmoil ... (p. 165)*

Green (2014) takes us inside the daily life of a school leader and raises questions about values and beliefs, both personal and professional. The specific details of her dilemma illustrate and validate our own lived experiences within schools and school systems. The question here is whether we have a social justice theory that (1) can guide our decisions and actions, and (2) makes a social and material difference not only to the school employees, but also in the lives of others. Green's self-reflection reinforces the idea that we discover a social justice theory-in-action as part of our practices and that this is how we ought to teach leadership for social justice within preparation programs.

### **1.1 Beyond school and back into schools**

Confronting what English (2008) called critical exteriorities, that is, social, economic and political conditions which affect social justice, school leaders are not alone. That is, the need to identify critical exteriorities is relevant to all of social science disciplines. During the last century, sociologist Norbert Elias conceptualized foundational aspects of sociology which include the terms ‘civilizing’ and ‘decivilizing’ processes and figurational sociology. Relevant to the understanding of English's critical exteriorities, social justice leaders need to understand the concepts which Elias tried to expose: problems of restraint, a relational theory of power, and the formation and transformation of groups and their identities. According to Rundell (2005):

*... introduces the notion of civilizing processes as a corrective to three images and intellectual paradigms that have dominated the human and social sciences, whether they are imbedded in philosophy, sociology, or psychology. These three images and intellectual paradigms are methodological individualism, systems theoretic approaches, and units of analysis that place the emphasis on the investigation of the immediate present. Elias develops a three-dimensional counter-paradigm of civilizing processes that concentrates on the following aspects of human association: relational and power interdependence between social actors, which dissolves the distinction between individual and society; the interrelation between processes at the levels of social development and psychologically located drives and affects; and change and innovation over time. (pp. 3-4).*

Elias's critique and paradigmatic shift is precisely what educational leadership scholars like Foster, English, and Shields have said is necessary theoretically for educational leadership; that is, we must extend our into intellectual paradigms beyond the delimited arena of schools and enter into the complexity of human associations in order to understand relational and power interdependence, social and psychological

development, and history –all topics viewed as outside school improvement research. It should be noted that leadership researchers continue to build upon previous studies, incorporating seminal literature from philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences (Normore & Brooks, 2014). Nevertheless, the literature, for the most part, seems delimited to what English (2008) labels as schooling interiorities, suffering then from the same fanciful theories and false assumptions that by addressing the interiorities, reformers will also address social justice. As such, leadership preparation programs continue to focus almost exclusively on leadership standards and accountability mandates, particularly in the US.

We must ask: where in today's leadership preparation programs do we find deep discussions on the purposes of education as art, experience and democracy articulated by John Dewey, which also encompasses a love for education which is at the heart of Paolo Freire's writings, and a place for the human imagination to blossom within the curriculum as envisioned by Maxine Greene? Where in leadership for social justice do we align with the assessment of Elliot Eisner (2002), that "the function of schooling is not to enable students to do better in school. The function of schooling is to enable students to do better in life"? How could we have come to the shortsighted conclusion that by improving student scores on achievement tests that this outcome will somehow address the profound issues of social (in)justices? The answer to the latter question is often approached as follows: in the US and elsewhere, school leadership preparation programs are mandated by law, policy and regulations to address today's political realities which in today's neo-liberal environment are centered on and driven by standards and accountability measures.

Conversely, we take the position that social justice can and should operate within the traditional knowledge and skills of school management, but, in so doing, bring social justice to these traditional approaches as a necessary purpose of schooling which requires a broader knowledge-base and different skillsets for future school leaders. Educationally, this broader knowledge-base and different skillsets also reflect changing demographics, new technologies and social media, and cultural contexts. Integrating the social justice purposes of public education to already existing academic and socio-cultural theories is the goal of leadership for social justice. In today's world, more than ever, what goes on outside the school building is relevant to building an excellent curriculum and instructional program. All this is to say that "the long-established technical and professional knowledge and skills needed to manage schools must work with pedagogical leadership, advocacy leadership, community leadership, transformative leadership and innovative conceptual leadership" (Nicholson, 2014:1209). It is important to know that one cannot successfully bend or break rules without first having a firm grasp of the knowledge of "what is." Thus, the bringing together of leadership for social justice and management is commensurate with academic excellence.

### ***1.2. Defining Social Justice as ... confronting the "harder truths" of school leadership***

It was Malcolm Gladwell (2008) who popularized a 1993 psychology study by Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer regarding the number of hours needed to become an expert. Through a combination of natural talent and deliberate practice, it is possible to become an expert in playing and teaching of the violin, assuming one started in childhood, with a minimum of 10 years. This is where the average of 10,000 hours entered the discussion. But what relevance has this to school leadership, or for that matter becoming

an expert teacher when the learning of skills involved begin in adulthood? In the absence of any quantitatively valid findings, we turn to an educator with expert credentials, Larry Cuban. He writes in his blog, not in a peer-reviewed journal, the following:

*Only by the end of the fourth or fifth year of teaching do most newcomers become competent and confident in figuring out lessons, knowing the ins-and-outs of classroom management, and taking risks in departing from the routines of daily teaching. Of course there will be variation among teachers in whether it takes five years or less, depending upon the person and the setting. Nonetheless, by that time, most teachers will have mastered the craft. They will have developed a repertoire of practices that fit their subject and students, and, by the end of four or five years, can make substantial changes in classroom structures and lessons* (Cuban, April, 20, 2010)

Using the kind of math associated with ideas written on the backs of envelopes, Cuban estimates five to six years to become an expert. Assuming that learning the skills of school leadership are above and beyond the skills of teaching, then we should add another five years to the equation. Importantly, the duality of being both a skilled school manager and a transformative leader, the two main components of school leadership, must be learned. If so, then how many more years might it take to become a moral leader (Sergiovanni, 1992), a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1970), a democratic leader (Apple & Beane, 1995) or a transformative leader/leader for social justice? (Shields, 2014). Adding any of these educational leadership purposes to leadership thinking and behaviors requires that we enhance management learning on how to run schools, how to maximize student learning, and how to fulfill accountability requirements (all hard work to be sure) with leadership learning aimed at transformation. Adding new educational leadership theories to leadership qua leadership may be, therefore, beyond the scope of what is viewed as legitimate school leadership preparation by those steeped in the regressive notions of educational leadership as non-transformational.

We begin with the hard truths that school leadership is difficult and complex regardless of which theory-in-action is applied to it. It is hard to be good at anything in education; it is even harder, therefore, to be outstanding. It is understandable, therefore, why dedicated and committed educators who put all of their energies, mentally and physically, into building a good school would be hesitant –if not also resistant– in confronting social injustices beyond their school buildings. Where will the extra time come from, they ask? Time is definitely a major factor – teachers and administrators typically put in 12 to 16 hours days. Organizationally, there are school systems and governmental authorities which have rules prohibiting teachers and administrators – within the scope of the law– from community and social engagement, if such work is seen as being in any way political. It will not be easy to overcome the factors of time, systems, and politics. It will not be easy to go from hard truths to leadership for social justice.

Nevertheless, students and leaders for social justice have themselves come to understand that there is an urgency to the social, economic and political agendas such that any delay in addressing injustices will have consequences for one or more generations of students and teachers are not adequately served within-schools. When it comes to leadership for social justice, the assumption that we begin with is that being good or outstanding [or even world class] is not sufficient. The pathways to good, outstanding and world class must also travel the pathways to social justice and that becomes the harder truths of leadership. If years of study and experience matter, and they do, then it is imperative

that the study of leadership for social justice begin as early in one's career as possible, perhaps even before one enters a graduate university leadership preparation program. That said, the focus of this review of literature is delimited to graduate leadership preparation and development only.

The key point is to differentiate between becoming competent, good and moral (i.e., mastering the knowledge and skills of managing the learning environment, school reform and change, and school improvement) and the knowledge and skillsets of practicing harder truths of leadership for social justice which we identify as human development indices across health, education, and fulfilling human potential. Within the latter skillset we include understanding and negotiating problems of poverty, race, and discrimination and their intersections with student achievement (Shields, 2014).

To repeat, we do not minimize how hard it is to become competent as a teacher or teacher leader or a school leader; yet, the goal for leadership for social justice requires that school leaders also be able and willing to address social, political, and economic injustices (as the harder truths) while on-the-job. The knowledge base for learning the harder truths often travel through philosophy (i.e., theories of justice, political theory and ethics), social theories, and economic theory. In each instance, the learning involves an intense study of theory, a study which has not been widely accepted by professors or practitioners in the field of school leadership – particularly in the US (Starratt, 2014). Educational theorists such as those who contributed to the text *Radicalizing Educational Leadership: Domains of Social Justice*, (2008) made their cases for why a “theory” of social (in)justice is relevant to everyday practices.

## **2. Initiating moves (Pedagogies) and pathways (Curricula) to leadership for social justice**

Second generation research on leadership for social justice that focuses on leadership preparation were published in the *International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Social (In)Justice*, Part VII “Leadership preparation as intervention.” edited by Bogotch and Shields (2014:1105-1246). This body of work represents seven unique reviews of literature and studies, authored by 15 US and international researchers. Each study presents arguments for why and how school leadership need to be re-conceptualized beyond policies, standards, and accountability measures. They position themselves in reference to the hegemonic thinking which still dominates the field of educational leadership. This recent literature has been analyzed as interconnecting themes triggered by initiating moves for pedagogy (Bellack, Kliebard, Hyman & Smith, 1966) which are then used as pathways to curriculum inquiry and development defining the practices of leadership for social justice. Initiating moves are those that begin the pedagogical interaction between teacher and learner, either by directly defining context for the learner or soliciting response from the learner.

Social justice pedagogical/andragogical initiating moves have related purposes in mind, such as initiating difficult and courageous conversations (Dodge & van Wyk, 2014), raising consciousness (Mullen, Young, & Harris, 2014), identifying barriers to implementing alternative ideas and theories of leadership (Theoharris, 2007, 2010), understanding and appreciating differences (Boske, 2014), initiating transformative adult learning (Mezirow, 1978), and addressing resistance and attitudes towards



subordinates (McGregor, 1960). These initiating moves are not only meant to raise consciousness, but also to deliberately create spaces, tensions, paradoxes, dilemmas etc. in order to allow for deeper reflections on social, political and economic problems.

From the perspective of an educational researcher, the initiating moves and pathways need to be described carefully through qualitative methods (Donmoyer, 2014; Theorharis, 2007, 2009). Yet, their use in university courses, scholarly conversations, and programs are difficult to isolate as standalone variables, however that difficulty does not mean that researchers ought not try to apply sophisticated measurement theories and construct validation methods to study of curricular and pedagogical pathways to leadership for social justice (Bogotch, Schoorman, & Miron, 2008; Donmoyer, 2014; Kose, 2009). We say this to point out the still existing methodological limitations in all leadership for social justice descriptive studies to date.

The first initiating move we identify here is the use of already existing educational theories to apply to the study of leadership for social justice. Feldman and Tyson (2014) offer such an approach to teaching leadership for social justice. The authors first assert that school leaders are woefully underprepared to negotiate problems of equity and social justice. However, to be prepared involves the study of more than one theory and the learning of more than one skillset. Their aim in teaching and applying multiple theories is to raise students' consciousness. The four theories they identify are: anti-bias education, critical pedagogy, multicultural education and Whiteness studies. Feldman and Tyson define the concepts underlying each theory, and then ask students how these theories-of-action can be applied to the practice of school leadership – strategically and intentionally.

Here is an example they offer with respect to anti-bias education:

*Learning caused by the careful construction of discomfort and its resolution. Identity development follows a developmental continuum of intra/interpersonal psychological processes that lead to anti-oppression activism. Enactment requires that leaders have fully developed racial identities. The graduate school leaders need to understand the theory and practice of the program and fully support it when students complain about the discomfort of identity crisis. Internships [in the program] must be reconceived. [not just more hours] (p. 1115).*

They assert that the professors teaching in this program must be highly skilled in facilitating socially constructive conflict engagement. They are certainly correct in identifying this requirement which may in and of itself give pause to faculty wanting to follow Feldman and Tyson's approach. This issue is even more in play with respect to the teaching of Whiteness studies. Feldman and Tyson write as follows:

*Address race and the system of advantage based on race and the central rationales that stabilize the system of advantage based on race. Resist becoming another way to draw attention to whiteness and to locate whiteness back in the center of leadership. Foster awareness to end racism by exposing whites to their own history, politics, and identities. Awareness is understood as fundamental to inspiring a moral imperative to act for just purposes. (p.1121).*

Words such as “understand,” “awareness,” “discomfort,” “conflict,” “identity,” “advantage,” “resistance,” “locate,” etc. – are closely tied to problems of race (Whiteness), poverty, politics, and ethics. We would ask, can these terms be learned in a single leadership course, in a leadership preparation program or by experiences in practice, over time? Further, are there faculty in the field today who can teach such a theory(ies)?

What Feldman and Tyson are doing is creating tensions for students in order to create spaces for self-reflection and consideration of alternative new leadership actions. They do so in a university setting, not in actual practice. The assumption is that by experiencing tensions and learning how to think critically while in this safe classroom space, the pedagogies will allow future leaders to further develop consciousness and then use these skills in their future practice. These are some very big assumptions. But what applies to students also apply to university faculty in terms of their knowledge and preparedness to facilitate this learning. Unlike many other disciplines, educational leadership is a professional study that is best learned through the interactions of theory and practices. Neither leadership nor social justice can be served by academic study alone.

### ***2.1. Working inside tensions***

Working within tensions is often antithetical to current leadership practices and may in some school situations be perceived as being a poor leader (Feldman & Tyson, 2014). That is, even as tensions and conflicts are part of the everydayness of school leadership, “best practices” and other mandated educational reforms make the tensions (dilemmas, paradoxes, and contradictions) invisible. Mary Green (2014) in her book *Caring Leadership in Turbulent Times*, cited earlier, used a quote by Blackmore and Sachs (2007) to emphasize how the absence of tension has been a deliberate construction of educational reformers:

*Leadership during educational reform was linked to hard-nosed aggressive and authoritarian behavior, stereotypically masculine. The management paradigm mobilized during the 1990s was about reengineering education in “hard line” ways, promoting images of being tough, entrepreneurial, and decisive, sidelining the human costs, and utilizing demoralizing and dehumanizing strategies of downloading responsibility, downsizing organizations, and outsourcing or casualizing core work. (Greene, 2014:132).*

In other words, under today’s standards and accountability measures, the role of the school leader is still to manage a traditional school which runs smoothly without acknowledging the unintended consequences and human costs created by the school system itself. The role of the traditional school leader is to find and eliminate within-school obstacles that cause some students to struggle to learn. School leaders are told to “turn around” their schools and restructure the learning environment, the learning experiences, and the learning outcomes in order to keep their jobs (Knapp & Copland, 2004; Portin et al., 2009). But the realities of tensions, dilemmas and contradictions have been ignored.

Blackmore (2009) argued that at the policy level, there is a “refusal to address the structural and cultural factors that will make a difference” (p. 4) in practice. The invisibility can apply to leaders’ own self-reflections of their values and identity and the identities of others with whom the work and teach. In other words, people are not seen for who they are racially, ethnically, economically, etc. Johnson and Campbell-Stephens (2014), citing Lumby and Heystek (2012) reported that the White school leaders in their study tended to ignore issues of race, even when their school had experienced dramatic demographic changes. The changes did not result in how leaders viewed themselves and others differently nor did it reveal exclusionary practices in their schools. Therefore, many researchers engaged in teaching leadership for social justice assert that leadership development programs should encourage aspiring leaders to reflect on their own cultural/racial identities and confront the meanings of terms such as “colorblind” which

disregard racial identities and diversity. And yet, paradoxically, Johnson and Campbell-Stephens (2014) found that white school educators believed just the opposite! That is, to see race is to be a racist.

Hence, faculty have to help aspiring leaders understand how race creates diversity of lived experiences and, for white educators, to reflect on their own taken-for-granted institutionalized privileges (see Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). In so doing, it becomes a leadership responsibility to attend explicitly to how systems perpetuate inequities and disparities.

These tensions, argues Christine Forde (2014), often emanate from the mismatch between policies and practices.

*... there remain significant tensions which relate partly to assumptions about the egalitarian nature of public education and the continued existence of persistent social marginalization and poverty. Tensions are partly to do with the role of school leaders and the enactment of government policy. (p. 1131).*

In concluding this subsection on working inside tensions, Nicholson (2014) quotes Meyerson's (2001) on her description of the 'tempered radical': "operat[ing] on a fault line...organizational insiders who contribute to and succeed in their job," yet continuously work to insert "ideals and agendas that are somehow at odds with the dominant culture" (p. 5). Tempered radicals live with a continuous tension between conformity and rebellion and they engage a spectrum of strategies to inspire positive change varying according to their intended scope of impact, from a few people to the provocation of large-scale learning and change, and their level of visibility, from public and pronounced to stealthy and covert. While some actions are almost invisible and therefore, do not result in strong opposition, others manifest more publicly and incite strong resistance and disapproval. The promise of Meyerson's continuum ranging from "resisting quietly and staying true to one's self" to "broadening impact through negotiation" "leveraging small wins" and "organizing collection action" is the inclusivity in defining how individuals contribute to social change. Meyerson's theoretical understanding of change is emergent and continuous, responsive to "little prods" that catalyze adaptation versus episodic and dramatic transformations.

Meyerson's views of organizational and social change...

*... makes room for lots of normal people to effect change in the course of their everyday actions and interactions. It is an inclusive model that sees people on the margin as well as the center making a difference in a wide variety of ways. Change agents are not just those characterized by bold visions and strategic savvy, but also those characterized by patience, persistence, and resourcefulness. In this model, change agents are sensitive improvisers who are able to recognize and act on opportunities as they arise. This view of change and change agents is less dramatic, less inspiring and less breathless than portraits of grand transformation and revolutionary leaders. It is also more inclusive, more realistic and more hopeful for most people who care to make a difference in their worlds. (p. 13).*

Meyerson's theory, like many other pedagogical approaches to change, starts with the self or as Generette, Perry, & Henderson (2014) note, those closest to you. It is, however, at the next stages beyond self-reflection that actually determines whether a leader will obey, comply with fidelity, or resist the policy, directive or dominant discourses. When this phenomenon is shared with others relationally who have similar thoughts and values, then there is greater self-and collective efficacy and courage in taking further actions. According to Nicholson (2014):

*Meyerson's conceptualization of leadership as embodying a continuum of strategies for change provides an inclusive space for working across diverse sectors and wide-ranging roles. In short, the admitted blank spot of transformative leadership theory, that is, everyday practice, can be embedded as theory into practice for leadership for social justice. (p. 1213).*

## **2.2. From tensions to spaces**

One central purpose for simulating tensions in a university classroom is to identify spaces within the current school systems for critical reflections and alternative ideas. According to Mullen, Young and Harris (2014), by having to struggle with self-reflections personally, professionally, and communally, aspiring leaders can begin to make sense of work situations in socially just ways which create spaces for change. The question – as is always the case in terms of “reflective practice” (Schon, 1983) – is reflection on what? Forde relates a survey of headteachers in Scotland conducted by Woods, Woods, & Cowie, 2009: 246) which indicated that as school leaders, 62 percent wanted more time for reflection on their values:

*Time for reflection can be for the individual but can also comprise periods of shared reflection in which a group of headteachers take time out to consider and re-evaluate their principal values, as one headteacher found with his preparation for headship (that is in the SQH). (p. 1133).*

Forde then makes another important contribution to the literature:

*However we need to interrogate this idea for it seems to suggest that social justice is simply a matter of understanding the needs of each child and addressing these. It is at this point that the tensions between policy discourses, around ‘getting it right for every child’ ‘achievement for all’ and ‘realising full potential’ need to be exposed and interrogated particularly in a context where the high accountability regimes still largely focus on attainment data related to public examinations. (p. 1136).*

Forde concludes that constructing leadership in terms of influence and pedagogy while vital aspects of any program are not sufficient in themselves. She writes:

*... not only to understand and articulate values related to social justice, equality and fairness and to appreciate the dilemmas posed in seeking to work towards these but to use these principles to challenge structures and practices which create barriers to learning. (p. 1141).*

Her insights parallel those of other educational leadership researchers such as Theoharris (2010) and Mullen (2008). Theoharris found that the strategies used by school principals who challenged specific injustices also had more fundamental purposes in mind needed to reshape school experiences. Such fundamental purposes involved challenging practices in relation to “school structures which marginalize, segregate and impede achievement” (p. 341), developing and empowering staff in their role in promoting social justice and creating an ethos which was inclusive particularly for marginalized families. No one should underestimate the complexity of these tasks nor the risks involved with leadership for social justice.

Nevertheless, creating imaginative spaces for pedagogical work undergirds liberation critiques (Mullen et al., 2014). According to Karanxha, Agosto, and Bellara (2014), professors need to provide a more complex understanding of social justice theory at both the micro and macro levels. One cannot take a singular approach to education for social justice. What is needed is to pedagogically unpack theories, grapple with tensions, and inspire a more socially just/anti-oppressive relationship among educators, students and communities. In giving attention to the multiple theories related to social justice,

professors working in these spaces can add to theories-in-action (Feldman & Tyson, 2014).

Breakthroughs in transformative learning have occurred for students when professors make space for interrogative dialogue that questions current practices, creates spaces for alternative versions, and allows students to understand and re-interpret history. Within these newly created spaces, it is important, from a critical pedagogical point of view, to keep the space itself 'safe' for the learner. Capper, Theoharis, and Sebastian's (2006) framework cite Young and Laible (2000) for meeting this requirement, that is, educational leadership students engaged in a social justice-oriented program can only achieve the learning when they are able to take intellectual and emotional risks toward social justice. Conversely, Saleeby and Scanlon (2005) cite feminist, multiculturalist, and post-structuralist researchers who have questioned whether university classrooms can really be the site for democratic dialogue given the power structures of gender, race, and class inequalities in both society and the university. As Ellsworth (1989) recommends, there is a challenge of constructing classroom practices that engage with the discursive and material spaces that the critical pedagogue must necessarily enter, a space where the origin of what can be known and the origin of what should be done are left unanswered.

### ***2.3. From pedagogies to policies***

Oftentimes, it is policy, not pedagogies which rush to fill in spaces. Therefore, understanding the relationships between pedagogies and policies is important. The works of Christine Forde (2014) in Scotland explicitly makes the connections between policies and the pedagogies needed to align with democratic values. Scotland, like many other nations, views education and educational opportunities as a right. This position is correlated with the ambition to end child poverty in a generation as per the 1872 Education Act which introduced compulsory education. In Scotland, the right of education was re-affirmed in 2000 with the statement that: "It shall be the right of every child of school age to be provided with school education by, or by virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority [the local district]" (Section 1). The previous year, 1999, the Scottish Parliamentary Taskforce on Poverty and Inclusion, Social Justice (SE, 1999:18) defined its agenda as follows:

*We will promote equal opportunities and challenge discriminatory attitudes and practices. Some groups within our society suffer persistent injustice. This is often caused and exacerbated by discrimination and prejudice. Women form a significant proportion of groups vulnerable to poverty, especially lone mothers and elderly women. People from minority ethnic communities and people with disabilities also suffer injustice or discrimination, and continue to encounter barriers to their full participation in employment and in society more generally. Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation restricts opportunities and contributes to injustice. Age discrimination, too, means that society is failing to benefit from the skills and experiences of all its members. We are working to make sure equal opportunities for all is part and parcel of all our programmes. Gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, age - these should not be allowed to affect choice and opportunity in the new Scotland. (p. 1130).*

Explicitly in The Standard for Headship (SfH) under the essential element titled 'Strategic Aims, Vision and Values,' section 4.1.3, Democratic Values reads: "Headteachers work with children and young people, staff, parents and others to promote participative citizenship, inclusion, enterprise, democratic values and a culture of respect within the school community and beyond" (SE 2005a: 6).

Forde then contrasts these policy statements with the current drivers of educational policy in Scotland and elsewhere which turn on (1) the search for effective school practices and the improvement of student achievement, and (2) the purpose of education as a strategy for economic development grounded in economists' reports written for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Those familiar with the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA score) know how the use of PISA test have driven educational policies further away from the democratic values articulated for Scottish headteachers. Forde argues that these reports demonstrate how measures of success are decontextualized through the pervasive use of performance indicators or attainment targets to make comparisons between individual institutions or more recently between national educational systems. Citing Bogotch (2008), she points out that these crude measures of performance and the high stakes public accountability have had the effect of creating a strong sense that any new [read different] ideas are to be resisted – even those ideas around social justice and fairness which could pose a challenge to these technologies of performance management and accountability.

Paradoxically, to contextualize education, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (2002) explicitly identifies groups of pupils who may be particularly vulnerable:

*refugees, traveler children, looked after children, those for whom English is an additional language, pupils with disabilities, those with irregular attendance caused by illness, family circumstances or respite care and any other potentially vulnerable group within the school experiences of pupils.* (HMI, 2002:54).

It is precisely the paradox of educational reform drivers and educators' values regarding fairness, equity and democracy that tests the future of leadership for social justice as praxis and actions.

### **3. Praxis theories into actions**

According to Mullen et al. (2014), we have to see the analogy between our teaching faculty and their students correlating with school principals' practices. Theoharis (2007) described a sample of principals who were attuned to social justice by openly opposing deficit thinking about pupils from diverse backgrounds by intentionally creating heterogeneous and inclusive programs. They demonstrated their understanding as to why the "traditionally marginalized students' failure ... as an inherent result of an unjust system" (p. 235). Furthermore, Theoharis (2007) has challenged school leaders to transform their communities with school wide structural changes, which requires knowledge of legislation that affects human rights. Similarly, Bogotch (2011) issued the challenge to educational leaders to use "pedagogical power collectively" to develop "a learning-to-learn leadership context that extends outwards, inside and out of school settings" (p. 135).

Mullen et al. define themselves as both a teaching faculty and as cultural dialoguers. They use a compass metaphor for orienting discourse about social (in)justices as leadership constructs and actions.

We think that the educational leadership field could benefit from loosely construed, conceptual writing largely because it is in the early phases of social justice thinking and praxis.... beyond raising critical consciousness in the classroom and education

leadership field involve acting on cultural dialogue as social justice praxis.(p. 1165) ... [to] combat the managerial takeover of schools, eliminate test score obsessiveness, and foster healthy and humane educational environments that benefit all participants in the schooling enterprise (see also English et al., 2012).

The authors “contrast issues like poverty, sexism, and homophobia which appear to be fixed, focusing on students’ identities, beliefs as well as school structures, all of which are malleable” (p. 1166). Following English (2008), they argue that people have the power to change what only appears fixed—identities, structures, and beliefs. The goal is to move past educators’ sense of hopelessness, frustration and fears (Bogotch, 2012) to engage in actions in and beyond schools. Difficult cultural discourse helps citizens to understand the inner power they have to unmake and remake the world. A positive attitude about the future probably serves as the best catalyst for engaging in this challenging creative work.

Whereas Theoharris (2010) illustrates the significant resistance school leaders meet in pursuing the aims of social justice, Ryan (2010) focuses on leaders’ knowledge and skills in politics as central to leadership for social justice. Specifying this needed political acumen includes an understanding of the political environment, developing political strategies such as “developing and establishing relationships, persuading others, persisting, planning, experimenting, being up front, keeping others off balance, playing ignorant, working the system and quietly advocating” (p 366).

### ***3.1. The praxis of curriculum inquiry, design and development***

Whereas pedagogies are associated with individual professors and individual leaders, the concept of curriculum requires collaboration and collegiality among individuals and across subject areas/disciplines. Curriculum requires a more holistic view of experiences and actions than do classes and coursework. But the question again turns on the unit of analysis: are we delimiting curriculum to within-school variables, even to what Shields (2014) calls socially just leadership actions or what English calls schooling interiorities or what Bogotch (2014) calls harder truths or what Foster (1986) referred to as broader and beyond? What is the legitimate unit of analysis for school improvement?

For Mullen et al. (2014) curricular interventions legitimize the development of prospective leaders as intentionally minded humanitarians who create contexts that enable inclusiveness, power sharing, community building, and democratic learning. We need a framework of leadership in which curriculum, broadly defined, is central (Ylimacki, 2011) rather than coursework.

According to Bates (2006), “conflict over curriculum, pedagogy and assessment is endemic in public discussions of education” but has been “largely sidestepped in discussions of educational administration” (p. 146), as have been the voices of critical theorists (some exceptions are Brooks, 2008; Dantley & Tillman, 2010; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2008; Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010; Young & Lopez, 2005). That said, how can we conceptualize social justice across a curriculum that runs from policy to personnel, finance, law, and leadership theory and practice? Advocates of leadership for social justice have drawn on multiple social theories including social reconstructionism (Bogotch, 2002; Capper; 1995), critical theory (Foster, 1986), and postmodern perspectives (English, 1994; Foster, 1995; Grogan, 2004), multiculturalism (McCray & Beachum, 2014) and culturally responsive leadership (Gooden & Dantley, 2005) just to name a few theories. Nevertheless, only a small number of scholars have

provided models for programs preparing leadership for social justice in professional development, pre- and in-service leadership preparation programs (Karanxha et al., 2014). Often cited is the study conducted by McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley, González, Cambron-McCabe, & Scheurich (2008) who stated that programs should have three goals as a basis of their curriculum and instruction:

- 1) address the achievement levels for all students;
- 2) prepare all students to live as critical members of society; and
- 3) restructure schools to ensure academic success in heterogeneous environments.

Johnson and Campbell-Stephens (2014) report that six US universities are currently developing curricular on-line modules under a federal government grant to the University Council for Educational Administration entitled "Preparing Leaders to Support Diverse Learners." Among the modules are "Building a Community of Trust Through Racial Awareness of Self" (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2011). The module includes readings, discussions, and conscious-raising activities that explore students' definitions of race and the effects of race and White privilege on their lives. The intent is to foster a critical consciousness to help aspiring school leaders develop a more complex understanding of race and multicultural education and the ways that the school curriculum can be transformed to meet the needs of all students. Across the pond in the UK, Johnson and Campbell-Stephens also describe The Investing in Diversity Program which operated from 2004-2011 (Campbell-Stephens, 2009:322). The program was sponsored by the London Centre for Leadership in Learning, and taught by faculty within the Institute of Education at the University of London. Funding was provided through the London Challenge (now termed City Challenge) to improve educational outcomes for students with a particular emphasis on the "challenges" present in urban contexts. There were 10 modules throughout the school year on topics such as moral purpose, data analysis, finance, leading teams, leading innovation in learning, and school improvement. The focus in these modules was not just about learning the skills and abilities necessary to be an effective school leader, but to develop a critical consciousness amongst the participants by questioning how specific policies and practices might affect groups of students "who have traditionally been failed by the British education system" (Johnson & Campbell-Stephens, 2014: 1174).

#### **4. Conclusions: more than a call to action**

In this review of literature, we have emphasized the processes of building curricula for leadership for social justice moving from existing social and critical theories to creating tensions and spaces which all for the self-development of theories-in-action (i.e., praxis) to address the realities of social injustices in and beyond schools. There have been times in history that educators seemed to be moving in democratic ways towards new understandings of social justice through leadership. But when we observe that our curricula, pedagogies, and reforms have not made positive material and social differences in the lives of our most marginalized students and their families, then as school leaders, we should "become more political..., more active socially in ... communities and organizations, and more critical of existing educational theories and practices" (Bogotch, 2008: 80). In other words, we should continuously assess and revise our practices until we can see that we have indeed made a real difference in people's lives.



We believe that educational leadership has reached the point where empirical studies tell us that our curricula, pedagogies, and reform are not resulting in national or societal democratization or social justice. Political scientists, economists, and sociologists have posited models that they hoped would bring more equal power relations and thereby result in ‘functional democratization’, characterized by a well-informed citizenry, freedom to participate in the decision-making process, accountability to the citizens by those who govern, majority rule and minority rights, etc. (Mennell, 2014:21). But instead, for a host of political and economic reasons, buttressed by neo-liberal policies, the results have been more like a “functional de-democratization” (p. 31).

On the one hand, we see in the US and elsewhere political progress for issues like gay rights or the increased prohibition of discrimination and increased equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. On the other hand, if we look at the most problems related to social injustices in the US, we have seen little to no advances in those areas, such as income equality. If ‘material’ means wealth and income and ‘social’ means race, the US is the poster child for ‘de-democratization.’ In terms of wealth and income, it is increasingly concentrated at the top. The Pew Research Center (2013) finds that “when expressed as dollars, the black-white income gap widened, from about \$19,000 in the late 1960s to roughly \$27,000 today. The race gap on household wealth has increased from \$75,224 in 1984 to \$84,960 in 2011” (p. 3). As the University of California at Berkley’s Emmanuel Saez (2013) reports:

*A number of factors may help explain this increase in inequality, not only underlying technological changes but also the retreat of institutions developed during the New Deal and World War II – such as progressive tax policies, powerful unions, corporate provision of health and retirement benefits, and changing social norms regarding pay inequality. (p. 5).*

Therefore, leadership for social justice must go beyond schools and into communities across societies. Yet we are struck by the analyses of political scientists, economists and sociologists who fail to take education into account. Education for social scientists still occupies a peripheral space. One exception is the field of public management. Dahl and Soss’s (2014) article titled “Neoliberalism for the Common Good? Public Value Governance and the Downsizing of Democracy” critique performance-centered management versus public value management. The field of educational leadership lives a ‘public value’ philosophy. And yet, we are stuck, for a score of years or more, with an accountability system based on high stakes testing. Dahl and Soss perceive this same phenomenon throughout society citing what Feldman (2014) calls “the erosion of truly democratic self-government by an unhealthy partnership between public and corporate managers” (p.503). The exportation and outsourcing of work, the hiring of temporary, non-union labor, the decline in real wages all have had a chilling effect and has eroded the middle class in the US. The current reforms in educational leadership parallel this ‘de-democratization’ process which must be reversed by leadership for social justice.

The push back from neo-liberal government movements which cling to the beliefs that markets right themselves and that self-interested human action will result in the public good must be confronted and rejected by leadership for social justice. To pretend that school leadership can be apolitical has resulted in our not addressing “some of the issues that matter most to the lives of citizens and create a realm of professional action insulated from democracy” (Dahl & Soss, 2014:502).

#### ***4.1. Actions derived from pathways***

This article identifies certain imperatives that the field of educational leadership must act upon to realize leadership for social justice. Our preparation programs must engage in Action Imperatives as established by the University Council of Educational Administration Center for Educational Leadership (UCEA) and Social Justice (housed in Duquesne University's School of Education. They read as follows:

- identify and develop educational and community leaders who are committed to, and effective in eradicating conditions of social injustice that are experienced by any of our society's young people.
- pursue and promulgate research dedicated to testing and identifying best educational practices that will enable all young people to learn as much and as well as possible.
- develop new ways to assess the development and acquisition of democratic knowledge, skills, and socially just dispositions of young people, their educators, and the school's community
- establish and maintain a dialogue among educational practitioners, community leaders, and university scholars regarding advancing equity and excellence in our schools and communities for all young people.
- advocate for policy reform to ameliorate socially-unjust systems and processes in our communities, states and nation (Henderson, 2014: 1244).

This UCEA Social Justice Center is inextricably connected to leadership for social justice preparation programs at the masters and doctoral degree level. In other words, the preparation of aspiring leaders are housed inside a community action demonstration project, not unlike how Dewey conceptualized laboratory learning (Bogotch, 2002) ought to be. Thus, the degrees of separation between leadership preparation and schools practice are being addressed here in terms of pedagogies and curriculum inquiry.

Shields and Bogotch (2014) concluded their edited International Handbook by asserting that the way forward combines new theories and action to address social injustices. What exactly is the social injustice inside of our profession? What is the meaning of Marshall and Young's "bold assertion" (Marshall & Oliva, 2006) which reads:

*... individuals who are unable or unwilling to purposefully, knowledgeable and courageously work for social justice in education should not be given the privilege of working as a school or district leader. (p. 308).*

University professors of educational leadership have little-to-no say in school system personnel matters. Yet this bold assertion, if adopted by the profession, would put school systems on notice by the academy that we as educational leadership teachers/researchers will not ignore the knowledge and skills needed to address the harder truths (i.e., social injustices) beyond the school systems' buildings. More so, we intend to provide school systems with aspiring school leaders for social justice as a matter of policy and fact. We will no longer provide school systems with individuals who are not grounded in the history and purposes of education, individuals who will ignore issues of diversity, equity, human rights or democracy. And should that decision/action lead to the further marginalization of university educational leadership preparation by government policy makers, foundations, and school systems, then perhaps it is time for educational leadership for social justice to re-define its own

purposes and roles in society beyond meeting school standards and accountability for aspiring leaders.

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## Principal Leadership in “Beating the Odds” Schools... Advocates for Social Justice and Equity

### Liderazgo de los Directores en Escuelas “Contra todo Pronóstico”... Defensores de la Justicia Social y la Equidad

### Liderança de Directores nas Escolas "Contra todos os Prognósticos"... os Defensores para Justiça Social e Equidade

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To explore the role that principal leadership plays in shaping school performance, this article draws on data from eight high schools that are “beating the odds” (i.e., they are outperforming expectations and have done so consistently for five or more years). Beating the Odds (BTO) schools were chosen strategically for their ability to produce high rates of learning with challenging student populations. By cultivating the elements of will and capacity, the principals in these BTO schools worked actively to promote organizational commitment and to hold both individual teachers and groups of teachers responsible for learning outcomes. BTO principals effectively recruited, retained, and strengthened their faculties through supervision, professional development, and professional learning communities. Driven by a common commitment to the organization and its goals, and by administrative and professional accountability, teachers and principals created a disciplined environment for learning and implemented a distinctive set of curricular, instructional, and assessment practices.

**Keywords:** Leadership for social justice, Equity for all, Beating the odds schools, Principal leadership.

Este artículo se basa en datos de ocho escuelas secundarias “contra todo pronóstico” (BTO, según sus siglas en inglés), es decir, escuelas que superan sus expectativas y lo han hecho constantemente durante cinco o más años para explorar el papel que juega el liderazgo del director sobre el rendimiento escolar. Las escuelas fueron elegidas estratégicamente por su capacidad para producir altas tasas de aprendizaje con poblaciones desafiantes. Gracias a la voluntad y a su capacidad, los directores de las escuelas BTO trabajaron activamente para promover el compromiso organizacional y para que los profesores se sintieran responsables de los resultados de aprendizaje. Directores BTO seleccionados fortalecieron sus facultades a través de la supervisión, el desarrollo profesional, y las comunidades profesionales de aprendizaje. El compromiso común con la organización y sus objetivos, y la responsabilidad administrativa y profesional impulsó a los maestros y directores a crear un ambiente disciplinado para el aprendizaje donde implementar un conjunto distintivo de prácticas curriculares, de enseñanza y evaluación.

**Descriptor:** Liderazgo para la justicia social, Equidad para todos, Escuelas contra todo pronóstico, Liderazgo del director.

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Este artigo é baseado em dados de oito escolas secundárias "Contra todos os Prognósticos" (BTO, de acordo com sua sigla em Inglês), ou seja, escolas que excedam suas expectativas e têm feito de forma consistente durante cinco ou mais anos para explorar o papel da principais lideranças sobre o desempenho escolar. As escolas foram estrategicamente escolhidos pela sua capacidade de produzir altas taxas de aprender com as populações difíceis. Graças à vontade e capacidade, os diretores das escolas BTO trabalhou ativamente para promover o comprometimento com a organização e para os professores responsáveis pelos resultados da aprendizagem sentir. Diretores selecionados BTO reforçaram as suas faculdades, através de supervisão, desenvolvimento profissional, e comunidades de aprendizagem profissional. O compromisso comum com a organização e os seus objectivos, a responsabilidade administrativa e profissional exortou os professores e diretores para criar um ambiente de aprendizagem disciplinado, onde a implementação de um conjunto distinto de práticas curriculares, ensino e avaliação.

**Palavras-chave:** Liderança para a justiça social, Igualdade para todos, Escolas Contra todos os Prognósticos, Liderança de directores.

## **Introduction**

Variations in financial expenditures and teacher quality variables often explain statistically significant and important differences in student achievement (Henry, Fortner, & Thompson, 2010). However, even when such key variables are controlled for, it's the differences in the characteristics of student populations across schools that account for the preponderance of the differences in Performance Composites between schools (Porter, 2014). And yet, there are some that are "beating the odds." These schools are producing high rates of learning with challenging student populations — high percentages of students with low entering reading and math skills, high percentages of students from low-income families, and high percentages of students from traditionally disadvantaged racial/ethnic groups. What explains the exceptions?

Research indicates that school leadership is second only to teacher quality as an "educational asset" in assuring all students an equal opportunity to get a sound basic education (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2005). Principals can make significant contributions to student learning outcomes and are crucial to turning around low performing schools (Brown, 2014). Thus, because of its currency in policy discussions, judicial findings, and research, the extent to which principals' leadership and associated organizational characteristics help explain good but unanticipated learning outcomes produced in some "beating the odds" schools was examined. To structure the investigation, a set of eight high schools which produced higher levels of student performance than would be expected in light of the challenges their students posed were identified. These schools are called "Beating the Odds" (BTO) because they "beat the odds" against low performance. By interviewing the principals and teachers in these schools, the purpose of this study was to identify what the principals were doing differently, with what impact on the schools as organizations, and with what resulting impact on student learning outcomes.

## **1. Literature review**

Despite conflicting views of social justice, of the sources of injustice in schools and society, and of educators' obligations to committed action, the evidence is clear and

alarming that various segments of our public school population continue to experience negative and inequitable treatment on a daily basis (Porter, 2014). When compared to their white and Asian middle-class counterparts, students of color, students of low socio-economic status, students who speak languages other than English, and students with disabilities consistently experience significantly lower achievement test scores, teacher expectations, and allocation of resources (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olsen, 2001). Haycock (2001) maintained that these gaps exist because “we take the students who have less to begin with and then systematically give them less in schools” (p.8). The differences show up in the curriculum taught, the resources spent, how teachers are assigned, and achievement expected.

Freire (1990) proposed that the purpose of our educational system is to make bold possibilities happen—as such, that it is the work, in fact the duty of public education to end the oppression of these students. Many agree, suggesting that educators today are actually the frontline civil rights workers in a long-term struggle to increase equity. And, although many schools are failing to fulfill this duty, others are meeting the challenge of serving each and every student really well—students from varied racial, socio-economic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Riester, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002). In striving for equity and excellence, virtually all students in these schools are learning at high academic levels. There are “no persistent patterns of differences in academic success or treatment among students grouped by race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income of parents, or home language” (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003:2). The following literature review highlights the empirical research directly correlating principal leadership to student achievement, to social justice, and to issues of equity.

### ***1.1. Principal leadership and student achievement***

Although current school reform efforts use different approaches to improve teaching and learning, all depend for their success on the motivation and capacities of local leadership. According to Fullan (2005),

*Leadership is to the current decade what standards were to the 1990s for those interested in large scale reform. Standards, even when well implemented, can take us only part way to successful large-scale reform. It is only leadership that can take us all the way. (p.32).*

A review of the literature on school reform and restructuring confirms there are no documented instances of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

For the past forty years, effective schools research has consistently identified strong instructional leadership as instrumental in creating a positive school climate and as a correlate of high-achieving schools (Edmonds, 1979). In schools where students performed better than expected based on poverty and other demographic characteristics, a “dynamic” principal was at the helm. Even though these studies suggested that specific actions by principals could directly influence student achievement, there was little evidence to support this idea. Current theory and research evidence instead points more toward principals affecting student achievement indirectly, through teachers and staff members. As with any manager or leader, principals influence performance through others, and the influence includes a broad spectrum of behaviors.

Given that the job of a school leader is multidimensional, many have identified areas in which school leaders must have skills: instructional leadership; management; communication, collaboration, and community building; and vision development, risk

taking, and change management. For example, in studies that document the importance of strong building leadership (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2005), principals worked to redirect people's time and energy, to develop a collective sense of responsibility for school improvement, to secure resources and training, to provide opportunities for collaboration, to create additional time for instruction, and to help the school staff persist in spite of difficulties. While their style and roles may be different, effective leaders create a culture for school improvement. They understand that "although leadership can be a powerful force toward school reform, the notion that an individual can effect change by sheer will and personality is simply not supported by research" (Marzano, 2003:174). As a result, successful principals promote the involvement of teachers and parents in the decision-making process and are not threatened by, but rather welcome, this empowerment.

Research conducted by Fullan (2006) and many others found that high-performing schools that demonstrate better student achievement possess a climate that focuses on student learning. Principals in these schools provide clarity to the school's mission, which influences everyone's expectations, have a vision that they allow staff and parents to shape, hold teachers and themselves to high standards, recognize student achievement, communicate academic achievements to the community, and encourage teachers to take risks in trying new methods and programs. They also found that schools with effective principals exhibit a sense of teamwork and inclusiveness in planning, enabling, and assessing instruction. Principals in these schools involve teachers in instructional decisions, provide opportunities for staff members and parents to assume leadership roles in charting instructional improvement, protect staff members from the community and central office, act as facilitators for the instruction staff, helping staff members succeed, serve as an instructional resource for staff members, create a feeling of trust through cooperative working relationships among the staff in the school. They get things done, provide staff development to support the staff's efforts to improve, are visible in classrooms and grade-level meetings, and facilitate the social support needed by students so that class time is devoted to learning (Brown, 2014).

### ***1.2. Leadership for social justice, equity and excellence***

Therefore, leadership not only matters, but according to Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom (2005), leadership's demonstrated impact tends to be considerably greater in schools where the learning needs are most acute. In essence, the greater the challenge, the greater the impact of leaders' actions on learning. Principals advocating for social justice and equity are facing these challenges everyday and despite countervailing pressures, they resist, survive, and transform schools (Causton & Theoharis, 2014; Riester, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002). They enact resistance against the historic marginalization of particular students and resist the pressures pushing schools toward a deceptive caring versus academic culture, or possibly a defeatist apathetic culture. These leaders, according to Rapp (2002), are willing and able to "leave the comforts and confines of professional codes and state mandates for the riskier waters of higher moral callings" (p.233). They understand that leadership depends upon relationships and shared values between leaders and followers. They also understand that not reflecting on, discussing, and/or addressing issues of race, poverty and disability only further perpetuates the safeguarding of power and the status quo (Larson & Murtadha, 2002). In response, researchers strongly advocate for ethical leadership. For example, Foster (2004) specifically called leaders to serve as change agents that

analyze the cultural aspects that have permitted long-standing social inequalities to, not only proliferate but, become institutional ideological belief systems. The question of how to accomplish this remains unanswered.

Given the strong connection between quality principals and high-performing schools, Scheurich and Skrla (2003) claim that “good leadership, the bodies and spirits of our leadership, is crucial to the justice of our cause for equity and excellence in schooling” (p.99). Effective leaders are reflective, proactive and seek the help that is needed. They nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. They model the values and beliefs important to the institution, hire compatible staff, and face conflict rather than avoid it. They make the shift from personal awareness to social action (Freire, 1973), realizing that respect for diversity entails advocacy, solidarity, an awareness of societal structures of oppression, and critical social consciousness. Leaders committed to this agenda decide they can create both equitable and excellent schools and then use their time and energy to figure out how to do so.. In their schools, there is no discernable difference in academic success and treatment among different groups of students. They believe that equity and excellence are the same and, as a result, “beat the odds.”

### ***1.3. Theoretical frame: instructional leadership***

Although studies have examined schools that make a difference in the lives of marginalized children (Riester, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002), there is an absence of literature regarding principals as the unit of analysis and the process of actually leading for social justice. Related to this is an absence of documented strategies that principals who are leading for equity and excellence use to advance their work in the face of countervailing pressures of public schools. Most assertions about the centrality of principal leadership are vague about just what principals actually do that affects student learning. Hallinger’s Principal’s Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) provided much greater specificity. Drawing on much of the best available research regarding principal leadership and student learning outcomes, Hallinger developed and validated the PIMRS in 1982 as the first instrument designed specifically to measure instructional leadership. Thirty years later, the PIMRS has been employed as a research tool in more than 200 empirical studies conducted in 22 different countries (Hallinger, 2011). As the most widely used instrument of choice among scholars studying principal leadership, the PIMRS has proven highly valid and reliable and is cited by leading experts as still the best-grounded instrument for use in the field (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2005)

The PIMRS instrument assesses three dimensions of the instructional leadership construct: Defining the School’s Mission, Managing the Instructional Program, and Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). These dimensions are further delineated into 10 specific instructional leadership functions. Two functions, Framing the School’s Goals and Communicating the School’s Goals, comprise the dimension, Defining the School’s Mission. Managing the Instructional Program incorporates three leadership functions: Supervising and Evaluating Instruction, Coordinating the Curriculum, Monitoring Student Progress. The third dimension, Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate includes several functions: Protecting Instructional Time, Promoting Professional Development, Maintaining High Visibility, Providing Incentives for Teachers, Providing Incentives for Learning. The following Methods section describes how the dimensions and functions of the

PIMRS (not the actual instrument) were used in development of the data collection protocols for this study.

## **2. Methodology**

### ***2.1. Study design***

This study was designed to answer the following research question: What are principals in Beating the Odds (BTO) schools actually doing to produce high rates of learning with challenging student populations? In Phase One of the study, quantitative data were collected regarding student background characteristics, teacher quality variables, resource allocations, and student achievement indicators used to identify and distinguish schools as “beating the odds” versus “low performing.” In Phase Two of the study, qualitative data were gathered to provide insight into the leadership practices and subsequent organizational procedures in the “beating the odds” schools.

Through purposeful sampling, eight “beating the odds” high schools were selected from a list of 345 traditional 9-12 high schools in one southeastern state using the following criteria: (a) the school had a performance composite greater than 70% and close to the state average; (b) incoming students’ mean 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics exam scores were well below the state average; (c) the school demonstrated consistent high growth for more than five years; (d) the principal had been in place for at least three years; and (e) a critical mass of student diversity existed (at least 66% of the total student population was considered high poverty, high minority). For this study, “minority” was defined as those students who fall under the United States subgroups of African American students, Hispanic American students, Native American students, and multiracial students.

#### ***2.1.1. Phase one: quantitative equity audits***

In Phase One, through the use of equity audits, quantitative data were collected regarding student demographics, teacher quality variables, programmatic expenditures, and student achievement indicators. Prior research has shown that all of these variables affect students’ achievement scores, and, as a leadership tool, equity auditing is a proven concept with a respected history in civil rights activism (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). Using ranked standardized residuals from a multiple regression procedure; several schools with high proportions of minority and low-income students that performed well above the expected level were identified. Data on these schools’ mean scores on all state tests for the previous five-year period were then assembled. Eliminated from the list were any schools whose performance proved to be an anomaly, including those whose performance had dropped significantly at any point during the five-year time frame. Schools that showed steadily higher than expected performance and whose performance had risen over the five years were preferred. This procedure yielded a set of eight schools in one southeastern state with challenging populations that were “beating the odds” on a regular basis.

#### ***2.1.2. Phase two: qualitative interviews and site visits***

Through random sampling, semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 90 minutes each were conducted at the eight BTO high schools: with each school’s principal, an assistant principal, and then seven to ten teachers (n=82). The principal was selected as a participant because he or she served as the unit of analysis, while the



other members of the school community offered valuable information regarding the impact of the principal's leadership on excellence and equity in the school. As a retrospective study interested in knowing what accounted for the better than expected performance in the BTO high schools over a five year period of time, data on the instructional management behavior of these schools' principals during those years was not collected. As such, asking the principals and teachers of the selected schools to complete Hallinger's (1985) PIMRS questionnaire would be asking for a false precision. However, the PIMRS did provide a reasonable guide for what might be asked and interviewing them about current and former leadership practices seemed more appropriate to a retrospective inquiry. Interviews offered more opportunities to follow up on responses with probing questions, to look people in the eye, to get a sense of what people seemed relatively sure about and what seemed shaky and also to pose open-ended questions designed to uncover aspects of the principal's leadership or other aspects of the school's functioning that might help explain the differences in student performance across schools. Thus the PIMRS categories of questions were adopted but grouped and modified to create protocols for interviews of both principals and teachers (see Appendix A for template of high school summary tables, including categories).

Interview write-ups were composed using a template constructed from the protocol and summarized in a bulleted table for each school. The individual school summary tables then became the basis for summary tables distilling the findings for each set of schools, and a further round of debriefings resulted in a single comparative table, which formed the primary basis for article writing. A final step in the analysis involved returning to the interview write-ups to select quotations and examples to illustrate and help elaborate each of the main points in the tables. This step also served to assure that adequate interview evidence existed to support each point made in the Findings section below.

### **3. Findings**

#### ***3.1. Results from phase one: equity audits***

Demographically speaking, the eight BTO schools served approximately the same percentages of minority students (73%), economically disadvantaged students (64.2% eligible for free or reduced lunch), students with limited English proficiency (7%), and students with disabilities (12.5%) as the low-performing schools (see Table 1). The striking similarity of the schools (even class size of 21) countered one hypothesis that the BTO schools would differ from the low-performing schools with regard to student demographics. Similarly, total per pupil expenditures in the low-performing schools averaged about \$8,275, some \$450 per pupil higher than in the BTO schools. So the performance advantage in the BTO schools did not result from higher levels of expenditures (see table 1). It is worth commenting that the higher average level of total per pupil expenditure in both the BTO and low-performing schools probably stemmed from the demographic differences noted above. Higher percentages of free and reduced price lunch students carry with them additional categorical funding for compensatory educational purposes.

Turning now to teacher quality (another possible hypothesis for the differences in achievement) the BTO schools had similar numbers on five indicators related to teacher quality (Average Mean Praxis Scores expressed in standard deviations above or below

the state mean, the percentage of National Board Certified Teachers, the percentage of teachers in their first year of teaching, the percentage of teachers with more than three years of experience, and class size, which is actually an indicator of the conditions under which teachers teach but may also affect the demand for teachers).

Table 1. Demographic composition of state high school student state testing population

	All State High Schools (n=345)	Low Performing High Schools (n=42)	Beating the Odds High Schools (n=8)
Poverty % free and reduced lunch	37.2	64.4	64.2
Race/ Ethnicity % Minority	33.9	76.1	72.8
Prior achievement average Grade 8 Math score	273.6	265.3	267.2
Prior achievement average Grade 8 Reading score	220.3	215.6	215.3
Expenditures average total per pupil spending	\$7,066.90	\$8,274.76	\$7,827.44
Average class size	22	21	21
Performance Composite	75.1	51.2	72.8

Note: Prepared by the author.

The BTO schools enjoyed a small to modest advantage over the low-performing schools with respect to five indicators (the percentage with at least a master's degree, the percentage with a continuing license, the percentage with Provisional, Emergency, or Temporary licenses, the percentage entering via Lateral Entry routes, and turnover), but came out slightly worse in one (the percentage with bachelors' degrees from the nation's most competitive or highly competitive undergraduate institutions, an indirect indicators of general academic ability). So teacher quality variables may have accounted for some of the outcome differences between the BTO and low-performing schools. As indicated below, both principals and teachers in BTO schools attributed their performance in part to high quality teachers and reported little difficulty in either recruiting or retaining good teachers. In contrast, principals and teachers in low-performing schools often report persistent problems in finding high quality teachers to fill vacancies and in keeping them from year to year (CITE). Thus, findings from the qualitative study help to illuminate how BTO schools get and keep high quality teachers.

Although demographic, teacher quality, and expenditure analyses all indicated a fair amount of equity between the BTO high schools and the low performing high schools studied, a more in-depth audit of achievement between both types of schools indicated great disparities when academic data were disaggregated and analyzed. Even though there were similarities in the blow average mean Reading and math scores for their incoming students, across the board, at-risk students in the BTO schools outperformed their low-performing school counterparts. By controlling for and/or eliminating some of the external reasons (e.g., demographics) and internal factors (e.g., teacher quality and expenditures) often cited for the achievement gaps between White/Asian, middle-class children and children of color or children from low-income families, the findings from Phase One of this study raised some interesting issues. The better than anticipated results in the BTO schools warrant a deeper examination inside for more subtle causes (e.g., principal leadership).

### ***3.2. Results from phase two: advocates for social justice and equity***

The Beating the Odds (BTO) high schools shared a distinctive common profile that combined well-defined elements of both the will and the capacity to succeed with

challenging student populations. In all of the BTO schools, it was the principal who seemed to drive this development. The will-related elements included organizational commitment, authoritative accountability leading to internalize and collective responsibility, and resilience. Capacity entailed provision of adequate opportunities and incentives for all students to learn, assured by high quality teachers using certain curricular, instructional, and assessment practices within an orderly and disciplined environment. In the sections that follow, these elements are explained and illustrated with examples and quotations from the interviewees.

Before proceeding, however, it is crucial to emphasize that the profile of BTO schools and leaders does not constitute a checklist of independent items, but an integrated whole with dynamic relationships among the elements. For example, the bonds of trust and attachment that link teachers with principals in BTO schools make it possible for principals to assert strong accountability pressures on teachers both individually and collectively without alienating them, depressing morale, or increasing undesirable turnover. In turn, the combination of organizational commitment and internalized responsibility seems to make for resilience in the face of adversity. Further, the resulting will to produce high student outcomes drives the implementation of key curricular, instructional, and assessment practices. Because incentives are focused primarily on student learning outcomes, curricular, instructional, and assessment practices are carried out not in a pro forma, compliance-oriented manner, but are employed mindfully and deliberately as tools in order to get results. The spirit is not, “Well I guess we gotta do these things because the state department or the principal said so,” but “We do these things because we are determined that these kids will learn, and doing these things in this way will produce better outcomes.” Just as the elements of will drive the way elements of capacity are built and employed, elements of capacity also strengthen the will to excel. For example, the professional learning communities that improve teacher quality and teaching also strengthen accountability. Teachers hold each other as well as themselves accountable for teaching the standard course of study and producing high outcomes —so “professional accountability” reinforces the administrative accountability asserted by the principal. Table 2 captures the joint action of the BTO schools’ success.

Table 2. How elements of will and capacity shape learning outcomes in BTO schools

ELEMENTS OF WILL	ELEMENTS OF CAPACITY
Organizational Commitment • Persona & Presence • Principal-Teacher Trust & Bonds • Teacher-Teacher Bonds • Positive School Identity	Teacher Quality •Teacher Recruitment •Teacher Retention •Professional Development •Professional Learning Community •Teacher Assignment •Pressure to Improve or Leave
Authoritative Accountability • Setting & Communicating Goals • Monitoring Student Progress • Monitoring & Evaluating Instruction • Providing Incentives for Performance • Internalizing Individual & Collective Responsibility	Curricular, Instructional, & Assessment Practices •Freshman Academies or Other Transition Support •Standard Course of Study, Pacing Guides, & Common Lessons •Rigorous Curriculum Standards with Pressure & Accountability to Learn •Cross-grade Curriculum Articulation •“Stairstep Curricula” and Curricular Re-Sequencing •Smaller Classes for Low-Performing Students •Interim or Benchmark Assessments •Protection of Instructional Time •Tutoring •Inventive Preparation for End of Course Testing
Resilience	Disciplined and Caring Environment for Learning

Note: Prepared by the author.

### ***3.2.1. The elements of will***

As noted above, it was the principal's leadership that seemed to account in large measure for the success characteristics of BTO Schools. Of course, teachers brought motivations and strengths of their own to the schools. But it was the especially high levels of organizational commitment, sense of individual and collective responsibility for student learning outcomes, and resilience in the face of setbacks and adversity that distinguished the BTO schools from similar low performing schools. And by teachers' as well as the principals' accounts, BTO school principals deliberately cultivated these qualities through readily described behavior. Thus, in the sub-sections that follow, both what principals were reported to have done as well as the resulting organizational characteristics that teachers and principals highlighted are described.

#### ***a) Organizational Commitment***

Creating and maintaining the will to succeed with at-risk students in the BTO schools seems to have involved developing bonds of interpersonal as well as professional attachment between the principal and teachers and among the teachers themselves. Nearly all of the principals had established a strong positive persona and pervasive presence in their schools. They were admired and often even well-loved figures in the school. They commanded respect partly by articulating goals and a vision for the school and by maintaining high visibility in and around the school, but even more so by "walking the talk." They were trusted in several senses. Teachers believed them to be motivated by the best interests of students and the school, not their own glory or careers; found them candid and true to their word; and pictured them as competent to deliver on commitments, the exceptions being due to circumstances beyond their control. But teachers' relationships with their principals generally went beyond admiration and trust to include a personal bond. They liked their principals personally, enjoyed working with them, and even in the largest high schools, conveyed a real sense of connection with them. "Organizational attachment" was the characteristic emphasizing that teachers were attached to their principals, each other, and the school as an organization. They were attached not only in the sense that they expressed a devotion to the school as a place to work and a determination to remain there for the foreseeable future, but they were also attached or committed to the mission and goals of the school.

*Persona and Presence.* Speaking about the principal's persona and presence in their BTO schools, teachers told us, "He's everywhere." Teachers often recounted what organizational researchers call "hero stories" about their principals. They told of their principals' energetic efforts to greet and talk with every staff member at opening picnics, their inspiring and entertaining daily announcements, their frequent "drop-ins" during classes, their avid attendance at athletic, musical, and theater events, their participation in departmental meetings, their early morning arrivals and into-the-night work habits, and their concern for teachers as well as students throughout these ubiquitous appearances. And, teachers often credited the principal for the school's success: "He's taken us from the bottom where we were when he first came here." Or, "After [the principal] arrived, the whole tone just seem to change. Maybe it's the coach in her. She's a natural cheerleader."

*Principal-teacher trust and bonds.* The BTO school principals seemed to inspire trust in teachers in part by communicating their own trust of teachers: "The teachers think that

I think they are geniuses. I want them to think that I have this unbelievable faith and trust in their ability to get kids to learn. I tell them over and over that they are the best to be found anywhere.” The flip side of this praise and trust, however, is a strong sense that good performance is expected, which carries a certain amount of pressure. One of her lead teachers later said that she is determined “*not* to let [the principal] down.” Another BTO principal recalled how she responded when her English I teachers pronounced the district’s pacing guide was poorly sequenced. She decided to “take a chance and just believe them,” and let them develop their own pacing guide. All year long, students performed badly on the district’s benchmark tests, which were keyed to the district pacing guide, and she had to endure repeated district level meetings where the school’s poor results were highlighted. But she stuck with her teachers’ judgment, and at the end of the year, students did very well on the state assessment. “That really built trust with my English I teachers,” she said. It is worth emphasizing that this principal was also a strong practitioner of data-based accountability, often laying out the assessment results for all teachers in a given team and asking what accounts for the differences in outcomes. Candor also seems to count. Asked if teachers trust the principal, a teacher from another BTO replied, “Highly. She calls a spade a spade. If we are not doing well, she tells us. If she does something wrong, she admits it.” Teachers in several schools likewise pointed to the principal’s open door policy as contributing to the development of this trust.

*Teacher-teacher bonds.* Teachers in the BTO schools also generally respected, liked, and enjoyed working with most of their peers. We heard virtually nothing about factions, cliques, or divisions within their faculties. They communicated a sense of camaraderie and pleasure in each other’s company as well as collegiality, albeit with some sense of rivalry or competitiveness between individual teachers or among departments. Our interviewer remarked, “Math wants to beat science and vice versa.” As noted, strong expectations for high performance go with the bonds between teachers and principals. A similar sense of obligation seems to go with bonds among teachers. As one teacher at a BTO school put it, “I don’t want to be the short leg on the stool.” In this as in other BTO schools, the principal’s deliberate efforts to build “professional learning communities” had clearly created or enhanced these teacher-teacher bonds. Principals in BTO schools not only arranged departments’ or EOC teacher teams’ schedules to permit common planning periods but also required regular data analysis and problem-solving sessions in which teachers helped each other improve each other’s instruction. The collegial support relationships that developed from these sessions plus the fact that BTO school principals also held departments and teams jointly responsible for student outcomes appeared to foster an all-for-one and one-for-all sense of solidarity among teachers.

*Positive school identity.* Principals also deliberately cultivated a distinctive, positive identity for their schools in ways that might seem trivial if they were not clearly so important to teachers, students, and the community. The schools’ identity was cultivated and symbolized by celebrating winning sports or other teams, featuring school mascots and slogans in murals, posters, and the like, and wearing school insignias on shirts in school colors. Teachers and students seemed proud to be associated with their schools and unembarrassed to show it. Bound up with these symbolic elements of the school’s identity was a sense that it is a disciplined social and academic environment where good teachers produce high rates of student learning. To

exemplify deliberate identity-building one BTO urban high school that had been known for years as a football powerhouse serves as an example. Yet its principals had abolished pep rallies, fearing that students would get out of hand. The new principal responsible for improving the school's academic performance saw the football team's reputation as a resource for strengthening students' pride in their school, something she could then appeal to in getting students to cooperate both in maintaining discipline and improving academic performance. She could tell them, "We are the [school mascots]. So let's don't have stories in the paper about fights or low performance at this school." The principal of another relatively new, very high-performing, high-minority school used athletic success to build morale, student loyalty, and active student cooperation in disciplinary and academic terms. Teachers at the school said, "We're winners, period." The kids buy into that and understand it. "They have to behave and perform in the classroom or they don't play. It's not a right; it's a privilege." In a few BTO schools, the positive identity was built around past academic performance, which imposed expectations for continued success: "This school has been a high growth school for 9 straight years." To gain broad buy-in to school goals, another principal appealed not simply to teachers' self-interests but also to community and ethnic pride. "I told them, 'We want [school name] to be seen in a positive light, and we want to dispel the myth that this predominantly Black school is just out here doing nothing.'"

#### ***b) Authoritative Accountability***

In BTO schools, teachers' admiration for and personal-professional ties with principals positioned the principals to assert accountability in a forceful way without alienating teachers. These principals did not simply articulate goals and plans and then explain them in a general way but held teachers specifically accountable for achieving the goals, sometimes in candid, direct, face-to-face exchanges. Both principals and teachers monitored students' progress on a regular basis, drawing on state test scores, scores on benchmark or other interim assessments, and data on attendance, discipline, and the like. Principals' bonds with teachers provided a context in which they could lay out data on student performance, often teacher by teacher, and ask what accounted for the failures as well as the successes. The data and questions seemed to come across to teachers not as attacks but as part of an ongoing effort to build a common understanding of what was working and what was not, and to promote wider adoption of effective practices. Principals of BTO schools also made it clear to departments, teams, and sometimes the entire school that they were collectively responsible for students' learning. Teachers were credited for success in team, department, or school-wide meetings, but they were also called to account when outcomes fell short of expectations or failed to improve. Together with their assistant principals, principals of BTO schools also regularly visited classrooms to observe and evaluate instruction, and they followed through with very specific, detailed feedback to teachers, including individual student results.

*Setting and Communicating Goals.* Speaking about her efforts to establish an overarching goal for the school, the principal of one BTO school said, "They have got to understand that the school has a goal, and whether that conflicts with their moral belief about testing doesn't really matter. The goal is that every student is going to achieve to the point that they are proficient and we can [accomplish that] as a whole." A teacher at a BTO school rolled her eyes about the nebulous goals she heard about from friends at some other schools. "It's not about 'global competition' or a '21st century workforce,'"

she groaned. “It’s, ‘Here are the kids we are getting. We want to see them improve this much. And everybody be focused on that.’ The focus is narrow and clear.” In a separate interview, her principal specified targeted goals by subject area. For example, “Our writing scores were terrible last year – 36% proficient. This year we are trying to double that by emphasizing writing across the curriculum.”

The BTO school principals involved representative teachers not only in developing plans but also in communicating them school-wide: “Department chairs present all of their data at the first School Improvement Team meeting, and then we disseminate out to the whole school what our achievement levels were for last year, what our goals are for this year, and what specific steps we plan to meet the goals for this year.” Pressure was a common theme: “Our principal focuses on one thing ... student achievement! The academic focus is a constant focus. It’s push, push, push ... it influences all decisions.” Yet teachers did not seem to find the pressure oppressive. As one explained, “You want to be a part of it the success.”

*Monitoring Student Progress.* Beyond the establishment and communication of goals, BTO school principals and teachers monitored students’ progress toward the goals from the time they enter the school—or even before that. The principal of one small BTO school explained, “We take a look at what the incoming 9th grade students did in reading and math last year, and our goal is to make sure that all of the students have shown some growth.” Puzzled by test score data revealing the persistence of a Black-White achievement gap in the school, one principal used other student data to pinpoint the causes. “I looked at all kinds of data about every single kid who had scored below proficient to where he went to school last year, discipline history, test scores, attendance, and so on. The problem turned out to be attendance.” So he brought all of his counselors and assistant principals together, and they interviewed every student to determine what was behind the poor attendance and encouraged all of them to attend more regularly, told students they would be keeping an eye on them in the future, and continued to follow up. The principal of a smaller BTO school requires progress reports every three weeks, as did some other BTO principals. “I require the teachers to print spreadsheets for me ... on Friday, based on students’ grades for that three weeks ... gauging mastery based on the tally marks.” He takes the spreadsheets home for the weekend, looking for classes with a high failure rate. Teachers are required to identify new strategies to use with each failing student, as well as to notify their parents. A teacher at another BTO school said, “We’re taking [reviewing] data the whole year — it’s kind of how we do things here.”

*Monitoring and Evaluating Instruction.* In addition to monitoring instructional *outcomes*, BTO school principals were also directly engaged in monitoring instructional *processes*. They reported spending a major percentage of their time observing in classrooms. One BTO principal conceded that on some days he is out of the school most or all day, but claimed that, “I get into some classrooms whether I am here 5 minutes or all day.” Like other principals of BTO schools, he gave more attention and more detailed feedback to new or struggling teachers than to experienced ones. Asked what he was looking for during these observations, he replied, “Something meaningful in the first 5 minutes,” clear goals and objectives, some activities involving writing, EOC review items, and instructional strategies other than lecturing or seatwork. Teachers generally confirmed principals’ claims about the frequency and nature of classroom observations. But, “they

are not out to get you. It's not a gotcha thing." Instead, they reported, the focus is on how to help teachers "fix things" in their instruction.

*Providing Incentives for Performance.* Beyond accountability pressures, the main positive incentive for teachers to produce better outcomes are the state funded bonuses for student performance and growth. In two BTO schools, the school district supplemented these with local funds. "Monetary rewards do help," one young teacher noted. "Before this, I had to have a second job. We also get paid extra for tutoring after school or Saturday for two or three hours." Other incentives were also at work. Principals and teachers both noted, sometimes with a touch of embarrassment or self-amusement, that competition among teachers was also a force. Teachers often added with a quick smile that the competition is a friendly one. Another teacher added, "The teachers are competitive, and the students are getting to be competitive." "I'm not upset at the other person because their scores are better than mine. It's about me getting better."

*Internalizing Individual and Collective Responsibility.* In BTO schools, teacher-principal and teacher-teacher bonds combined with accountability pressures seemed to lead teachers to accept responsibility for overcoming the challenges their students presented. Both as individuals and collectively, teachers in BTO schools seemed to be animated by a sense of responsibility for their students' learning. As one teacher put it, "Failure is not an option... if a student fails, it's on us [teachers]." In another school a teacher told us earnestly, "You've got to have the guts to do the job. We want it [success] and we'll do what it takes to get it." In a third BTO school: "The teachers in this school do not accept excuses. Hard work is required. You may not sit quietly and just not be disruptive. A critical mass of the staff shares this attitude. You must work and try your best to achieve. Whether or not their parents allow excuses, we will not. It can be exhausting, but we do not accept excuses." Their students' weak incoming skills, insufficient motivation, impoverished fund of prior experiences to draw on in learning, lack of parental support, involvement in gangs or destructive cliques, or dim sense of the importance of education to their economic futures were facts of life or spurs to action, not excuses for failure. They communicated a conviction that students can and must learn to the students themselves in a variety of ways. They did not simply expect students to learn, but demanded that they do so, and supported their learning by using the practices described below. As teachers told us at the highest-scoring BTO school, "One thing that is made clear to every new teacher that comes in is that test scores are the responsibility of the entire school, not just certain teachers." This type of accountability seems to demand improvements in instruction, the improvements in instruction produce better outcomes, better outcomes elevate expectations, and so on in a slow upward spiral. Small initial successes set off a spiral of rising expectations and changes in teachers' behavior.

### ***c) Resilience***

In BTO schools, principals' and teachers' attachment to each other and to their schools along with their acceptance of responsibility for meeting the challenges that students brought to the school seemed to engender a certain resilience in the face of discouraging circumstances and setbacks. At times, BTO schools lost high-performing teachers, underwent a change in student population, experienced state test scores drop when a new version of an assessment was adopted, or suffered other setbacks, but they did so without losing hope. They acknowledged and bemoaned the loss, but soon pulled up their socks and got back to work.



### ***3.2.2. The elements of capacity***

Before plunging into a discussion of the specific elements of capacity of distinguished BTO schools, three points need to be emphasized. First, that principals generally played a central role in cultivating the elements of both will and capacity in these schools. It goes without saying that they could have accomplished nothing without the active engagement of talented teachers, and we found impressive teachers in all schools, but the distinctive edge that BTO schools showed in terms of academic performance owed a great deal to active interventions by their principals. Secondly, that it was the dynamic interactions of the elements of will and capacity that appeared to result in better results, not simply the presence of the elements as individual items in a checklist. For example, teachers in BTO schools seemed to carry out the curricular, instructional, and assessment practices described below with a determination to get results that stemmed in part from principals' authoritative assertion of accountability for academic outcomes. Similarly, professional learning communities gave rise to professional accountability — teachers holding themselves and their colleagues accountable— which complemented the administrative accountability asserted by the principal. A third point concerns the distinction between what might be called potential teacher quality and effective teacher quality, or between *teacher* quality and *teaching* quality. Ultimately, it is the quality of the actual instruction that students get in the classroom that shapes what they learn. BTO schools appear to recruit and retain qualified teachers, strengthen their skills via formal and informal professional development, and motivate them to translate more of their potential into high quality teaching than do low performing schools.

#### ***a) Teacher Quality***

When asked about specific rises or drops in the percentage of students proficient in particular state tested subjects, the most common explanation was the gain or loss of an outstanding teacher. Not surprisingly, then, principals of BTO schools were active, selective, and persuasive recruiters. They did not simply accept the teachers they were sent, but sought out good candidates on the web, at job fairs, and —it seemed— everywhere they went. In some cases, bonuses helped them recruit, but principals said and teachers confirmed that it was the image of the school as a work environment and the quality of their prospective colleagues that clinched the deal. Once the principal had primed the recruiting pump, the school's reputation and teachers' word-of-mouth networks seemed to attract many good candidates, thus allowing principals to be more and more selective in hiring teachers —and in keeping them. The principals were reluctant to give up on teachers performing below par and worked actively to help them improve, but if a teacher continued to be ineffective, the principals put him on an action plan and suggested that he might be happier in another school. Turnover rates in these schools were generally low, but the principals held that some teacher turnover was desirable.

*Teacher Recruitment.* For BTO schools, bonuses and pay supplements were not negligible factors in teacher recruitment. One principal told us that he used supplemental funds not only for signing and retention bonuses but also to pay for small rewards, such as snacks at meetings, jackets in school colors for all faculty, or flowers. “Little things mean a lot to teachers,” he explained. Yet explaining that “somebody can always outbid you,” one principal said that in recruiting teachers, he appeals to “missionary zeal.” It was clear that many teachers in BTO schools were motivated primarily by a drive to see that low income and minority students get a better education.

Explaining how he gets a competitive edge despite the small size and remote location of his BTO school, the principal shared, “Basically, it’s about timing. Whenever I have an opening, I check [the state’s online application website] multiple times during the day, and I try to be the first person to call.... I describe the school, and I talk about my leadership style.... I tell them we are 90% minority, 79% free or reduced lunch, and if you don’t have some experience working with these populations or a strong desire to work with these populations, then this is not the place for you. I tell them that I reserve the right to make all decisions, but 9 times out of 10 I am gonna give you that decision making power.” [Then,] I don’t do telephone interviews. You have to come in person. I don’t care where you live. Especially in small towns and rural areas, BTO principals often preferred hiring teachers from the local area, on the theory that they would understand the students’ culture better and be more likely to stay in the school. The principal of one large BTO school brought in a dozen teachers from a high school that she had turned around earlier. Although they were only 12 teachers out of a faculty of about 170, “they made a huge impact. I only brought the best. People that I knew would help change the climate.” Another BTO principal reported that she interviews all prospective hires individually, but they are also interviewed by groups of teachers within each department who actually do a lot of the recruiting for her. Because the district has screened candidates’ qualifications, she can look more for personal qualities. “The first thing I look for is energy and eagerness. People who really believe that the kids can do well. Not just people who are looking for a job.” She also looks for people with deep curriculum knowledge who can work in teams.

*Teacher Retention.* A factor that seems to help keep good teachers is the degree to which they feel supported in concrete ways. As one principal explained, “I tell them I don’t care what you need in order to teach—I don’t care if it is some kind of wild-striped pencil—we are getting it.” In another large BTO school, the principal spoke about the teachers whom each of his assistant principals were responsible for “taking care of.” This included supervising instruction in their classrooms, but also prominently included helping them to handle student discipline and other problems, as well. BTO school principals all took active steps to “do everything I can to take away all of the nonsense that makes teaching not fun.” Another type of “support” that was important to teachers was permission to restructure the curriculum. Mathematics teachers at one BTO school proposed re-sequencing courses from Algebra I-Geometry-Algebra II to Algebra I-Algebra II-Geometry to improve curricular continuity and thus improve student outcomes. Their principal approved the change, and the teachers cited this development as evidence that “she gives us a lot of freedom and trust.” They went on to note, “But she holds us responsible for results,” and they experienced the combination of trust and accountability as indicating that the principal “treats us with respect as professionals.”

*Professional Development.* In addition to recruiting and keeping good teachers, BTO principals also worked to strengthen the teachers they had. Some principals were selective, restricting the range of PD to a few activities keyed to their improvement priorities. Others brought teachers “who are doing it right” into the school for PD sessions while another BTO school principal singled out two specific Reading professional development offerings that contributed to rising performance. She described the strategies as “very, very prescriptive,” meaning that the strategies are specified in great detail, so that teachers in all curricular areas—teachers with little or no background in reading instruction—can grasp the strategies with only modest

training and use them to improve students' ability to read texts in their subject areas. The instructional strategies helped teachers engage a broader range of students more actively in learning course content. Several principals of BTO schools likewise viewed mentorship as a form of one-on-one professional development. The principal of our highest-performing BTO school hired an outstanding retired teacher to observe and coach struggling teachers—mainly but not exclusively initially licensed and lateral entry teachers.

*Professional Learning Community (PLC).* Teachers were much more enthusiastic about advice from other teachers than about advice or critiques from administrators. Principals of BTO schools may not have used the term “professional learning community,” but they promoted the development of (PLCs)—often quite aggressively. A few simply arranged common planning times for teachers of a given course, but most went well beyond this to charge content area teams or departments with collective responsibility for improving student outcomes. They made it plain that if one teacher fell down on the job, all would be held responsible. Some principals named a lead teacher to organize meetings, submit reports, observe in others' classrooms, and take other steps to pinpoint problems and help their colleagues address them. Some also met with the teams on a periodic basis to review data on students' progress—sometimes at the individual student level. Professional learning communities did not simply spring up in these schools, but were virtually mandated. Within PLCs, norms of good practice arose and were enforced. In this sense, collegial accountability reinforced the administrative accountability discussed above. But by helping teachers deal with knotty problems of classroom practice, PLCs helped to build capacity as well as to enhance motivation. Principals in BTO schools held teachers responsible for outcomes, but worked with them and allowed them considerable flexibility to develop and implement more effective approaches and materials. “Because I *require* some strict planning together, all teachers of a state tested content course have planning time together,” and are required to meet, develop common lesson plans for each week, and submit minutes of each meeting. “If you don't monitor it [planning], it's not done.” She went on to say that, “The most important PD is the PD we do here—what we do to make a difference in kids' learning and test scores.” As one lead teacher put it, “[The principal] has high expectations for all of us. She meets with our team. She will ask, ‘What are you *not* doing that so-and-so *is* doing, and why are your scores not as high?’” But this is a genuinely analytical question. “It's not just to put you on the spot. It does put you on the spot.” Forthright comparisons of scores of teachers teaching similar students followed by questions about “what is going on here” and efforts to help were common practice for principals of BTO schools. According to teachers, the interchanges are motivating, but they also elicit colleagues' suggestions about specific techniques to improve instruction.

*Teacher Assignment.* In addition to recruiting strong teachers and promoting further development through formal PD and professional learning communities, principals in BTO schools also assigned teachers strategically, often asking and providing incentives for strong, experienced teachers to teach some “regular” or lower-ability classes, not all Honors and Advanced Placement classes. They gave some play to teachers' preferences in an effort to maintain motivation and commitment, but did not hesitate to press teachers to take some classes with more challenging students. They also tended to assign their most effective teachers to teach state tested subjects. “If I am held accountable,” one principal explained, “I am going to have my best people teaching

them.” Offsetting the pressures was the strong sense that, as teachers in another BTO school told us, “Getting the bigger classes or the state tested content classes is compliment. You have to prove yourself if you want to teach those classes.” A relatively new principal at one small BTO school told us, “I had to move teachers out of their comfort zones. Some people had been teaching the same thing at the same level for years. I had to take a look at the data and see what teachers were doing the best with what group of students and move those teachers around according to those statistics.” He cited as an example a teacher who had been teaching virtually all seniors for many years, but seemed to have the firmness and fairness to push less motivated students to succeed. So he assigned her to teach a 9th grade state tested course. She was reluctant at first, but succeeded beyond her own expectations. “So she came to me this year and said, ‘I’m willing to do whatever you need for me to do.’” The principal of one large BTO school also spoke of “putting the teachers that are really powerful people where it matters most.” She stressed that she does not believe in assigning teachers based on seniority —“the best teachers are in the state tested courses ... you are not gonna be the leader if you can’t produce the results.”

*Pressure to Improve or Leave.* Finally, principals at BTO schools were willing, if necessary, to put strong pressure on poor performers to improve sharply or find another job: “You try not to have too many teachers that are bad, but if they are bad, I put ‘em on an action plan and try to make ‘em get better.” One principal explained that his school’s high turnover rate in the previous year was the result of his deliberate effort to “push out some bad teachers.” Another recalled, “I had some teachers who decided this [environment of pressure for performance] was not for them.” Yet the principals in these schools were not quick to judge teachers. A typical BTO principal said that he insists on knowing the details of Assistant Principals’ work with struggling teachers before taking action to force them out: “What exactly have you done to correct the problem? What have you done to help Mr. Smith get better? Do not just give up on a teacher. Do everything you can to help.”

*Disciplined and Caring Environment for Learning.* The principal and teachers in BTO schools take a proactive approach to establishing norms of order and discipline in the school. The culture of many high schools is the product of a tacit bargain or balance between the preferences of adults and students, but in these schools it is clearly the adults who set boundaries on behavior and control the culture of the school. Yet the environments do not feel hostile or punitive. The teachers claim to know and profess to like their students, and limited observation bore this out. The principal and teachers at the highest-scoring BTO high school stressed the importance of being visible, actively engaging, and setting norms for behavior from the moment students enter the school each day. They stand at the door and in the halls, greet as many students as possible as they enter, watch closely for infractions of the rules on dress and behavior, and politely address them. According to one teacher, “Visible, Vigilant, and Vocal” is the motto, and when rules are set down, “They are enforced. Without question.” Speaking about the need to combine strong discipline with caring relationships with students, one young African-American principal told us, “This may come as a surprise, but I am very tough. But the students know that I love them to death. I get on the bus, and I ride with them to every game ... I go to the churches, go to a different church every Sunday. I live in [nearby town], but I come to [this area] to WalMart ... because I see my kids [here].”

The school is small enough to have a “family oriented atmosphere,” and that is “the major reason why we have done as well as we have.”

***b) Curricular, Instructional, and Assessment Practices***

The BTO schools implemented a signature set of curricular, instructional, and assessment practices designed to assure all students appropriate and adequate opportunities to learn—and, indeed, to demand or insist that they learn. No school implemented all of these practices thoroughly, but each implemented most of them. There were variations in the particulars from one BTO school to another, but the same sense of results-oriented mindfulness in the use of the practices was evident across all these schools.

*Freshman Academies or Other Transition Support.* To manage the transition from middle to high school, personalize the environment and reduce dropout rates, and address incoming skill deficits, most BTO schools had established Freshman Academies. Academies and similar programs were regarded as essential because so many ninth graders enter high school with grossly inadequate reading and math skills. The Academies generally housed ninth graders and teachers of their core academic courses in a separate building or wing, and those large enough to warrant it were subdivided into teams. BTO schools which had not organized Freshman Academies had created special seminars or other programs to support 9th graders. For example, in one of the large BTO high schools without a Freshman Academy, all 9th graders take an intensive freshman seminar in grammar, reading, and writing in the Fall. Data on incoming students are also reviewed in detail, and students with low skills are assigned to special courses designed to prepare them for state tested courses. One BTO school had also organized a program for “Freshmores,” students who are in their second year of high school but have not passed the courses required for sophomore status. “Freshmores” were offered the opportunity to take double blocks of key courses, such as English I, in order to get back in step with their grade-level friends —reportedly a strong incentive for many students.

*Standard Course of Study, Pacing Guides, and Common Lessons.* Principals of BTO schools insisted that teachers follow the state’s standard course of study. While allowing some flexibility, they promoted the use of district or school-constructed pacing guides, and in some cases, common lesson formats and lesson plans. When we asked how teachers decide what to teach, a typical response came from the principal of one small BTO school: “The standard course of study of course dictates what is taught in classrooms.” Principals and teachers in BTO schools seemed keenly aware of the tension between (a) legitimate efforts to assure that students get some exposure to everything they will be tested on and (b) assuring that the numerous topics in the standard course of study do not whiz by before students have an opportunity to grasp them. The principal of a huge BTO urban school was equally insistent on the standard course of study: “We gotta really teach and review and re-teach and re-loop. That’s been the reason that we have had some growth in test scores.” In a few BTO schools, members of a department or a team responsible for a state tested subject went so far as to develop and teach a common set of lesson plans on a week by week basis —plans keyed to pacing guides they had developed, themselves.

*Rigorous Curricular Standards with Pressure and Incentives to Learn.* In one very small school in a primarily African-American community, the principal told us, “When I came

in, I had to take a look at the course offerings. Were they rigorous enough? In some cases, we had said, ‘Our kids can’t do this and so let’s not expose them to this, this, and this. I had to fine tune that master schedule and put in some more rigorous course offerings. We didn’t have honors level courses in some subject areas.’ Describing his grading standards, an ex-military teacher of History told us, “Major tests, 80%. Other tests, 20%. No retesting, no extra credit for homework, no open book tests, no grades for class participation. That’s my grading policy, and I’m not changing it. I grew up in a housing project myself, and I don’t care who they are or what they are. [Potentially] they are all A students.” In light of this, one BTO school organizes what the principal called a “celebration-motivation program” before the state exams are given—a pep rally with a big banner celebrating the facts that the school is the only high school in the district to make high growth the previous year, cheerleaders, gift items donated by local merchants, and a dance with a DJ. Another BTO school had an extensive program of incentives for students to learn. For example, for passing state assessments, students received free passes to athletic, theater, music, and other school events. And, at several schools, teachers told of using iPods or less expensive prizes as incentives to get low performing students to after school and Saturday sessions.

*Cross-grade Curriculum Articulation.* One might assume that if all teachers follow the standard course of study and pacing guides keyed to it, then articulation of the curriculum across grades would take care of itself. If so, teachers told us, one would be incorrect. As a mathematics teacher explained, “I have done assessments to determine the preparation of students I am getting in Pre-Calc, and I feed that back to the teachers who are sending them to me. Where we are working and where we are not working. This led to conversations about “vertical teaming,” because for example, to get to Advanced Placement courses in the senior year, that starts way back with the teachers in the middle school. The guidance from the standard course of study is not enough. It leaves a lot of room for interpretation and different emphases within it.

*“Stairstep Curricula” and Curricular Re-Sequencing.* The principal of one small BTO school described a “pre-English” course for students who arrived at the high school without having demonstrated proficiency on the 8th grade state Reading examination. “We were doing a disservice to these students by throwing them in with students who had already met that bar.” He also noted the addition of a similar “pre-Algebra” mathematics course and the use of “Progressive Algebra,” a modular mastery-based course. He and other principals of BTO schools explained that the 4x4 block schedule enabled them to work such courses into a student’s course of study without delaying graduation. Intermediate courses permitting students to progress in smaller increments are referred to as “stairstep” courses. Similarly, at a very large urban high school, the principal described working with subject matter teams of teachers to review all of the available data on incoming students. She said the school gets “hundreds of kids who are not ready for high school, kids who slide through the [end of grade 8] gateway.” Students in this category are assigned to a “foundations” course in mathematics, then to Algebra 1a, then Algebra 1b. “We do [something like] this in every single subject.” Before students can take Biology, they get a yearlong course in Earth and Environmental Science that is designed to “get them to love science” through a rich diet of field trips, hands-on activities, visits to museums, and the like. For low-skilled students, History is also split into a two-semester, yearlong course. For students with low but passing scores on the English I test, 10th grade English is a year-long, double-blocked course. To make these

classes small enough to be effective for marginal students (about 20 students), Honors level courses are made larger (about 35 students). BTO schools also rearranged the traditional sequence and timing of courses to improve continuity or match them up better with students' maturity and experience levels. For example, one BTO principal made Civics and Economics a 12th grade subject on the premise that many more 12th graders than 8th graders would have experience with work and managing their own money.

*Smaller Classes for Lower-Performing Students.* It is not only class sizes in "stairstep" courses that BTO schools are reducing sharply. At the highest-performing BTO school, teachers made a point of the small size of classes for "regular" classes: "Our class sizes [for non-Honors classes] are very, very manageable. They are generally 10 to 17 in English I." Another chimed in that she has 32 students in an Honors section of a non-state tested course. Smaller class sizes not only make it easier to teach challenging students, but also serve as an incentive to teach them. One highly qualified teacher at the same school noted that largely because of the smaller size of classes for them, she teaches "regular" classes only.

*Interim or Benchmark Assessments.* As a component of BTO schools' capacity to promote student learning, principals and teachers in several BTO schools preferred to develop their own pacing guides and interim assessments, engendering "higher ownership" and correspondingly more widespread implementation." A teacher in one BTO school described her team's use of results from a common midterm examination in English I. "We went over the questions on the three goals that were lowest. We just didn't worry about cases where just one kid may have missed an item. We used the results on the three goals that all of our kids struggled with and discussed ways that we could re-teach that information."

*Protection of Instructional Time.* Perhaps the most impressive example of protecting instructional time is the meticulous and intensive approach to developing individual student class schedules at one BTO school. Each summer, the principal and assistant principals review every single student's schedule request to assure that it will produce appropriate progress toward graduation and that required courses with presumably heavier demands and electives with lighter ones are balanced across the two semesters. According to the principal, it is "unacceptable" for even one student to be miss-assigned to even one class on the opening day of school. Teachers confirmed his claim. The result is that they can get started teaching the very first day without time lost to reworking faulty schedules. This gets the year under way in a crisp fashion and sends a message that the school is well-organized and means business about teaching and learning from the very first day of school. In addition to this, the principals of several BTO schools forbade any whole school announcements without their explicit approval. They also limited early departure for athletic events to the minimum necessary time. "The coaches know that they are not going to leave 30 or 40 minutes earlier than they really need to."

*Tutoring.* In some BTO schools, district or state funds are used to provide teachers extra pay for tutoring after school and on Saturdays, but in most, such work is simply an assumed part of their regular responsibilities. As a teacher in a large regional BTO school told us, "We find the problem and we keep going after it and after it until they come in. There is no giving up." One BTO school hired back a retired to certified teacher to provide small group remediation to students struggling in Biology. The principal noted that when he arrived at the school, "We were just teaching to the middle

in our classes. We weren't remediating nor were we accelerating." But now, all teachers do tutoring. "That is a requirement and an expectation" for at least one day a week, and teachers are encouraged to go beyond the requirement.

*Incentive Preparation for End of Course Testing.* The principal at one very large urban BTO school described her school-wide plan to involve the entire faculty in preparing students for state examinations. She assembled the faculty and, to make the point that they are all educated people capable of helping in some area, she asked any teacher without a college degree to raise her hand. This was, of course, greeted only by laughter. Then she listed all of the state tested courses on the whiteboard. She told all teachers that they had to sign up to help with one of the courses and asked them to think about which they were most suited for. Then for a 12-day period, she rearranged the schedule to create an extra period in the day when students would meet with their assigned teacher in small groups—small, because now all students who were about to take a state test were distributed across a much larger set of teachers. To assign students to teachers, all students were reviewed individually. She told the students, "These 12 days are going to make you great." The students went nuts. I don't know whether the review really raised the test scores, or the kids finally believed there was hope for them." The teachers got similarly excited "because they got to work with people they never worked with before." Those who do not normally teach state tested courses come to appreciate what the exams are really all about. "The lead teachers prepped them to lead these reviews. They got to see how creative and smart these people are." There was some variation from school to school in which of these incentive practices were implemented, but all of the BTO schools reported implementing a substantial subset of them. Further, it seemed clear that their commitment to the schools' central goal—high student outcomes for all students—led teachers to carry out the practices with determination to assure learning, not simply to implement them in a pro forma manner.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In summary, in BTO high schools, principals had worked actively to cultivate organizational commitment, hold both individual teachers and groups of teachers responsible for learning outcomes, and thus to strengthen the school's ability to withstand the inevitable reverses and disappointments. Enlisting active cooperation from teachers, BTO school principals also effectively recruited, retained, and strengthened their faculties through supervision, professional development, and professional learning communities. Driven by a common commitment to the organization and its goals, and by a combination of administrative and professional accountability, teachers and principals created a disciplined environment for learning and implemented a distinctive set of curricular, instructional, and assessment practices. They did so with an evident determination to assure high levels of learning by all of their students.

In contrast, in low performing high schools studied (Hallinger, 2011; Henry, Fortner, & Thompson, 2010; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010), principals have generally not been as effective in building the same levels of organizational commitment, individual and collective responsibility, and resilience. Morale and reputational problems have made it difficult to recruit, train, and retain faculties of



similar quality. As environments, low performing schools seem to lack the powerful combination of discipline and caring observed in BTO schools. And finally, they have not implemented nearly so fully or forcefully the effective curricular, instructional, and assessment practices observed in BTO schools.

Beating the Odds schools were chosen strategically for their ability to produce high rates of learning with challenging student populations—high percentages of students with low entering reading and math skills, high percentages of students from low income families, and high percentages of students from traditionally disadvantaged ethnic groups. By cultivating the elements of will and capacity outlined above, all eight BTO schools were able to produce high growth for several years in a row. But despite extraordinary leadership, will, and capacity, only one of the eight schools was able to produce a Performance Composite that would entitle it to designation as a School of Distinction or School of Excellence.

One cannot generalize from small samples of schools, nor project beyond the limits of the data actually collected. We cannot say that with less challenging demographics, more of the BTO schools could have produced a better performance composite. But the contrast does suggest that concentrating high percentages of students with low entering skills, students from low income families, and students from traditionally disadvantaged ethnic groups in certain high schools makes it difficult to break through an invisible ceiling on performance.

Performance composites in the 70s are certainly not consistent with the obligation to ensure that all of the state's children have an equal opportunity to get a sound basic education. But neither are the data consistent with the assertion that it is these and other lower performing high schools alone that are failing to make good on that constitutional obligation. The data clearly indicate that the problems in our education system begin earlier and are more widely distributed. As such, future research needs to dig deeper into the root causes of low performance in addition to the subsequent effects.

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## Appendix A: HSRA School Summary Table

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Report:** \_\_\_\_\_

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_

1) Overall Story?	
2) Goal Setting and Communication of Goals?	
3) Coordination of Curriculum?	
4) Supervision and Evaluation of Instruction	
5) Monitoring Student Progress and Providing Incentives for Learning?	
6) Promoting Professional Development and Building Community?	
7) Maintaining Visibility?	
8) Creating Trust?	
9) Protecting Instructional Time?	
10) Providing Incentives for Teachers?	
11) Others?	
12) Specific Variables based on Quan Data?	



**REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN  
PARA LA JUSTICIA SOCIAL**  
**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

## El Liderazgo para la Justicia Social en Organizaciones Educativas

### The Leadership for Social Justice at the Educational Organizations

### Liderança para a Justiça Social nas Organizações Educacionais

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En este artículo se realizan algunas reflexiones y consideraciones en torno a Liderazgo para la Justicia Social en las organizaciones educativas. Se ha elaborado a partir de una revisión bibliográfica de investigaciones y aportaciones teóricas recientes referidas al tema de la Justicia social y del liderazgo orientado a la misma en organizaciones educativas, particularmente centros escolares en los que las facetas curriculares y pedagógicas del ejercicio de tal liderazgo son esenciales. El texto está organizado en una introducción y dos grandes apartados. En la introducción se acota el propósito del artículo y el contenido a abordar en el mismo. El primer apartado incluye una breve explicación sobre la escasa atención que se ha venido prestando a este tema y algunas de las razones que suscitan su interés en la actualidad. En el segundo, más amplio, se ofrece una caracterización, fundamentada en la bibliografía existente, sobre qué cabe entender por liderazgo para la Justicia social cuando nos situamos en contextos escolares, y cuáles son los grandes ejes y pilares a tener en cuenta para desplegarlo.

**Descriptor:** Justicia social, Liderazgo, Organización educativa, Democracia, Comunidad, Diversidad, Curriculum.

In this article some reflections and considerations are made about leadership for Social Justice in educational organizations. It has been written from a revision of theoretical and research literature relating to Social Justice and the Leadership aimed at such justice inside educational organizations, specifically school organizations where it is essential to lead the curricular and pedagogical issues. The text is organized in an introduction and two sections. The introduction limits the purpose of the article and the contents dealt with. The first section includes a short explanation about the scant attention paid to this issue and some of the reasons that currently arouse some interest. In the second larger section, supported on existing literature, a characterization about the leadership for Social Justice at the school context is given; and which are the core ideas and foundations to keep in mind to unfold it.

**Keywords:** Social justice, Leadership, Educational organization, Democracy, Community, Diversity, Curriculum

Este artigo apresenta algumas reflexões e considerações sobre Liderança para a justiça social em organizações educacionais. Uma revisão da literatura de pesquisas recentes e contribuições teóricas relacionadas com a questão da justiça social e orientada para o mesmo em organizações de liderança educacional, particularmente escolas em que os aspectos curriculares e pedagógicos do exercício dessa liderança são essenciais. O texto está organizado em uma introdução e duas seções principais. Na introdução, o objetivo do artigo e o conteúdo a ser abordado no mesmo diz. A primeira seção contém uma breve explicação sobre a pouca atenção tem sido dada a esta questão e algumas das razões para aumentar o seu interesse hoje. No segundo, mais amplo, caracterização, com base na literatura existente sobre o que se entende por liderança para a justiça social quando estamos em contextos escolares, e quais são as principais linhas e colunas a serem considerados para a implantação são oferecidos.

**Palavras-chave:** Justiça Social, Liderança, Organização educacional, Democracia, Comunidade, Diversidade, Currículo.

## Introducción

En las páginas que siguen se recogen algunas reflexiones y consideraciones, acerca del “liderazgo para la Justicia Social”, planteadas en términos generales y a partir de la revisión y consulta de trabajos teóricos y de investigación recientes. En principio y atendiendo al título del artículo, el tema no parece en exceso complejo; sin embargo esa primera impresión se diluye rápidamente pues los conceptos que se combinan en dicho título –justicia social, liderazgo– constituyen, a su vez, ámbitos de reflexión, teorización, investigación y práctica muy amplios, en los que se entrecruzan o coexisten múltiples planteamientos, posturas y perspectivas. Son conceptos, por otra parte, que no solo pertenecen y se utilizan en el ámbito educativo, sino en otros muchos campos (economía, salud, nuevas tecnologías, urbanismo...) adoptando, con frecuencia, matices diferenciadores en cada caso. Incluso dentro de la esfera de la Educación, son muy diversas las contribuciones que se han venido realizando en los últimos años alrededor de ambos tópicos: desde el ámbito de la Justicia Social se han abordado asuntos y cuestiones relacionadas con políticas educativas; la formación del profesorado, de directivos y personas que ejercen liderazgo; el currículo escolar; las estructuras y culturas organizativas, etc. También sobre el Liderazgo las aportaciones teóricas y de investigación son múltiples, ya sea en relación con diferentes planos en los que se despliega – el de las políticas educativas a nivel estatal o de comunidades autónomas, provincias y distritos; el de los centros educativos, equipos docentes, departamentos, aulas – ya en relación con sus diferentes facetas: liderar administrativa o educativamente, liderar lo curricular, las culturas organizativas, las dinámicas de trabajo conjunto y coordinación, etc.

Por otra parte, aportaciones recientes tanto a nivel nacional como internacional sobre dirección de centros educativos y liderazgo que específicamente aluden a “justicia social”, así como otra serie de reflexiones e investigaciones en torno a la exclusión educativa, a estudiantes en riesgo, a la educación y escuela inclusiva, a la voz del alumnado, etc. aportan ideas, referentes y marcos de reflexión, desde los que pensar y articular qué significa hablar de Liderazgo para la Justicia Social.

Abordar con cierto grado de detenimiento y elaboración toda la serie de aspectos, ámbitos y dimensiones que confluyen en torno a esta temática desborda, con mucho, las pretensiones de un artículo como éste. Mi intención no es más que la de ofrecer algunas

reflexiones y consideraciones generales sobre el Liderazgo para la Justicia Social en contextos educativos, más en concreto, en organizaciones escolares cuya responsabilidad es la de proporcionar una buena educación y procurar buenos aprendizajes para todos sus alumnos y alumnas. Aunque desde mi perspectiva un foco clave de atención sobre el que ha de girar un liderazgo para la Justicia Social en las escuelas ha de situarse en el currículo, la enseñanza o la evaluación de los aprendizajes es decir, en lo pedagógico, las reflexiones incluidas en los apartados que siguen también se refieren a diversos aspectos que se entrelazan y se precisan mutuamente para poder focalizar el liderazgo sobre ése núcleo.

El artículo se ha organizado en dos apartados. En el primero, de carácter introductorio, se comentan muy brevemente y a grandes rasgos algunas de las razones por las que el liderazgo para la justicia social en las escuelas no ha constituido un tema de interés destacable entre los teóricos e investigadores de la Organizaciones y la Administración Educativa, al menos hasta años muy recientes. En el segundo, más amplio, se realizan algunas consideraciones en torno a lo que, desde mi perspectiva, constituyen características definitorias del mismo; en concreto se alude a cuatro: 1) Es un liderazgo con un propósito moral; 2) que respeta la diversidad tratando de configurar una “comunidad” democrática; 3) orientado a la transformación de situaciones y dinámicas escolares injustas y 4) con la mirada puesta en la equidad de lo pedagógico y los aprendizajes de los alumnos.

## **1. El liderazgo para la justicia social en la educación como tema de interés reciente**

La justicia social y el liderazgo para la justicia social en la educación son temas que sólo recientemente, en el plano internacional, han adquirido una cierta visibilidad y despertado el interés por parte de teóricos e investigadores (Furman, 2012; Ryan, 2010). Bien es cierto que ello no significa que no existieran experiencias, proyectos innovadores y personas comprometidas con planteamientos y actuaciones encaminadas a hacer de las aulas, de los centros escolares, o de los contextos comunitarios en los que están insertos espacios de defensa y de lucha por la justicia social. Pero si nos situamos en el plano de la reflexión académica y de la investigación, el interés por el tema es, como se acaba de decir, reciente (Soho et al., 2005). Los textos y fechas de publicación con que nos encontramos al realizar una simple búsqueda bibliográfica en Internet, por ejemplo, así lo ponen de manifiesto -prácticamente todas ellas son posteriores al año 2000-. Como bien han señalado Bolívar, López y Murillo (2013) se trata de uno de los pilares de un trípode- formado por el liderazgo pedagógico y para el aprendizaje; el liderazgo distribuido y el liderazgo para la justicia social – muy presente en la reflexión, la investigación y las propuestas tanto de formación como de actuación que se están planteando en la actualidad en relación con este ámbito.

### ***1.1. La escasa atención desde el ámbito de la Organización y Dirección Educativa***

Las razones de la ausencia notable de aportaciones previas sobre el tema habría que buscarla, según Soho y sus colaboradores (2005), en la propia trayectoria que a lo largo del siglo pasado ha seguido la investigación sobre Administración y Organización Educativa. Una trayectoria en la que han predominado enfoques Científico-técnicos inspirados en el paradigma Positivista tanto a la hora de investigar en este ámbito de la

organización y la dirección o administración escolar, como –en el caso norteamericano al que se refieren Soho y sus colaboradores a la hora de formar y seleccionar a administradores/directores escolares. De manera que aunque en los años 80 se estaban sacando a la luz temas y asuntos relacionados con la justicia social en diversos ámbitos, no ocurría así en el de la Administración Educativa, salvo excepciones (por ejemplo, aportaciones realizadas desde la perspectiva Crítica por Bates en 1983, por Foster o por Smyth en 1986, en las que se abogaba por un modelo de administración educativa y de liderazgo centrado en el problema de la justicia y la equidad). Los discursos dominantes en esos años trataban de “buscar una base de conocimiento” enraizado en una separación conceptual entre cuestiones educativas y cuestiones administrativas y en perseguir una ciencia “libre de valor” de la Administración Educativa (Bates 2006:141). Sólo a partir del último cuarto del pasado siglo XX, aportaciones provenientes de los denominados enfoques Interpretativos, de perspectivas que ponían el acento en las éticas de la organización/administración educativa o de otras más críticas cuestionan seriamente los postulados positivistas; aunque no constituyeron un acicate para generar interés en torno a la justicia social sí contribuyeron a que apareciesen en escena planteamientos que “han defendido una orientación de justicia social en la Administración Educativa” (Soho et al., 2005:56).

Las referencias anteriores aportan algunas claves que nos permiten comprender mejor por qué la Justicia Social y el liderazgo en educación no han venido constituyendo un tema de especial atención entre los teóricos e investigadores de las organizaciones escolares y educativas en general. Una muestra de la práctica ausencia en los discursos académicos más dominantes de asuntos ligados a esos temas es, por ejemplo, el silencio sobre el particular en los manuales más al uso de administración, dirección, liderazgo en educación y, en general, en los currículos diseñados para la formación de quienes desempeñan su trabajo en el marco de organizaciones educativas.

### ***1.2. El “despertar” del interés por el liderazgo para la Justicia Social en educación***

Es con la entrada del siglo XXI que la justicia social y el liderazgo para la justicia social comienzan a constituir objeto de atención en el ámbito educativo, si bien buena parte de las aportaciones publicadas al respecto son, hoy por hoy, y en ello concuerdan varios estudiosos del tema, más teóricas que prácticas (Furman, 2012; Jansen, 2006; Ryan, 2010; Shields, 2004; Theoharis, 2007). Algunos de los factores más sobresalientes que influyen en el “despertar” del tema son los siguientes:

#### ***a) Las “nuevas realidades escolares” de los tiempos que vivimos***

Las escuelas, particularmente las públicas, sirven a una población mucho más heterogénea ahora que antes (Philpott, 2012; Rhiel, 2000), estando abocadas a educar eficazmente a un alumnado diverso en términos de raza y etnia, clase social, género, religión, origen nacional y lenguaje nativo, orientación sexual y discapacidad física. Los desafíos y oportunidades que plantea esa creciente diversidad de población en edad escolar es una de las razones aducidas para justificar la relevancia que han ido cobrando recientemente discursos en torno a la justicia social (Furman, 2003, 2012; Furman y Shields, 2003; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Murillo et al., 2010; Shields 2003) en los contextos educativos.

#### ***b) La sucesiva constatación de la brecha económica y de logro existente entre alumnos de minorías y el resto.***



Múltiples estudios e informes, particularmente norteamericanos, han ido constatando esa brecha, y poniendo de manifiesto cómo determinados alumnos (de color, de bajo estatus socio-económico, de grupos étnicos minoritarios, de clases sociales empobrecidas...) obtienen peores resultados académicos, rinden menos en las escuelas, se mantienen expectativas más bajas en relación con sus posibilidades de éxito escolar, no sólo se espera de ellos un rendimiento más bajo, sino que se permite que sea así, etc. en pocas palabras, no son tratados de forma equitativa respecto a los demás (Brown, 2004; Lalas y Morgan, 2006; Ryan, 2006; Shields, 2004).

Esta situación, que acabo de ilustrar echando mano a referencias documentadas en el contexto norteamericano, la encontramos igualmente, ya sea de modo más o menos explícito, en contextos educativos europeos, sudamericanos, australianos o , por no hablar en términos tan amplios, en los centros escolares y prácticas educativas de nuestros entornos más próximos. En cualquier caso, una mayor conciencia de las diferencias en niveles de éxito escolar de unos u otros alumnos y alumnas – con las repercusiones que conlleva para las posibilidades y oportunidades futuras en las trayectorias escolares y de vida de ellos mismos – ha puesto sobre el tapete la pertinencia de abordar el tema desde una perspectiva de Justicia Social cuya agenda en las escuelas –como expresa a modo de resumen Brooks y sus colaboradores (2007)– “tiene que ver con conseguir la equidad y la excelencia en educación para todos los chicos con bagajes raciales, culturales y lingüísticos diversos” (p. 382).

***c) La influencia de aportaciones esclarecedoras sobre el “pensamiento de déficit” que habitualmente impregna a las políticas y programas escolares destinados a cerrar esa brecha (Furman, 2012)***

De hecho, en los últimos años, frente a la tendencia predominante a considerar que las “culpas” del bajo rendimiento y también de otros problemas relacionados como el absentismo, la desafección o desapego escolar , el abandono prematuro, etc., se localizan en las deficiencias o las limitaciones de los propios alumnos, de las comunidades y barrios de los que proceden y en los que viven, o de sus familias, se han ido desarrollando otros planteamientos asentados en evidencias de investigación, que constatan que “los resultados no equitativos suelen derivar de prácticas y políticas organizativas sistémicas (...)” (Marshall y Oliva, 2010:7). Se pone, pues, sobre la mesa el papel que pueden estar desempeñando en los fenómenos de no-equidad las prácticas estructurales e institucionales y las relaciones de poder y, en ese marco, la necesidad de asumir que el propio contexto escolar puede constituir, en sí mismo, un entorno de riesgo. Lo será especialmente para aquellos alumnos y alumnas que por sus características personales y socio- familiares, se encuentren con un currículo y enseñanza academicista, alejado de su propia realidad y experiencia vital -que representará para ellos y ellas una barrera difícil cuando no imposible de franquear- y con un entorno y condiciones organizativas inhóspitas, impersonales, que le brindan escaso apoyo para transitar satisfactoriamente por la escuela (Escudero, 2013; Escudero y González, 2013; González, 2006, 2010, 2011; Zyngier, 2004). Dicho en términos escuetos, el propio centro escolar y lo que ocurre en él, pueden contribuir a la inequidad en el progreso y trayectoria escolar de los estudiantes.

Estas, entre otras, son razones que están en la base de planteamientos sobre el liderazgo para la justicia social, desde los que básicamente se argumenta la importancia de conceder la relevancia que corresponde a esas coordenadas complejas de las escuelas de nuestros días, de dedicar esfuerzos y energías a alterar y transformar creencias, ideas,

modos de funcionar o prácticas que provocan desigualdades injustas- que se podrían evitar- en la vida diaria de los centros educativos y sus aulas; de cultivar contextos y condiciones escolares que posibiliten una educación inclusiva, una buena educación que marque huellas positivas en todos los alumnos proporcionándoles una formación valiosa para una vida significativa ahora y en el futuro, así como buenos resultados, pero también justos y equitativos. En el fondo late el horizonte de una escuela inclusiva, democrática equitativa para todo el alumnado.

## **2. Liderazgo para la justicia social: una caracterización general**

Comentaré en este apartado cuatro grandes rasgos que, desde mi perspectiva, son esenciales a la hora de pensar en un liderazgo para la justicia social en las organizaciones educativas. Los dos primeros, más generales, aluden al carácter moral del mismo y a su necesario papel en construir comunidad (democrática) en la diversidad. Los dos siguientes hacen referencia a su empeño en transformar situaciones educativas injustas en el seno de la organización escolar y, en esas coordenadas, a la importancia de situar lo pedagógico y los aprendizajes de los alumnos como núcleo básico en orden a construir un contexto educativo justo y equitativo.

### ***2.1. Un Liderazgo con un propósito moral***

Es frecuente, como se comentará más adelante, caracterizar al liderazgo para la justicia social atribuyéndole un carácter ético y moral más que técnico. La noción de liderazgo moral, particularmente en el ámbito educativo, empieza a tomar cierto peso en la bibliografía sobre liderazgo a finales de los años 90 del pasado siglo. Como en su momento explicaba Sergiovanni (1992) y más tarde nos recuerda otros (Dantley, 2005; Shapiro y Stefkovich, 2001) surge como modo de cuestionar las visiones en exceso técnicas y gerenciales propiciadas desde los presupuestos de la Gestión Científica. Entre otros argumentos, subraya el hecho de que los líderes educativos se encuentran cotidianamente – en sus escuelas, sus departamentos, equipos, aulas – ante asuntos y problemas no estrictamente “técnicos”, que les exigen hacer frente a paradojas o complejidades y adoptar decisiones éticas. El foco de atención, cuando se habla liderazgo moral, se sitúa tanto en la ética como guía práctica (los cómo) para el desarrollo del liderazgo como en los propósitos morales (los por qué) del mismo (Furman, 2003). Uno de tales propósitos es la Justicia Social (Furman, 2003, 2004; Jean Marie et al., 2009). Shields (2006) es clara al respecto cuando apunta que el liderazgo implica una comprensión del poder

*...el que uno tiene como líder; el conferido por el status social y la posición de acuerdo con las normas y convenciones organizativas; el de actuar para el bien, para apoyar o retar al statu quo, y para mejorar las condiciones y aumentar las oportunidades de todos los miembros en la comunidad. (p. 63).*

La clave, señala la mencionada autora, es usar el poder moralmente hacia un propósito ético, tal como Justicia Social.

Distintas definiciones del liderazgo para la justicia social, hacen una referencia e hincapié explícito en ese rasgo tan crucial como es su carácter moral: Evans, (2007, cit. en Jean Marie et al., 2009:4) habla de líderes que tienen la obligación social y moral de promover prácticas escolares, procesos y resultados equitativos para un alumnado muy diverso;

McKenzie y sus colaboradores (2008:116) se refieren “a líderes que eleven el logro académico de todos los alumnos en su escuela, los preparen para vivir como ciudadanos críticos en la sociedad y estructuren las escuelas para asegurar que aprenden en aulas heterogéneas e inclusivas”; por su parte, Theoharis (2007, 2010) subraya que es un liderazgo centrado en abordar y eliminar la marginación en las escuelas de manera que se erradiquen prácticas que son injustas reemplazándolas por otras más equitativas y culturalmente adecuadas, y en términos similares Dantley y Tilman (2010) sitúan el foco de atención de este liderazgo en buscar soluciones a temas que generan y reproducen desigualdades en las escuelas.

Otras definiciones hacen referencia a los valores que orientan al liderazgo para la justicia social: Kose (2009) alude a valores transformativos de logro académico alto y equitativo, inclusión, afirmación de la diversidad, y responsabilidad social; Shields (2010) por su parte insiste en avanzar hacia “finés de valor” como son aumentar la equidad, animar el respeto a la diferencia y la diversidad, reforzar la democracia profunda, promover el enriquecimiento cultural y el avance del conocimiento, ... y configurar prácticas asentadas en los valores de crítica de las injusticias o inequidades, más que en los de eficacia y eficiencia. Igualmente Hernández-Castilla y sus colaboradores (2013) se refieren a:

*Valores e ideas fuerza vinculadas a la inclusión y promoción de prácticas congruentes con el reconocimiento, la redistribución y la representación: la búsqueda del bien común, el respeto por las culturas de los estudiantes y sus familias, la dignidad de las personas. (p.266).*

La consideración clave de que no existe liderazgo para la justicia social sin un propósito moral que estoy planteando en este apartado queda ilustrada con las referencias señaladas. A partir de ellas se evidencia que al desplegar tal liderazgo en la organización no sólo importan los estilos, las conductas o las actitudes sino, sobre todo, los valores y éticas que sustentarán y se reflejarán en sus prácticas.

## ***2.2. Un Liderazgo en contextos de diversidad con la mirada puesta en lo colectivo y lo diverso, la democracia y la inclusión***

Aludiré en este apartado a varios rasgos del liderazgo para la justicia social que se complementan mutuamente y por tanto habrían de ser cultivados de modo simultáneo en el ejercicio del mismo.

### ***2.2.1. Poner la mirada en lo colectivo y lo diverso***

Las organizaciones educativas, como se ha señalado, se caracterizan en la actualidad por la diversidad (cultural, social, religiosa...) y heterogeneidad de su alumnado. El liderazgo ha de reconocer las múltiples realidades y diversidades que están presentes en ellas, las necesidades de cada individuo y, al tiempo, trabajar con vistas a que el centro educativo funcione como una comunidad. Para precisar esta afirmación tan genérica, conviene hacer una doble precisión:

a) La primera tiene que ver con el hecho de que aunque la noción de la escuela como comunidad, presente en buena parte de las reflexiones más recientes sobre el liderazgo, remite a la idea de una organización articulada en torno a lo “común” y lo “igual”, ello pueden terminar excluyendo, devaluando, o ignorando la heterogeneidad de grupos diversos de alumnos. La comunidad a construir en un proceso de liderazgo orientado a la justicia social habría de girar, más bien, en torno al reconocimiento y respeto por la diferencia como principio sobre el que asentar las relaciones a través de las que se

construye la actividad y funcionamiento cotidiano del centro educativo. En tal sentido, el liderazgo más que perseguir una comunidad homogénea en la que todos comparten, o han de aceptar y asumir las mismas creencias, valores y normas, habría de trabajar por lograr una comunidad de la “diferencia” (Furman, 2002; Shield 2003, 2006, 2010; Shield y Sayani, 2005; Vivert et al., 2002). Desde mi perspectiva, éste es un concepto importante, “pues alude a una comunidad asentada en los principios de inclusión, participación y respeto” (Shield, 2006:73), formada desde y a través de la negociación de valores, creencias y normas diversas e, incluso, discrepantes; en la que se pueden expresar y negociar, en procesos de diálogo, las diferencias, los desacuerdos y conflictos y en la que es factible explorar vías y modos mínimamente compartidos de entender las situaciones con las que nos enfrentamos y cómo deseamos mejorarlas pudiendo, por tanto, acordar y desarrollar metas comunes. Una comunidad de diferencia es, pues, una comunidad fluida y dinámica, que se construye y reconstruye constantemente a partir de las interacciones y relaciones dialógicas de todos los miembros:

*Debemos valorar el mérito (valía) intrínseco de todos los miembros de la comunidad, reunirnos con respeto, implicarnos en el diálogo, formar nuevos modos de entender, descubrir valores compartidos, y crear una comunidad más inclusiva, más justa socialmente en la que todos los niños puedan también tener éxito académicamente.* (Shield, 2003:2).

Es evidente que defender aquí que un proceso de liderazgo para la justicia social ha de ir encaminado a configurar el centro escolar como una comunidad “de diferencia” a la que acabo de referirme, representa un horizonte y un trayecto complejo de alcanzar y recorrer. Pero ello no le resta valor, incluso aunque solo sea un horizonte al que siempre se aspira y nunca se alcanza, porque en él está anidada la posibilidad de que el cómo entendamos la noción de Justicia Social –sobre la cual acordar un sentido de propósito en el centro educativo- y las decisiones que se adopten sobre cómo cultivarla – qué acciones emprender-, se tomen en comunidad y en procesos dialógicos. Es tales coordinadas cobra pleno sentido y es imprescindible del todo el desarrollar un liderazgo distribuido (Bolívar, 2012 González, 2011a, Murillo, 2006) en y a través de la comunidad escolar.

b) La segunda precisión, hace referencia a que en ningún caso se está pensando aquí en el centro educativo como una comunidad aislada del entorno y ajena a lo que ocurre en su contexto local y comunitario. Al contrario, se trata de que los límites entre la escuela como comunidad y la escuela en comunidad se hagan porosos y se difuminen. La comunidad local ha de estar implicada y participar en procesos de toma de decisión substantivos en el centro educativo, entre otras razones porque ello abre vías para que las experiencias de vida de cada alumno/a, que de por sí son diversas, se incorporen a la escuela, al entramado de lo que los estudiantes aprenden y cómo llegan a comprenderse a sí mismos y a los demás (Shields, 2003). De modo que un puntal importante del liderazgo al que se está aludiendo se sitúa en reconocer y valorar la experiencia de vida de los estudiantes, la necesidad de incorporarla a las situaciones de aprendizaje así como la importancia de que los propios miembros de la comunidad estén presentes en las actividades de la escuela, bien porque están representadas sus expectativas y experiencias, bien porque se implican directa y físicamente en tales actividades.

Como comentaré más adelante, ello requiere procesos de liderazgo orientado a hacer del centro escolar una comunidad en la que alumnos, familias y otros miembros del entorno participan, indagan, dialogan, llegan a acuerdos para ofrecer un currículo más cercano a

la vida y experiencia cultural, social y vital del alumnado; un liderazgo no solo interesado por el bien de cada individuo sino por el bien común de todos ellos.

### ***2.2.2. Cultivar la participación auténtica y ser inclusivo***

Las dos consideraciones que acabo de realizar, constituyen el telón de fondo y justifican otro elemento clave y complementario del tema que nos ocupa: Desplegar liderazgo con la mirada puesta en que el centro educativo funcione como comunidad, y en constante interacción con su entorno más próximo, conlleva movilizar procesos democráticos y participativos en él.

Justicia social y comunidad democrática, en ese sentido, están estrechamente interrelacionados: es en el marco de procesos de indagación y crítica abierta en los que participen todos los miembros de la comunidad educativa, donde se acordará qué significados le atribuimos a “justicia social” y se decidirá qué acciones llevar a cabo para trabajar en pos de ella (Furman, 2004). En tal sentido, podríamos decir que para liderar para la Justicia social es necesario articular y facilitar los correspondientes mecanismos, espacios y oportunidades para la participación. Pero no sólo se trata de posibilitar el que se participe, también importa sobre qué asuntos y cuestiones. Por eso hay que decir también que la participación tiene que ser “auténtica”. Escudero (2006) lo expresó claramente al señalar que

*...puede haber, y de hecho las hay, formas huecas y contenidos irrelevantes de participación, por parte del profesorado o de otros actores, en las que no se propicie la reflexión ni se sustente un currículo democrático. Incluso puede haber prácticas de participación que armen y justifiquen una educación selectiva y discriminatoria, donde las voces que se pronuncien y los acuerdos que se tomen no tengan como objeto la defensa del bien común de la educación, sino la consagración de fórmulas, contenidos y resultados escolares y educativos alineados con decisiones individuales, libres de trabas, al servicio de intereses de grupos sociales o corporativos, quizás de individuos particulares. (p.12).*

En una línea similar, y como muestra de que nos movemos en un campo en el que los planteamientos en ocasiones están próximos y poco diferenciados – aunque se utilicen términos diferentes para explicitarlos–, algunos hablan de un liderazgo inclusivo. Inclusión y Justicia Social no están desligados (Murillo et al., 2010), como tampoco lo está inclusión y democracia (Ryan, 2006) y su conexión se mantiene en los procesos de liderazgo para la justicia social. Éstos, como ya he señalado antes, no se agotan en cultivar espacios y articular procesos democráticos de participación auténtica, sino que también se encaminan a construir prácticas más inclusivas dentro de las escuelas, como vía para contribuir a abordar cuestiones de marginación y de justicia social.

Conviene realizar, no obstante, alguna matización en lo que respecta a la equiparación que se realiza con frecuencia entre liderazgo inclusivo y liderazgo para la justicia social, pues el término “inclusivo” se ha terminado convirtiendo en un concepto paraguas bajo el cual se recogen prácticas educativas y también liderazgos de diverso signo. En su momento Parrilla (2007, citado en Echeíta, 2013) ya advertía de prácticas educativas calificadas como inclusivas que, sin embargo, no hacen más que perpetuar el estatus quo del sistema y abrir nuevas puertas a la marginación... y en términos similares se pronuncia Sapon-Sheive (2013) al apuntar que con definiciones restrictivas de inclusión no se “crea un sistema educativo realmente inclusivo para todos” (p.72) y se desdibuja, por decirlo de algún modo, la conexión entre aquella y la justicia social. Sobre el tema insisten Capper y Young (2014) cuando reconocen que la noción de inclusión que se maneja frecuentemente en el discurso (norteamericano) de la Justicia social se

circunscribe a alumnos con “discapacidades” o con “necesidades educativas especiales”, dejando fuera a otros (los lingüísticamente diversos, de familias de bajos ingresos, de color, con diferentes orientaciones sexuales, idiomas, religión, etc.); ambos autores tachan de ironía el que exista un cuerpo de investigación que muestra los beneficios de integrar a todos los estudiantes y, al mismo tiempo, se perpetúen prácticas escolares segregadoras y advierten sobre el uso de conceptos como “inclusión” que en ocasiones se utilizan como meras etiquetas para calificar prácticas de liderazgo para la justicia social que, no son auténtica y plenamente inclusivas: “la bibliografía sobre la Inclusión/integración y la práctica puede, irónicamente, excluir a alumnos, sin que ello se cuestione desde el liderazgo para la justicia social” (p.159).

No podríamos en ese sentido, calificar de liderazgo para la justicia social a aquel que perpetúa prácticas escolares segregadoras, consiente o justifica que algunos queden excluidos, y, en última instancia no cuestiona el statu quo educativo existente, con sus correspondientes prácticas y modos de hacer.

Finalmente, las dos características del liderazgo para la Justicia Social a las que acabo de aludir - inclusivo y democrático- ponen sobre la mesa la relevancia de desencadenar procesos democráticos de indagación abierta y crítica orientados por los propósitos morales de la justicia social en los que necesariamente habrán de tomar parte los miembros de la comunidad, pues todos ellos tienen concepciones acerca de la justicia social y cómo avanzar hacia ella. Desde esta perspectiva se desdibuja, en cierto modo, una concepción individualista y jerárquica del liderazgo y se perfila otra, más horizontal y distribuida según la cual aquel se asentaría en la implicación de docentes, alumnado, y otros miembros de la comunidad escolar en definir, acordar y poner en práctica una visión de justicia social que sea adecuada y significativa para el centro educativo y su entorno en un momento y circunstancias determinadas. Una visión de la justicia social, por tanto, “no estática e inamovible” (Bogotch, 2002:146-147) ni dependiente de un único “líder”. En definitiva, se trata de dar vida, entre todos, a los principios que abogan por los derechos y la responsabilidad de los individuos que, formando parte de contextos de diversidad, han de perseguir el bien común, no exclusivamente su auto-interés individual propio.

### ***2.3. Un liderazgo para la reflexión crítica y transformación de situaciones y dinámicas escolares injustas***

La noción de Liderazgo está estrechamente ligada a la de cambio: Habitualmente con ella se alude a procesos de influencia y movilización de personas alrededor de una determinada idea, visión, de qué centro educativo y qué formación para los estudiantes con vistas al cambio y la mejora. Al situarnos en el ámbito de la Justicia Social se insiste igualmente en un liderazgo que está orientado hacia el cambio o transformación de aquellas condiciones, situaciones, relaciones sociales y prácticas educativas que generan situaciones injustas.

Desafiar las estructuras y culturas institucionales dominantes y emprender cambios basados-en-la-equidad que las transformen, requiere desencadenar previamente procesos de indagación crítica y toma de conciencia sobre las prácticas, estructuras, normas y creencias dadas por sentado y, en general sobre las condiciones que nutren situaciones no-equitativas (Cambrom-McCabe y Mc Carthy, 2005; Capper et al., 2006; Jean Marie et al., 2009). Ya en los años 80 del pasado siglo teóricos como Bates (1983) y Foster (1986, 1989) avanzaron, esa noción de que el liderazgo, “es y debe ser socialmente crítico, no

reside en un individuo sino en las relaciones entre individuos, y está orientado hacia visiones sociales y cambio, no simplemente o sólo a metas organizativas” (Foster, 1986:46).

El epígrafe que encabeza este apartado refleja esa idea: la reflexión crítica ha de ir acompañada de acción y viceversa. Ambas facetas se necesitan mutuamente pues, como bien advierte Furman (2012), el conocimiento y la reflexión sin acción no tienen valor, es simplemente palabrería, y la acción sin reflexión y conocimiento es activismo uniformado.

En el centro educativo ese proceso de reflexión-acción habrá de estar focalizado en aspectos y asuntos nucleares al funcionamiento educativo del centro escolar, tales como:

a) Los alumnos y alumnas que recibe y con los que va a trabajar el centro: quiénes son, cuáles son sus circunstancias, características sociales, culturales, trayectorias escolares, rendimiento y disparidades de rendimientos, qué complejidades y dificultades llevan consigo etc. Ése es un primer peldaño para tomar conciencia de las complejidades y dificultades que traen los estudiantes consigo, de la pertinencia de considerarlas “no tanto como déficits a superar, destruir o eliminar cuanto como asuntos a ser abordados” (Smyth, 2006:17), y de la necesidad de asegurar que la educación ofertada en el centro se adecua y ajusta para todos ellos.

b) Es, además, un conocimiento imprescindible para emprender y afrontar el análisis y reflexión crítica sobre otros dos aspectos básicos como son el currículo ofertado y las dinámicas de funcionamiento educativo en el centro. Interrogarse sobre el currículo que se está ofertando y desarrollando contribuirá a poner sobre la mesa y analizar, en su caso cuestionar, en qué medida se ajusta o no a las necesidades y características de los estudiantes y está siendo beneficioso y provechoso para todos ellos, o en qué grado el currículo está representando para algunos alumnos –cuya cultura socio-familiar y experiencia vital está alejada de la cultura escolar–, una barrera que los silencia, los margina y los pone en riesgo de fracaso y exclusión.

Estrechamente conectado con ese plano de lo curricular en términos amplios, otro foco, más concreto, es el relativo al funcionamiento educativo cotidiano en el centro y las aulas. Una cuestión básica y relevante a plantear y sobre la que reflexionar es ¿Cómo o en qué medida este centro educativo está funcionando para todos los alumnos y alumnas que recibe, particularmente para aquellos que están más en desventaja?, cuestión al hilo de la cual cabe formular muchas otras como: ¿Son los aprendizajes alcanzados por los alumnos equitativos en todos los grupos?, ¿Quién se beneficia, está incluido, se privilegia y quién está más en desventaja, es excluido, marginado?, ¿A quién se escucha?, ¿Cómo sabemos lo que ocurre y qué información y evidencias estamos utilizando para tomar decisiones?, etc.

Las dinámicas de análisis y reflexión crítica que permitirían responder a los anteriores u otros interrogantes y la utilización de las respuestas como acicate para sacar a la luz y cuestionar las bases más profundas –no siempre visibles ni conscientes– de las prácticas habituales en el centro educativo, exigen necesariamente disponer de una visión o concepción amplia de lo que constituye una escuela para la justicia social.

Shields (2003, 2004), Furman y Shileds (2003, 2005) o Vivert y Shield (2003) basándose en un trabajo de 1995 de Kincheloe y Steimberg, apuntan cuatro criterios que pueden

servir para orientar esa exploración y análisis crítico. Aluden a una escuela que sea justa, optimista, empática y democrática. Se sintetizan en la tabla 1.

Tabla 1. Criterios para analizar críticamente el funcionamiento educativo del centro escolar

<b>JUSTICIA</b>
Una escuela y una educación que: Garantiza el acceso de todos a los servicios educativos, poniendo a disposición del conjunto de alumnos programas que satisfagan sus necesidades académicas, sociales y culturales..., dando a todos acceso al currículo a través de la inclusión de sus experiencias de vida. No opera sobre supuestos y prácticas que <i>patologizan las experiencias vividas o las capacidades de grupos específicos</i> que terminan excluyendo o marginando a alumnos por razones de género, etnia, raza,...
Equipa a todos para enfrentarse con vidas exitosas, productivas, plenas fuera de la escuela; Ofrece a todos programas retadores desde el punto de vista académico que les lleven a educación superior o al trabajo deseado; asegura la sostenibilidad equitativa, que las tasas de abandono y finalización de alumnos de diversos grupos (pobres, de etnias, familia mono-parental...) sean comparables.
<b>OPTIMISMO</b>
Una escuela y una educación que: Asegura que todos los alumnos logren resultados que permitan acceso educativo a oportunidades educativas futuras. Atiende y presta atención a quienes son menos exitosos, a los más marginados, y los que están más en desventaja para asegurar un éxito académico sin el cual para ellos se cerrarán las puertas y se constreñirán las oportunidades. Aumenta las opciones de vida y posibilidades de todos los alumnos, no sólo de los que ya llegan a la escuela con ventajas sociales y culturales.
<b>EMPATÍA</b>
Una escuela y una educación que: No se focaliza únicamente en lo académico. Atiende a los estudiantes como personas globales, en sus múltiples facetas (intelectuales, físicas, sociales, emocionales...). Asentada firmemente en relaciones pedagógicas e interpersonales positivas y de cuidado.
<b>DEMOCRACIA</b>
Una escuela y una educación en la que: Se anima y cultiva la participación en procesos democráticos, ofreciendo a todos aquellos afectados por las decisiones educativas oportunidades y ocasiones para participar en los procesos de toma de decisión Se enseña a participar, se asegura que todos se sientan cómodos, dándoles poder para que se sientan competentes y capaces. Se participa democráticamente en el aprendizaje ( procesos de enseñanza no transmisivos y pasivos) empoderando a los alumnos para participar y responsabilizarse de su aprendizaje. Se enseña y apoya a los alumnos cuando participan en procesos democráticos en la escuela y se les prepara para la participación continua y democrática en la sociedad más amplia.

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Son cuatro aspectos a tener en cuenta para guiar y orientar procesos de liderazgo para la Justicia Social, pues a partir de ellos se pueden valorar los planteamientos y prácticas existentes en el centro escolar y los caminos a emprender para transformarlas, así como los progresos que se van haciendo hacia la construcción de esa escuela socialmente justa que se pretende. Constituyen, igualmente, criterios con respecto a los cuales juzgar el éxito de un programa o, también, un marco para iniciar y desarrollar un necesario trabajo de coordinación y diálogo profesional entre docentes que les ayude a comprender en qué medida y cómo con sus actuaciones están inhibiendo o animando los aprendizajes y el éxito de sus alumnos bien, en el primer caso porque los marginan o silencian, bien, en el segundo, porque los escuchan, los respetan y les dan voz en ámbitos y facetas significativas de su educación.



La reflexión y análisis crítico que exige cualquier proceso de liderazgo para la justicia social, puede llevarse a cabo echando mano de otros procedimientos e instrumentos. Por ejemplo, Skrla y sus colaboradores (2010) han desarrollado lo que denominan “audits de equidad” como herramienta que puede servir para “facilitar la utilización y promover el conocimiento sobre, la discusión de y una respuesta substantiva a patrones sistémicos de inequidad en las escuelas” (p.265). Dicho instrumento está constituido por 12 indicadores agrupados en tres categorías de dimensiones (equidad de la calidad del profesorado; equidad de los programas y equidad de logro).

*El proceso de utilización sugerido, en términos similares a lo ya comentado antes, se despliega en diversas fases a lo largo de las cuales se recoge información, se sistematiza, discute y analiza abiertamente, se exploran soluciones potenciales y los puntos fuertes, debilidades y costes de las mismas seleccionado alguna de ellas; se ponen en práctica, se evalúan e informa sobre su desarrollo. (Skrla et al., 2010:274-275).*

Interrogar y analizar desde criterios de justicia social y de educación socialmente justa lo que está ocurriendo, es una vía privilegiada para tomar conciencia de la situación y de la necesidad de transformarla. Igualmente relevante, como reconocen prácticamente todos los teóricos e investigadores en este ámbito, es que a nivel individual, quienes ejerzan liderazgo se impliquen también en procesos de auto-reflexión sobre sus propios valores, supuestos, creencias, sesgos y prácticas. Se trata de un aspecto básico si, como señalé al inicio de este apartado, asumimos que el liderazgo para la justicia escolar es una *praxis* y que, como afirma Furman (2012) la interacción entre adquisición de conocimiento, reflexión y acción ha de producirse

*...a dos niveles- el intrapersonal y el extrapersonal- con el propósito de transformación y liberación. A nivel intrapersonal, la praxis implica auto-conocimiento, auto-reflexión crítica y actuar para transformarse uno mismo como líder para la justicia social. A nivel extrapersonal, la praxis conlleva conocer y comprender temas de justicia social sistémica, reflexionar sobre esos temas y emprender acción para abordarlos. (p. 203).*

En síntesis, y a grandes rasgos, una dimensión clave en el ejercicio del liderazgo para la justicia social es la de trabajar en el centro educativo con y para que las personas que constituyen la comunidad escolar reconozcan, analicen críticamente y tomen conciencia de esa realidad en la que están inmersos –patrones de privilegio, prácticas excluyentes, discriminaciones, y, en general, condiciones organizativas y prácticas educativas éticamente censurables–, exploren juntos y en contextos democráticos caminos y vías alternativas para transformarla y trabajen conjuntamente para cambiarla. No es una faceta sencilla, y desde luego, es más fácil formularla sobre el papel que desarrollarla en la práctica cotidiana. Algunos trabajos y estudios recientes (Broks et al., 2007; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2007; Mafora, 2013) se hacen eco de esa imagen de líderes que trabajan con continuidad, persistencia, coraje moral y que están comprometidos continuamente con promover transformaciones substantivas en sus centros escolares en la línea que se viene comentando, pero también, de las dificultades y resistencias múltiples a las que ha de hacer frente este liderazgo.

#### ***2.4. Un liderazgo que no ignora la importancia de lo pedagógico y de mejorar los aprendizajes de alumnos***

Ejercer liderazgo orientado por los propósitos morales a los que ya se ha hecho referencia anteriormente, que empuje al centro educativo hacia modos de organizarse y relacionarse socialmente más justos y que vaya configurándose y funcionando en lo cotidiano como una comunidad de diferencia y democrática es crucial en un enfoque de justicia social. No obstante, todo ello tiene o debe tener implicaciones en lo educativo, en

la enseñanza y en los aprendizajes de los alumnos: En última instancia, éste es el núcleo y razón de ser de los centros escolares. Es por ello que en este último apartado, plantearé que hablar y defender la justicia social en las organizaciones educativas pasa necesariamente por cultivar y proteger en ellas una educación socialmente justa y, por tanto, por prestar atención a las implicaciones pedagógicas de los aspectos que se han comentado en apartados previos.

No siempre lo pedagógico se ha puesto en el primer plano –ni por los investigadores y teóricos del liderazgo en las organizaciones escolares en general, ni por los que específicamente han focalizado su interés en el liderazgo para la justicia social–; entre las múltiples razones que se han aducido para explicar que “lo educativo” haya ocupado un segundo plano, una de ellas es la influencia de otros campos de conocimiento, particularmente el empresarial, con sus discursos “ajenos e inapropiados, que no tienen cabida en las escuelas y tienen poco o nada que hacer en lo que respecta a las actividades nucleares de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje, pudiendo incluso ser profundamente perjudiciales para ellos” (Smyth, 2005:7). “Lo educativo”, los procesos curriculares, de enseñanza en las aulas, los ambientes de aprendizaje, o la evaluación no ha sido objeto de atención prioritaria, aunque como ya he señalado la naturaleza de la Justicia Social en las escuelas está estrechamente ligada e influida por el currículo, lo que se enseña y cómo a los estudiantes. Furman y Shields (2005) ilustran esa “influencia crítica” cuando advierten de que:

*... las injusticias se despliegan en las relaciones individuales pero también sistemáticamente, en políticas que asumen que cualquier enfoque simple de currículo, programación, distribución de recursos, rendición de cuentas es adecuado para todos los alumnos. La injusticia está presente diariamente cuando los docentes se centran tan rígidamente en el currículo formal, prescrito, que no se dan cuenta de las barreras que supone para muchos estudiantes atravesar el currículo oculto. La injusticia ocurre cuando no hay espacio creado al que los alumnos puedan traer sus experiencias vividas, sus interrogantes sobre el mundo, cuando algunas voces se silencian y otras se privilegian. Las injusticias se despliegan cuando actitudes de docentes o de políticos mantienen un pensamiento de déficit subyacente según el cual algunos alumnos, por sus características culturales, étnicas de clase... serán menos capaces de aprender que otros. (Furman y Shields, 2003:17).*

Un liderazgo para la Justicia Social ha de propiciar, amparar y facilitar mejoras pedagógicas relevantes en orden a transformar situaciones como las indicadas y propiciar una buena educación, justa, equitativa, que garantice buenos aprendizajes a todo su alumnado. Ello constituye un eje central sobre el que articular el liderazgo. El análisis y la reflexión crítica –a la que me referí en el apartado anterior– sobre lo que está ocurriendo en el centro y en sus aulas, las prácticas en las que se está inmerso y los valores que apuntalan las actuaciones en el centro educativo y con la comunidad, ha de ir acompañada de la búsqueda y concertación de vías de mejora y transformación en el marco de metas y prioridades conjuntamente acordadas, que les den sentido. Kose (2009) por ejemplo insiste en la importancia de visualizar o imaginar, en procesos de liderazgo, de qué manera o en qué sentido la educación puede servir como medio para avanzar hacia una sociedad más democrática y socialmente justa o –en términos similares a los comúnmente utilizados en la bibliografía sobre liderazgo y dirección educativa en los últimos años– Capper y sus colaboradores (2000) subrayaron la importancia de construir y asumir una visión colectiva transformadora, que oriente esfuerzos de mejora escolar equitativa e inclusiva.

El tema es complejo y controvertido pues quienes investigan y trabajan en este ámbito de la Justicia social sostienen planteamientos diversos acerca del currículo y enseñanza

que ofrecen las escuelas y los aprendizajes de los estudiantes. Algunos mantienen posturas más o menos críticas sobre el particular, denunciando el carácter academicista del currículo oficial que formalmente han de cursar los alumnos, o llamando la atención sobre la importancia prestada a lo académico frente a otras facetas formativas también imprescindibles relativas a lo emocional, las habilidades sociales, la conciencia cultural, etc. Otros cuestionan seriamente la pertinencia de un currículo que suele estar alejado de la vida y el mundo de un alumnado, con frecuencia, muy diverso.

En consonancia, también es diferente el posicionamiento respecto de hasta qué punto es valioso e importante alcanzar los aprendizajes y los logros establecidos en el currículum formal. Por una parte, reflexiones teóricas e investigaciones insisten en que la meta nuclear de una escuela socialmente justa es alcanzar buenos logros por parte de todos los alumnos (McKenzie et al., 2008) y que el núcleo del liderazgo para la justicia social es promover las mejoras necesarias para elevar los de aquellos más marginados (Theoharis, 2007, 2010). Por otra, se plantea que una escuela socialmente justa exige un liderazgo que cuestione críticamente los aprendizajes académicos delimitados y exigidos de antemano en los currículos oficiales con su correspondiente énfasis en contenidos inapropiados y desarrollen, desde el análisis crítico, alternativas más ligadas a las experiencias, las vidas y las culturas de los estudiantes (Portelli y McMahon, 2004; Vibert y Shields, 2003).

Decantarse por una u otra postura y planteamiento en el centro escolar tendrá, necesariamente, repercusiones en los modos de desplegar procesos de liderazgo para la justicia social. En todo caso, no se puede pasar por alto que la esencia y procesos nucleares de un centro educativo giran alrededor del currículum, la enseñanza y la evaluación; es ése el trípode sobre el que se articula el trabajo que se desarrolla en él, la actividad que realizan los docentes y el foco de lo que ocurre en las aulas. Un propósito importante –casi podría decirse, la razón de ser del centro escolar– es lograr buenos aprendizajes para todos los alumnos y eso debería tener un peso importante en los procesos de liderazgo pedagógico y orientados a una escuela socialmente más justa. El siguiente comentario de Capper y Young (2014) ilustra esta cuestión tan crucial en el ejercicio del liderazgo que estamos comentando:

*Los educadores para la justicia social deberían considerar que la meta primaria de su trabajo es la de incrementar el aprendizaje y logro de los alumnos. Uno puede debatir cómo se mide mejor el aprendizaje, que las ganancias en aprendizaje representan sólo una faceta del bienestar del alumno y que la práctica del liderazgo ha de estar ligada a la transformación de la comunidad; pero al final, si un niño no puede leer, escribir, comunicarse y contar a nivel del grado o más, las probabilidades educativas y de vida de ese niño disminuyen seriamente. (p.163).*

Un liderazgo desplegado en contextos y situaciones en los que la Justicia Social es el horizonte no puede ignorar la importancia crucial de la formación académica desarrollada con el alumnado en el conjunto del centro y en las aulas. Que el liderazgo para la justicia social se proponga hacer del centro, como se comentó en apartados previos, una comunidad de aprendizaje democrática y socialmente justa, no significa que haya de renunciar al propósito de alcanzar un buen desarrollo académico e intelectual entre su alumnado: No son metas necesariamente opuestas (Furman y Shields, 2003). Lo académico ha de ocupar un primer plano en los procesos de liderazgo para la Justicia social. El argumento de Shields (2003) es contundente a este respecto: “Si las escuelas no proporcionan la educación que ayuda a las personas a cambiar sus circunstancias de vida y que ofrece esperanza para un futuro mejor, ¿Qué institución llenará ese vacío?” (p.60).

Ello, desde luego, no significa dar por buenos, incuestionables e inamovibles los aprendizajes formalmente prescritos en los curricula oficiales.

La relevancia de esta dimensión pedagógica del liderazgo en las organizaciones educativas es patente en la bibliografía más reciente sobre líderes escolares exitosos y prácticas de liderazgo que influyen en el aprendizaje de los alumnos (Bolívar, 2012; González, 2013). No es infrecuente que se aluda a prácticas de liderazgo en contextos educativos con alumnado muy diverso y en entornos desfavorecidos, que promueven la calidad de la escuela y la Justicia Social. Por ejemplo, Leithwood y Rielh (2005:24) destacan en base a evidencias de investigación, cuatro conjuntos de prácticas de liderazgo exitosas en contextos escolares como los indicados:

- La promoción de formas poderosas y adecuadas de enseñanza y aprendizaje,
- La creación de comunidades en la escuela,
- La atención al desarrollo de las culturas educativas de las familias y
- La expansión de la proporción de capital social de los alumnos que valora la escuela.

El primer conjunto de tareas, que es el que más interesa resaltar aquí, abarca aspectos como el énfasis puesto en que el profesorado mantenga expectativas altas sobre todos los alumnos y desarrolle, en consecuencia, metas de aprendizaje ambiciosas para todos ellos; el prestar atención a la distribución del alumnado en los grupos y posibilidades de reducir el tamaño de éstos en los cursos iniciales; el mantener agrupamientos heterogéneos, desarrollar un currículo rico, no reducido únicamente a habilidades y conocimientos básicos, que tenga significado para el alumnado y desplegarlo a través de las convenientes estrategias de enseñanza, cuidar la coherencia y coordinación del programa, etc.

En cierto modo, tales prácticas no son sino una muestra de que focalizarse y cuidar lo pedagógico no significa mirar exclusivamente a los aprendizajes académicos olvidando otras facetas del aprendizaje y desarrollo de los alumnos, como tampoco significa dar por bueno, sin más, el currículo oficial y formal prescrito para las escuelas. En términos similares, Murillo y Hernández-Castilla (2011) al caracterizar la actuación de equipos directivos que fomentan y logran una escuela que trabaje en y para la Justicia Social, aluden a prácticas como:

- Desarrollar una visión de la escuela centrada en la Justicia Social;
- Potenciar una cultura escolar en y para la Justicia Social;
- Trabajar para el desarrollo de las personas;
- Priorizar la mejora de los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje;
- Potenciar la creación de comunidades profesionales de aprendizaje
- Promover la colaboración entre la escuela y la familia, potenciando el desarrollo de culturas educativas en las familias, y
- Expandir el capital social de los estudiantes valorizado por las escuelas.

Otras aportaciones, realizadas desde perspectivas más críticas y socio-críticas sobre la justicia social y cómo luchar por ella en las escuelas y comunidades podrán un acento más acusado en la necesidad de cuestionar y transformar situaciones de injusticia propiciadas por el propio diseño curricular, las condiciones organizativas (por ejemplo, horarios rígidos, agrupamientos homogéneos y segregación del alumnado, itinerarios...)

y la enseñanza desplegada en las aulas. Se insistirá en la importancia de procesos de liderazgo que contribuyan, entre otros aspectos, a que en el centro educativo:

- Se reflexione y analice críticamente acerca del planteamiento curricular existente y se tome conciencia explícita de los componentes morales e ideológicos en los que se asienta el que se oferta en el centro.
- Se dialogue, clarifique y asuma una concepción dinámica, rica, no estática ni rígida de entender el aprendizaje académico y el “éxito” escolar.
- Se desarrolle un currículo asentado y próximo a las experiencias, vidas y culturas de los estudiantes, que preste atención a las influencias culturales, socio-familiares y locales en las trayectorias vitales de éstos y que se materialice en una pedagogía forjada “con” –no “para”– los alumnos (Furman y Shield, 2003; Smyth et al., 2008).

Como en apartados anteriores de este artículo, tampoco se entrará aquí a desarrollar con detalle esta faceta del liderazgo para la Justicia Social y los múltiples aspectos que involucra: el currículo, la enseñanza, las relaciones educativas y sociales en el centro educativo, el desarrollo profesional de los docentes en su seno, la evaluación de los aprendizajes, las relaciones con las familias y el entorno, etc.

En cualquier caso conviene insistir en que si desde una perspectiva de Justicia Social el liderazgo se asienta en procesos de análisis y reflexión crítica, en el caso de las organizaciones escolares es fundamental que tales procesos se realicen sobre el currículo y la enseñanza. En definitiva, se precisan procesos de liderazgo con la mirada puesta en ofrecer un currículo más próximo y basado en las vidas de los alumnos, sin renunciar a que sea académicamente riguroso, socialmente valioso y capaz de proporcionar aprendizajes necesarios para un futuro esperanzador y digno. Sobre un escenario tal, caben múltiples actuaciones y procesos de liderazgo orientados a crear las condiciones pedagógicas y organizativas en el centro, en las aulas, con las familias... bajo las cuales todos los alumnos y alumnas puedan aprender y formarse, académicamente y, también, como buenos ciudadanos.

### **3. Consideraciones finales**

En contextos escolares como los actuales, junto con una creciente diversidad, coexisten metas múltiples y conflictivas, realidades cambiantes, y perspectivas alternativas sobre los propósitos y metas de la educación. Son contextos que no siempre son justos y equitativos, pudiendo operar como entornos de riesgo que terminan siendo excluyentes para ciertos alumnos/as. Esta es una realidad que no siempre es visible explícitamente, y no es inusual que se silencie. Sin embargo, no se debería tomar como periférica ni como irrelevante, sobre todo si lo que se pretende es –como con tanta frecuencia se declara en los actuales discursos y declaraciones formales de las políticas educativas– ofrecer una buena educación, aprendizajes valiosos y oportunidades para una vida digna para todo el alumnado.

Es en estas coordenadas en las que cobra pleno sentido el liderazgo para la justicia social. A lo largo de los apartados anteriores se han desgranado algunos elementos básicos de tal liderazgo, y se ha ofrecido algunas consideraciones generales sobre el mismo. Los procesos de liderazgo son siempre complejos pues a ellos va ligada la posibilidad de que una determinada organización (educativa) se mueva y camine por

derroteros anteriormente no transitados, emprenda actuaciones con nuevos sentidos y significados que puedan llevarla hacia una mejora y transformación. Un criterio esencial y un imperativo ético sobre el que asentar tales cambios es, sin duda, el de la equidad. A lo largo del texto se ha insistido en que los procesos de liderazgo cobran su auténtico sentido cuando están claros los referentes, valores y principios que los orientan. Cuando hablamos de un liderazgo para la justicia social, éstos no son sino los de equidad, igualdad, participación, inclusión, educación buena para todos los alumnos.

La panorámica presentada en este artículo nos sitúa ante un escenario enormemente complejo, en el que hay que tocar muchos resortes, abrirse a muchas voces y perspectivas, impulsar dinámicas dialógicas constantes, participación y democracia, adentrarse en las facetas educativas, pedagógicas, curriculares y cómo plantearlas y abordarlas en contextos en lo que la diversidad está al orden del día, etc. Procesos complejos de liderazgo que es necesario desplegar en los centros educativos y que han de ocupar un lugar preeminente en ellos. En todo caso, y aunque no se ha abordado en las páginas anteriores de una manera explícita, conviene advertir que el empuje y los pasos hacia centros educativos socialmente más justos no dependen única y exclusivamente de lo que se sea capaz de liderar en ellos. La justicia social se juega en lo que se haga dentro de las propias organizaciones educativas pero nunca al margen de lo que ocurre fuera de ellas, tanto en las comunidades de las que forman parte como –en un plano más amplio– en las políticas (educativas, económicas, laborales, sociales...) que la propician o dificultan.

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## **Dimensions of Social Justice Leadership: A Critical Review of Actions, Challenges, Dilemmas, and Opportunities for the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in U.S. Schools**

## **Dimensiones del Liderazgo para la Justicia Social: Una Revisión Crítica de las Acciones, Desafíos, Dilemas y Oportunidades para la Inclusión de los Alumnos con Discapacidad en las Escuelas de Estados Unidos**

## **Dimensões da Liderança para a Justiça Social: Uma Revisão Crítica das Ações, Desafios, Dilemas, e Oportunidades para a Inclusão de Alunos com Deficiência em Escolas de Estados Unidos**

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Empirical research has described how school leaders with social justice orientations investigate, understand, and address issues related to marginalization. These studies detail many of the heroic efforts of principals and their dedication, persistence, and skill. Theoretical and empirical writings have often presented social justice leadership as a “cure-all” to inequities rather than politically situated leadership orientation that in its practice is dilemma-laden. This article draws upon previous research on effective leadership as well as highlighting key aspects related to special educational policy in U.S. public schools to cultivate a more in-depth understanding of the practice of social justice leadership for inclusion. This analysis is presented to prompt a more in-depth and practice-oriented discussion, analysis, and understanding of the challenges associated with social justice leadership. Recommendations for future research and a more community-oriented and activist approach to social justice leadership are presented and justified at the conclusion of the article.

**Keywords:** Social justice, Leadership, Educational policy, Special education.

La investigación empírica ha descrito cómo los líderes escolares con orientaciones hacia la justicia social investigan, comprenden y abordan las cuestiones relacionadas con la marginación. Estos estudios muestran en detalle muchos de los esfuerzos heroicos de los directores, su dedicación, persistencia y habilidad. Escritos de carácter teórico y empírico que, a menudo, presentan el liderazgo para la justicia social como algo capaz de “curar” las desigualdades, en vez de mostrar el liderazgo como una práctica políticamente orientada y cargada de dilemas. Este artículo se basa en investigaciones previas sobre el liderazgo eficaz, y destaca aspectos clave relacionados con la política educativa de las escuelas públicas que fomentan una comprensión más profunda del liderazgo para la justicia social

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para la inclusión. Este análisis se presenta para provocar una mayor profundidad y discusión orientada a la práctica, el análisis y la comprensión de los retos asociados con el liderazgo para la justicia social. Se presentan y justifican en las conclusiones del artículo algunas recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones y un enfoque más orientado a la comunidad y activista con el liderazgo para la justicia social.

**Descriptor:** Justicia social, Liderazgo, Política educativa, Educación especial.

A pesquisa empírica descreveu como líderes para a da justiça social investigam, compreender e resolver problemas de marginalização. Esses estudos mostram em detalhes muitos dos esforços heroicos dos líderes, a dedicação, a persistência e habilidade. Escritos de caráter teórico e empírico, muitas vezes exibem líderes capazes de “curar” desigualdades, em vez de mostrar liderança como uma prática politicamente orientada e cheio de dilemas. Este artigo é baseado em pesquisas anteriores sobre a liderança eficaz, e destaca os aspectos fundamentais da política de educação nas escolas públicas que promovam uma compreensão mais profunda da liderança para a justiça social para a inclusão. Essa análise é apresentada para causar maior profundidade e discussão orientada para a prática, análise e compreensão dos desafios associados com a liderança para a justiça social. Nós apresentamos e justificamos as conclusões do artigo algumas recomendações para futuras pesquisas e uma liderança mais voltado para a comunidade e ativista para abordagem de justiça social.

**Palavras-chave:** Justiça social, Liderança, Política de educação, Educação especial.

## Introduction

The practice of social justice leadership in schools that serve high-poverty communities or historically marginalized student groups is of tremendous importance to explore, examine, understand, and further develop within countries and internationally. Research in the United States has primarily investigated school leaders—whether they are principals, assistant principals, or teachers—leading in ways that promote equity, expand inclusive opportunities, increase educational outcomes, and empower marginalized communities (Bogotch, 2002; Dantley & Tillman, 2006; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011; Wasonga, 2009). The heroic efforts of school leaders are being documented in this emerging literature, as are their expertise, passions, patience, kindness, and stubborn persistence to address deep-rooted problems. Many scholars are also exploring the meaning and nature of social justice leadership through opinion pieces and conceptual papers while others have developed frameworks for preparing social justice-oriented principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders (Brown, 2004, 2006; Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; McKenzie et al., 2008).

Recently, scholars have begun to critique the collective body of work on the topic in order to provide greater clarity to the meaning of social justice leadership and to set new directions for research, practice, and principal preparation guidelines (Capper & Young, 2014; Furman, 2012). One major criticism that has emerged is the literature’s limited body of empirical research, mostly in the form of case study research, with each study focusing on only one or two equity issues in a school while ignoring others (Furman, 2012). For example, a study of social justice leadership may focus primarily on students with disabilities and inclusion but ignore the inclusion of English language learners. Second, empirical research has focused almost entirely on the principal while ignoring other stakeholders that may be necessary to creating more equitable schools.

Third, theoretical and empirical writings tend to be present social justice leadership as a “cure-all” or a solution to equity issues rather than a politically situated leadership orientation that can be dilemma-laden and difficult to achieve its aims given the complicated policy context of public education (Capper & Young, 2014). Taken together, these issues do not provide a comprehensive understanding of social justice leadership and its role in creating more equitable school experiences and outcomes for marginalized student groups.

This article draws upon previous empirical research to review effective leadership practices while emphasizing important dilemmas and challenges that have been largely ignored in order to cultivate a nuanced understanding of social justice leadership. Primarily, the inclusion of students with disabilities was emphasized in this article because of inclusion’s connectedness to principles of social justice (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014). Other social justice leadership and equity issues are weaved through the article, but not fully addressed due to space considerations. This article concludes with the recommendation that theories of social justice leadership must be adapted and revised to include a more distributed and community oriented approach to leadership. The intentions of this article are not to invalidate the practice of social justice leadership or inclusion, disparage the efforts of principals and others who engage in social justice leadership, or to dissuade further research and theoretical writings on the topic. Rather, this article was written to serve as a tool to prompt greater discussion, analysis, and understanding of the challenging equity issues school leaders confront in their daily work and to enhance understandings of how policy context, school resources, student demographics, and community issues complicate the practice of social justice leadership.

## **1. Literature review**

Context and policy are important to understanding the actions, behaviors, and challenges associated with social justice leadership. Deep-rooted challenges exist across the numerous social justice and equity issues confronted in schools. This article begins with an introduction to special education policy in the United States in order to highlight the complex policy context nested above and within schools and districts. Next, definitions and conceptualizations of inclusion are presented to highlight the complexity of inclusion in the public school context and the challenges it poses to school leaders. Then, empirical research focused on social justice leadership and inclusive leadership is examined to highlight effective practices and challenges. Finally, social justice leadership is examined through the social justice principles of recognition and redistribution to highlight the inherent dilemmas of social justice leadership in schools.

### ***1.1. Special education and inclusion***

#### ***1.1.1. IDEA and marginalization***

In the U.S., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004) (formerly the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) is the federal policy that mandates all students with disabilities are: identified as a student with a disability; provided with a free and appropriate education and an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) in order to receive an educational benefit; and educated in the least restrictive environment determined by a team of teachers and parents. The law also established disability classification types, an expectation for ongoing progress

monitoring, student disciplinary guidelines, and a system of due process to remedy disagreements between parents and schools. The positive impact of IDEA is undeniable. All students with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability, receive a free education, and are now more likely to be educated with their non-disabled peers. IDEA is not without criticism. Many scholars contend IDEA is underfunded, creates rigid labels that marginalize students, and contributes to racial and class-based discrimination of students already inherent in schools and society (Milner, 2010). Researchers in the U.S. have documented disparities in special education identification, placement decisions, and student outcomes for decades (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Blanchett, 2006; Donovan & Cross, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). African American students and students living in poverty are more likely to be identified with an emotional, behavioral, or intellectual disability and more likely to be segregated from their non-disabled peers than White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Many African American students and students in poverty attend urban public school districts that have systematically established segregated, under-resourced, and low-performing systems that marginalize and isolate students (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2013; Harry & Klinger, 2006).

The intersection of race and poverty are important variables associated with the marginalization of students with disabilities because these variables influence the educational policies, curriculum, expectations for, and experiences of students. Historical, social, cultural, and economic features of U.S. society have created systems that benefit White students at the expense of other racial/ethnic groups with repercussions for African American students and other non-White race/ethnicities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Dutro (2010) argues that curriculum should “allow children to see themselves, access experiences that differ from their own, and foster talk about issues of equity and social justice” (p.257). Yet, some teachers don’t value engaging students with culturally relevant curricula or learning experiences (Milner, 2010) and maintain deficit perspectives of children because of their racial or economic backgrounds. Given this context it is not surprising that researchers have discovered that many educators respond more severely to similar student behavior issues in schools that primarily serve African American and Hispanic students in comparison to schools that primarily serve White students (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Milner, 2010).

The impact of racial and class-based discrimination creates significant barriers for marginalized student populations that contribute to the inappropriate identification and segregation of students in special education programs. The long-term outcomes of this system helps to explain disproportionate achievement, suspension, expulsion and dropout rates, and the maintenance of a special education to prison pipeline for poor and minority children (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2007). These circumstances justify a linkage between social justice leadership and inclusion.

### *1.1.2. Clarifying and defining inclusion*

Inclusion often equates to confusion in public schools. The word inclusion does not exist in IDEA and is rarely used in case law although many legal and educational scholars have attempted to make a connection between inclusion in education and the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that overturned the separate but equal doctrine. The legal impetus for inclusion is broadly described in the least restrictive environment (LRE) component of IDEA and states: “Each public agency must ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with

disabilities for special education and related services” (§ 300.114). In other words, the inclusion of all students in the general education classroom is not mandated by IDEA because school districts are required to ensure a variety of placement options exist that range from highly segregated to fully inclusive general education classrooms.

Many education scholars hold contrasting views on inclusion and how students with disabilities should be educated. As a result, a continuum of inclusion definitions exist ranging from fully inclusive for all students regardless of the nature and severity of the disability to definitions that assume full inclusion is somewhat unrealistic in the immediate future due to the lack of coherence across educational policies, school district structures that segregate students, and school cultures and staff capacity. Some inclusion definitions recognize how student groups have been marginalized and how special education policies can further contribute to their marginalization. For example, Katzman (2007) defined inclusion as “an educational philosophy that calls for schools to educate all learners including students with disabilities in high-quality, age-appropriate general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools” (p.129). Slee (2007) defined inclusion as “not the adaptation or refinement of special education. It is a fundamental rejection of special education’s and regular education’s claims to be inclusive. Inclusion demands that we address the politics of exclusion and representation” (p.164). Udvari-Solner and Kluth (1997) expanded on the politics of exclusion:

*Inclusive schooling propels a critique of contemporary school culture and thus, encourages practitioners to reinvent what can be and should be to realize more humane, just and democratic learning communities. Inequities in treatment and educational opportunity are brought to the forefront, thereby fostering attention to human rights, respect for difference and value of diversity.* (p. 142).

Inclusion definitions of what schools should be like under optimal conditions are often difficult to reconcile when considering the imperfect and challenging conditions that most public schools operate under. Schools often lack the resources, training, community consensus, district support, and expertise necessary to make such drastic shifts in thinking and administering education. These challenging conditions tend to be more extreme in schools that serve high proportions of African American and Hispanic students. These imperfect conditions have tempered other definitions of inclusion. Osgood (2005) described inclusion as “more of an ideal than an idea, one to which schools should continually aspire but also one that remains unobtainable in the foreseeable future” (p.200). DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2013) argued “scholars must recognize the inclusion of all students may not be immediately obtainable during transitional reform periods because inclusive reforms often confront obstacles that cannot be remedied in the short-term” (p.8).

This article does not take a particular stance on how inclusion should be defined beyond the following remarks. Primarily, it should not be assumed that any type of leadership action that transitions students with disabilities into the general education classroom is equal or just. Physically moving bodies into the same room as other students is not synonymous with inclusion because placing a student with a disability into the general education classroom does not mean they will be included in all the social, emotional, and academic experiences. In certain instances, students with disabilities are placed in inclusive classrooms for compliance reasons or to comply with parent demands, but remain isolated because they are unable to access curriculum, teacher support, and other valuable opportunities and experiences. Students with disabilities are truly included when they have equitable access to curriculum, resources, opportunities, and can

meaningfully benefit from those opportunities. Accordingly, schools are inclusive when school leaders engage in social justice leadership actions that transform the values, beliefs, culture, and capacity of the entire school community.

**1.2. Inclusive schools and social justice leadership**

*1.2.1. Inclusive schools and effective leadership*

Although the concept of inclusion is difficult to define, inclusive schools tend to (a) welcome all students and families; (b) have faculty and staff that embrace inclusive values and accept teaching all students as part of their job; (c) have formal structures in which groups of teachers utilize formal and informal data to track student progress, analyze data, problem solve academic or behavioral challenges, and develop action plans with interventions and goals; (d) efficiently and flexibly utilize human capital and other resources; and (e) provide high-quality professional development for skills associated with co-teaching, co-planning, and meeting the diverse needs of all students (Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein, 2004; DeMatthews, 2015; Salisbury & McGregor, 2002; Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011; Waldron, McLeskey, & Redd, 2011; Youngs, 2007). Effective school leadership practices contribute to these characteristics. Table 1 details research findings that connect effective school leadership practices to the development of an inclusive school.

Table 1. Effective leadership practices and inclusive schools

CHARACTERISTICS OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS	EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICE
School environment that is welcoming to all	Principals welcome teachers, parents, and community stakeholders to meaningfully engage in the school. Principals also model inclusive values by encouraging democratic decision-making, open forums, and inviting marginalized families to the school (Griffith, 1999; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011)
Faculty embrace inclusion and accept teaching all students	Principals influence student achievement by setting directions and expectations for faculty and staff. They help to establish goals, shared understandings, and a school culture that is motivated to perform at high levels (Holmes, Clement, & Albright, 2013; Jacobson, 2011; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Pazey & Cole, 2013)
Structures to track student progress, analyze data, problem-solve, and develop plans	Principals draw upon instructional leadership and distributed leadership practices to establish teacher teams that collect, analyze, and develop action plans based on student data (DeMatthews, 2015; May & Supovitz, 2011; Neumerski, 2013; Robinson, 2010; Stoll et al., 2006)
Efficient and flexible use of resources	Principals pay close attention to the organizational features of their schools and modify, adapt, or develop systems that meet the needs of all students. (Hornig & Loeb, 2010; Nanus, 1992; Odden, 2011; Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2011)
High-quality professional development	Principals ensure teachers have access to high-quality learning opportunities (Hallinger, Lee, & Ko, 2014; Neumerski, 2013) and offer: “...intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support and providing appropriate models of best practices and beliefs considered fundamental to the organization” (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 9).

Note: prepared by the author.

The characteristics of inclusive schools are associated with effective leadership actions, but implementing inclusion brings complexity that requires collaboration and a



distribution of leadership and tasks that will be discussed in greater detail at the conclusion of this article. The complexities of creating a more inclusive school involves three broad areas: technical/legal, pedagogical/curricular, and collaborative. Technical and legal complexities are related to federal, state, and district policies and require that principals and teachers understand these issues, follow appropriate procedures, and maintain compliance expectations (DeMatthews, 2015). Examples of technical challenges include redeveloping the school budget to hire an additional special education teacher to increase student access to a special education teacher while in the general education classroom or revising bell schedules, course schedules, and student caseloads to provide the necessary time for co-teaching and co-planning. These challenges are more extensive in locales where federal, state, and district special education policies are not aligned or do not promote or incentivize inclusive education programs. Legal complexity is consistent when attempting to create more inclusive schools and can be associated with the development of a student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP). The development of the IEP is guided by federal, state, and district policies and laws that require:

- A multidisciplinary team meeting of teachers, diagnosticians, parents, and student if appropriate;
- A number of written descriptions that describe a student's present levels of performance, learning goals, proposed supports and services, progress monitoring tools, and appropriate classroom environment;
- Meetings are conducted and documents are completed within pre-determined time periods; and
- Parents are provided with their right to due process when they disagree with the school district.

Effectively serving all students in an inclusive setting requires tremendous skill and expertise associated with pedagogy and assessment, skills and expertise most staff might not have at the onset of the reform (Friend et al., 2010). School leaders must ensure they can enhance teacher capacity in a number of areas including, but not limited to, developing and co-teaching lessons that meet the needs of all learners; managing behavioral, social, and emotional challenges associated with a student's disability; providing and interpreting assessments to identify and describe students' present levels of performance; managing and coordinating paraprofessionals and other instructional or behavioral support staff; utilizing assistive technology and specialized resources and intervention models; and establishing communities of inquiry and practice to effectively problem solve and create new interventions (Billingsley, 2007; Boscardin, 2007; Pazey & Cole, 2013). When school leaders and teachers do not have these skills and levels of expertise they will not be able to effectively include all students.

Teacher collaboration can be difficult in schools because most teachers have been isolated, work with limited supervision, and possess a high degree of autonomy. Yet, inclusive schools require that collaboration is ongoing and meaningful because effective co-taught lessons require teachers to consider grade level curriculum and a range of methods for differentiating and adapting instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners (Friend et al., 2010). Teachers should also be reflective of their lesson, review informal and formal assessment data, and hold discussions about re-teaching skills

students were unable to master. Collaboration is also vital with other stakeholders, including parents, because many special education-related challenges (e.g. due process complaints, decisions about student supports and services, challenging student behaviors) can be more efficiently and effectively solved when there is trust between parents and the school.

### *1.2.2. Social justice leadership*

The empirical research focused on social justice leadership has primarily highlighted the principal as the primary change agent, although community engagement, shared decision making, and democratic leadership are often mentioned (Furman, 2012). This section will focus on the principal as the key actor or catalyst to social justice work in schools. The methods principals utilize to create inclusive schools vary based on their personal beliefs, school culture, and district policies.

Principals with social justice orientations recognize inequities that are often concealed amongst the other issues associated with the daily administration of a school because they dig deep into school policy, issues, budget, and culture with a critical eye for injustice. Social justice leadership is about recognizing the inequities in society and schools, bringing stakeholders together, and taking action (Bogotch, 2002; Dantley & Tillman, 2006). Each school has different challenges, contexts, and human dynamics that makes defining social justice leadership difficult, but its practice generally involves: (a) interrogating school policies, cultures, and community expectations; (b) identifying oppressive and unjust practices; (c) employing democratic processes to engage marginalized communities, faculty, and staff; and (d) substituting unjust practices with equitable and culturally appropriate ones (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2007; Wasonga, 2009).

A prevalent theme in the literature is the “action-oriented” nature of social justice leadership (Furman, 2012), which includes a heightened sense of awareness to issues of oppression, exclusion, and marginalization (Brooks & Miles, 2006). This awareness has been described as the “conscious commitment to recognizing ... choosing to remove blinders and recognize the multiple needs of the children and families” (Lopez et al., 2010, p. 69). School leaders with social justice orientations have deep-rooted personal values and beliefs that allow them to confront tremendous resistance and persist in the short- and long-term (Jansen, 2006; Jean-Marie, 2008). Furthermore, these leaders recognize the importance of all stakeholders in change processes because equity-oriented change can be so difficult. Vital to the practice of social justice leadership is a school leader’s communication skills, emotional awareness, and ability to build meaningful and long-lasting relationships. The practice of social justice leadership becomes about connecting groups of people together (Brooks et al., 2007) while fostering collaboration, democratic dialogue (Riester, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002), and shared decision-making processes (Wasonga, 2009). Special attention is given to personal and professional relationships as well as opportunities to increase stakeholders’ sense of ownership over decisions associated with the school. Theoharis (2007) found that principals resisted “the historic disconnect between marginalized families and schools ... to create welcoming school climates and also reached out to the community and in particular to disenfranchised families (p. 237).

With the support of community and a wide array of stakeholders, social justice leaders recognize they have the ability to restructure school resources to develop inclusive

programming, maximize resources and staff expertise, or grow programs that foster collaboration and culturally relevant pedagogies. Social justice leaders become visible actors who mediate conflicts, champion ideas, and raise important concerns (Scanlan, 2013; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). They challenge others to think about issues of social justice and question the status quo, and in doing so become activists working for change.

### ***1.3. Technical challenges and contradictions to social justice leadership***

Although the empirical literature focused on social justice leadership has described many of the personal orientations, actions, and practices that contribute to the development of more socially just schools, this literature has done little to capture the tensions and challenges that arise (Capper & Young, 2014; Furman, 2012). Social justice theorists have only begun to question and explore the challenges and dilemmas of school leadership by theorizing on how principles of social justice can be at odds with each other especially when considering the various and intersecting interests of student populations or the tensions associated with academic achievement and inclusivity.

Recent research has started to uncover some of the challenges, dilemmas, and pressures principals confront when they attempt to create more inclusive schools (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). In part, these dilemmas exist because principals seek fast-paced change or take on too many responsibilities without building school capacity. These ideas will be further addressed in the next section. When principals are engaged in social justice leadership efforts they tend to confront resistance with significant consequences on their social justice agenda. These forms of resistance come from within the school, immediate community, district, and beyond (Capper & Young, 2014; Theoharis, 2007). Instances of resistance include the momentum of changing a status quo culture, obstructive staff views, privileged parental expectations, bureaucratic red tape and regulations, limited resources, and harmful state and federal regulations. These forms of resistance can take a great personal toll on principals and force them to reckon with their own self-esteem and senses of discouragement. Other studies focused on inclusive reforms found similar challenges. Theoharis and O'Toole (2011) found resistance from general education teachers and vocal/privileged families. DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) documented contradictory district policies that created social justice dilemmas, including issues with ongoing enrollment, budget, community, and student behavior created dilemmas for principals that did not always allow for a socially just outcome for all students. DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) concluded that:

*The fact that persistent historical and structural marginalization not only exists but is pervasive in education underscores the fact that eliminating inequities is an ongoing struggle rather than a singular battle fought and won over the course of the school year. In reality, principals leading for social justice experience the physical, mental, and emotional ups and downs of the work, press on while engaging in ongoing battles inside and outside of the school, and learn new lessons based on past experiences. Principals that continue to engage in social justice work are truly heroic but at times imperfect, especially while leading under immensely challenging conditions. (p. 32).*

Challenges to social justice leadership can extend beyond the bureaucratic, technical, or change oriented struggles that are the bread and butter of school leadership (Cranston, Ehrich, & Kimber, 2006). Social justice leadership work can be sorted into two principles: redistribution and recognition. The principle of recognition is about defending the identity of marginalized groups with the purpose of reimagining

mainstream conceptualizations or stereotypes of marginalized groups not traditionally viewed as communities of value. The principle of redistribution is concerned with economically defined groups struggling to end exploitation for the purpose of achieving redistribution (Fraser, 1997). North (2006) argues that the principles of redistribution and recognition create contradictions for practitioners seeking to create more socially just schools because these two principles can conflict. For example, North (2006) described a fictional but plausible example of a school funding reform that provided equal funds to each school (an example of redistribution), which in turn, diluted a school that served a marginalized community ability to procure additional resources for the development and implementation of a culturally relevant curriculum (an example of recognition). These kinds of conflicts are common in the daily work of school leaders as they seek to establish more inclusive schools.

School leaders often confront dilemmas when attempting to create more inclusive schools because inclusion simultaneously incorporates principles of redistribution and recognition, but also because schools have finite resources and tend to serve various marginalized student groups with different interests. These conflicts have not been sufficiently described in the literature. Despite the paucity of research, dilemmas to social justice leadership can be easily hypothesized when considering the challenges of inclusion. School context, academic or behavioral challenges associated with specific disabilities, school budget, and parental decision-making complicate social justice leadership work and can pose serious dilemmas for school leaders.

School context is important because the various student groups, their identities, and needs shape how resources and recognition needs to be shifted to promote equity. Social justice leadership requires that principals recognize and address the historical marginalized racial/ethnic groups, English language learners, students with various disability types and needs, students in poverty, and students who are part of the LGBT community. It has been eloquently argued that social justice leadership must be about becoming experts on, the range of student differences and their intersections... they do not have the option of choosing which student differences they will succeed with and which students of difference they will ignore in doing so (Capper & Young, 2014).

Yet, in practice, these groups compete because schools have limited resources, time, and expertise to address countless groups and issues.

Academic or behavioral challenges associated with certain disability types also create conflict for inclusive schools. The special needs of students can require a great deal of assistance, expertise, and support from teachers and classroom aides (Durlak et al., 2011; McLeskey & Waldron, 2011; Oliver & Reschly, 2010). As previously noted, teachers and administrators often lack training to work with diverse student populations. Thus, in a fully inclusive classroom, particular students with more significant needs might disadvantage other student groups, as students with the most need will receive increased attention and resources while others may be left behind. Some scholars might claim this depiction or argument is unethical and unwarranted. Such claims have a degree of validity, but purist assertions for immediate and full inclusion ignore the serious needs and challenges certain students bring with them to school each day and the feelings school leaders confront as they try to strike balances between supporting a student with intensive needs, supporting all students, and putting teachers in situations they are able to succeed and feel successful.

School budget is another challenge to social justice leadership because multiple equity issues are present in most schools across a range of student groups and identities (Capper & Young, 2014; Furman, 2012). Recognition and redistribution can be in direct conflict considering that inclusion must apply to all students and extend beyond disability to differences associated with language, race/ethnicity, income level, and sexuality. In some instances, particularly with language, for inclusion to work well teachers need training and may need additional staff to work in co-taught classrooms. Obviously, principals cannot hire positions that don't exist in their school budget so choices must be made between an extra ELL teacher and an extra special education teacher. Who will benefit and who will remain marginalized rests in the balance of these decisions.

Finally, principles of redistribution and recognition can be at odds when working with parents. Conflicts between parents and the school can arise when schools seek to create more inclusive classroom. Parents of students without disabilities may fear their children will have fewer opportunities to learn and be supported in an inclusive classroom (Ferraioli & Harris, 2011; Glazzard, 2011). In these instances, parents should use their powers of persuasion to engage such parents, but also remain steadfast in their school's mission and vision of serving all students. However, parents of students with disabilities may also be against the inclusion of their children. Parents with children in high-needs urban districts or other districts may have fought long and hard to ensure their children gained access to the special education supports and services they need (Harry & Klingner, 2014; Wellner, 2012). Parents may have even seen noticeable positive results since their children entered into special education programs. Moreover, the long fights parents may have had with districts and teachers could instill mistrust between parents and school personnel. Consequently, parents may be against inclusion if they view inclusion as "taking away" supports and services. The solution to the parent challenges is building trust, but trust can take time and some wounds were generated over long periods of time and will take time to heal. In these situations, school leaders confront a dilemma: If they recognize these parents as a marginalized community group and respect their wishes, they will be unable to provide inclusion for some students in the short-term and possibly the long-term because the segregation of a small group of students can be extremely inefficient and costly in an inclusive school since special education teachers would have to be pulled from co-taught inclusive classrooms to segregated classrooms.

## **2. Addressing challenges and proposing solutions**

The idea of social justice leadership is powerful and inspiring, but current research and prescriptive writings have not generated suitable solutions to the persistent and deep-rooted equity problems in schools. In part, empirical research seems to suggest that quick equity-oriented turnarounds are possible when heroic principals thrust schools to better serve all students. Two flaws are inherent in this assumption. First, as noted previously, the challenges to creating a more socially just school are immense and take time to overcome. They are deep-rooted in history and present numerous dilemmas for leaders. A lack of policy coherence, budget, time, training, and the sheer number of equity issues makes social justice leadership an almost impossible task. The deck is stacked against principals and this work. Moreover, heroic principals that can create dynamic change in short time periods are not the norm and most likely never will be. In

addition, numerous studies have documented the quick decline in school improvement when heroic principals or leaders leave (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012).

Second, even heroic school leaders cannot single-handedly overcome certain leadership challenges or dilemmas associated with the recognition and redistribution principles of social justice. Each dilemma is a problem that extends beyond the principal's skill, command, and time commitments. Many of the problems are associated with larger problems in education policy, district structures, and community relationships that extend far beyond the school's walls or community. For such problems, creating a more equitable school is not directly linked to a principal's expertise, communication skills, or personal values. Rather, the solution exists outside of the scope of the principalship and school and should prompt principals to be a part of political and policy-related advocacy work at all levels of education policy. Principals should not assume they are leaders of such advocacy work considering the numerous job responsibilities assigned to them. Instead, leading for social justice should mean acting as a catalyst for advocacy work within a community.

The dilemmas of social justice leadership should implore equity-minded principals to engage in certain actions and beliefs, but these principals must recognize they cannot do everything. Social justice leadership should be re-envisioned as a school-wide and community-wide endeavor. Principals engage in social justice leadership (e.g., use their knowledge, skills, and expertise) to support the development of a school and community social movement that can further promote the needs of schools and diverse student groups. In part, this work should resemble distributed models of leadership (Gronn, 2009; Heikka, Waniganayake, & Hujala, 2013) with the primary focus on building capacity, leadership, and ownership throughout the school community and all equity issues that impact students and families. The dilemmas of social justice work are almost too great to overcome, except when schools and communities are fully engaged together, when they are well-organized and prepared to advocate for all students, when all educators are prepared to collectively problem solve school-wide or singular problems, and when parents, central office administrators, community organizations, and businesses have identified common interests and work together to collectively address or adapt policy, budget, and other technical problems.

Promoting inclusion and equity are noble and necessary goals for principals, but when leadership is concentrated in the hands of one heroic leader, a few administrators, or when communities are disengaged from decision-making, social justice leadership will only generate superficial and short-term change. It is no surprise that the field of educational leadership has taken such an interest in principals engaging in social justice leadership, but the scope of research, preparation frameworks, and other theoretical writings must focus more broadly on school and community leadership. The cliché, "It takes a village to raise a child" must be evident in the underpinnings of educational policy, principal leadership, and the community if social justice is to take place and take root. When educators, scholars, and policymakers seek to empower communities, schools can be radically transformed into inclusive, caring, and equity-oriented environments that contribute to the academic, social, and emotional growth of our children.

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## Culturally Relevant Education and Critical Pedagogy: Devolution of Hierarchies of Power

### Educación Culturalmente Relevante y la Pedagogía Crítica: Descentralización de las Jerarquías de Poder

### Educação Culturalmente Relevante e Pedagogia Crítica: Descentralização das Hierarquias de Poder

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This article considers two educational strategies that serve to empower students by responding more authentically to student needs. We begin by defining our terms and then move to a tiny school deep in the jungles of Central America. This school, like many schools in developing nations, struggles to educate students for an uncertain future. At issue are contradictions extant in a postmodern, globalized world, where colonial domination has been replaced by post-colonialism, which is not free from issues of domination and power. This article offers culturally relevant education and critical pedagogy, in tandem or separately, as a way to forge new links with a society that is attempting to become a more developed nation. Culturally relevant education allows for teaching and learning that is responsive to student needs, while critical pedagogy offers a means of devolving as much power to the students as possible. In this way, students may become empowered to foster meaningful change within their lives and within the societies in which they live.

**Keywords:** Critical theory, Culturally relevant education, Public education, Student empowerment, Teacher empowerment.

Este artículo considera dos estrategias educativas para capacitar a los estudiantes y responder a sus auténticas necesidades. Comenzamos por definir nuestros términos para dar paso a una pequeña escuela situada en la selvas de América Central. Esta escuela, como muchas escuelas en naciones en vías de desarrollo, se esfuerza por educar a los estudiantes para un futuro incierto. El problema es la contradicción existente en un mundo globalizado y postmoderno, donde la dominación colonial ha sido reemplazada por el post-colonialismo, que no está libre de problemas de dominación y poder. En este artículo se ofrece una alternativa de educación culturalmente relevante y pedagogía crítica, que, en conjunto o por separado, son medios para crear nuevos vínculos en una sociedad que trata de convertirse en una nación más desarrollada. La Educación Culturalmente Relevante permite que la enseñanza y el aprendizaje responda a las necesidades de los estudiantes, mientras que la pedagogía crítica ofrece un medio de dar el poder a los estudiantes. De esta manera, los estudiantes pueden tener el poder para fomentar un cambio significativo en sus vidas y dentro de las sociedades en las que viven.

**Descriptores:** Teoría crítica, Educación culturalmente relevante, Educación pública, Empoderamiento del estudiante, Empoderamiento del docente.

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Este artigo considera duas estratégias educacionais para capacitar alunos e responder às suas reais necessidades. Começamos por definir os nossos termos de abrir caminho para uma pequena escola localizada nas selvas da América Central. Esta escola, como muitas escolas em países em desenvolvimento, se esforça para educar os alunos para um futuro incerto. O problema é a contradicção existente em um mundo globalizado e pós-moderno, onde o domínio colonial foi substituído pelo pós-colonialismo, que não está livre de problemas de dominação e poder. Este artigo oferece uma alternativa na educação culturalmente relevante e pedagogia crítica, que, em conjunto ou separadamente, são um meio para criar novos elos de uma sociedade que está se tornando uma nação mais desenvolvida. A educação culturalmente relevante permite que o ensino ea aprendizagem atende às necessidades dos estudantes, enquanto a pedagogia crítica fornece um meio de dar poder aos estudantes. Assim, os alunos podem ter o poder de promover mudanças significativas em suas vidas e nas sociedades em que vivem.

**Palavras-chave:** Teoria crítica, Educação culturalmente relevante, Educação pública, Capacitação dos alunos, Capacitação de professores.

*...to teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin (Bell Hooks, 1994).*

## 1. Literature Review

Student demographics are in constant flux. Evolving and designated leaders, both, can benefit from establishing a culturally relevant approach to education within a critical pedagogy. With these two stratagems in place, diverse families and students will undoubtedly benefit from administrators' and educators' ability to create safe, happy, caring and successful classrooms.

Being a school administrator is always a difficult and complex endeavor. In addition to the many responsibility and growing complexity of their responsibilities, administrators, in conjunction with their teaching staff and occasionally with the students themselves, aspire to develop the best possible teaching and learning contexts within their schools and for their school communities. These instructional leaders tend to view their roles as helping teachers and students construct and apply new knowledge and skills. However, this is often accomplished through the process of trial and error (Popper, 1972) simply because teaching cannot be reduced to a set of prescribed technical activities where students of the same grade or age group complete similar tasks. Teachers must continuously make decisions as to how similar age-group students can learn and apply concepts being taught through prescribed curricula in different situations so as to construct knowledge. Furthermore, the importance of connecting the home culture with the school culture through facilitating a culturally relevant classroom has been underemphasized pedagogically (Brown, 2007). In accordance with this, a critical pedagogy can assist in creating a socially just school within an equally socially just school system. This article introduces culturally relevant leadership in combination with a critical pedagogy to ensure a dynamic and thoughtful organizational climate.

## **2. Method**

Because this article presents a philosophical stance rather than a purely empirical approach to this study, an organizing framework, rather than a qualitative research methodology has been applied to the current phenomena under investigation. For this topic, we have chosen to use Cooper & White's (2012) "Five Contexts" of qualitative research. These contexts include the autobiographical and biographical component, the historical component, the political component, the postmodern component and the philosophical component.

Hopefully, the (auto)biographical context will assist the reader in situating him-/herself relative to the research being conducted. The historical context allows the recognition that one has a place in history, and that one can change that place from being merely an observer and a reactionary to being in a position of power within which one can insert oneself into the historical moment in order to influence the course of that history. For the researcher, the historical context offers an important perspective on the past, which, in turn, can inform future decisions. The political context is omnipresent in the lives of every citizen in today's society. Recognition of the political aspects of engaging in, performing or resulting from research allows the researcher to bring an additional perspective to bear upon the research issue. The postmodern context is an important consideration to any form of research, since we live in postmodern times. In an age of blurred genres and mixed methods, the postmodern era helps one to realize that things are not as they were. In that sense, an understanding of these postmodern or "liquid" times can assist the researcher in seeing qualitative research in all of its complexities and contradictions. And, last but not least, the philosophical context binds the previous contexts together in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities associated with engaging in and contemplating deep issues embodied in the research. This context allows for the necessary introspection and thoughtfulness that may aid in delving into deeper philosophical questions of meaning.

As such, these five contexts represent an orientation to inquiry that allows one to describe, identify and speak about the naturally messy and complex nature of this and any research inquiry. However, these contexts do not occur sequentially in any research endeavor. They tend to arrive simultaneously and to overlap one another, weaving in and around the research as major themes and ideas become transparent or, at least, are made less murky. And so it is with this inquiry. The components of the "Five Contexts" weave themselves subtly and unobtrusively into the fabric of this article.

### ***2.1. Definitions***

Culturally relevant or culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy (Gay, 2010) grounded in teaching in cross-cultural or multicultural settings (Diller & Moule, 2005), allowing each student to relate course content to his or her own particular cultural context (Scherff & Spector, 2011). While the term culturally relevant teaching often deals specifically with instruction of African American students in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 1994), it has proven to be an effective pedagogy for students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Culturally relevant pedagogy encompasses "behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial cultural diversity in learning" (Gay, 2010: 31). It is a pedagogy that ensures learning for all students because it is relevant to the students' lives. It is a pedagogy that ensures the delivery of instruction, no matter what the curriculum outcomes; are taught in a manner

that accesses student's ways of knowing and doing. It values what students already know and uses student's prior knowledge and ways of learning to deliver instruction in a successful manner.

Critical pedagogy, on the other hand, represents both a philosophy of education and a social movement combining education with critical theory. As Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinburg (1997) attest, "critical pedagogy is the term used to describe what emerges when critical theory encounters education" (p. 24). First identified by Paulo Freire (1993), it has developed into a praxis-oriented "educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action" (Giroux, 2010: 67). Critical pedagogy represents a philosophy of education more than a set of "tried and true" methods that serve to advance student learning. Critical pedagogy combines education with critical theory, of which there are numerous brands, including Marxist, feminist and post-structuralist critical theory (Capper, 1993; Vibert, Portelli, Shields, & LaRocque, 2002). In education, critical theorists often come armed with an agenda for change. Due to this agenda, critical pedagogues as educators are ultimately concerned with the elimination of oppression and suffering (Brosio, 2000) as they critically reflect on current and historical social inequities in order to work toward the empowerment and transformation of others, while grounding decisions in morals and values (Capper, 1993; Greenfield, 1993). In short, critical theorists in education tend to work towards positive social change within the development of a truly democratic and socially just society.

In essence, there are five relevant and critical leadership techniques for developing such a school culture that is supportive of social justice: building trust, engaging personal culture(s), confronting issues of social dominance and social injustice, transforming instructional practices, and engaging the entire school community (Howard, 2007). What follows is an exploration of that process, using a tiny elementary school in the rain forest of Central America. This school serves as a metaphor for all schools desirous of making positive change in the process of educating students in order to positively impact their lives and the lives of their families now and in the future.

### ***2.2. St. Jude's elementary school***

I (Robert) am writing this section of the article from the table of a dining hut deep in the jungle of a small country in Central America. It is mid-April, and I am here with a group of pre-service teachers from Canada who are experiencing their final practicum. This is an international opportunity for them. However, this experience has not been without its benefits and drawbacks. To begin with, this country would be considered a developing country. With less than half a million people, it continues to struggle to maintain a vibrant economy and this is reflected in the educational system.

When the pre-service teachers arrived, they were immediately introduced to the local school, St. Jude's Elementary School, and the surrounding village. Ironically enough, St. Jude is considered to be the patron saint of desperate cases and lost causes. The school itself is a pargead, cinder-block structure that is comprised of three buildings – one of which is a designated hurricane shelter. The classrooms sport a profusion of posters on the walls referring to the alphabet, the water cycle, flora and fauna and times, places and dates, depending on the grade level. The floors are covered with ragged linoleum that is swept clean on a regular basis by students, most often girls. Even among the very

young, gender stereotyping is much in evidence as the young boys tussle with one another while the girls tend to pursue more sedentary, typically housekeeping, activities.

The grade levels are similar to those of a regular North American school, but children begin school at three years of age, occasionally as early as two years of age. This is the Pre-Kindergarten Class. There is one classroom per grade up to Grade Eight. Classes range in size from a low of sixteen students to a high of more than twice that number. Classrooms are slightly smaller than average-sized North American classrooms and large rooms are sub-divided to conserve space.

Teaching is interesting. Students attend school intermittently with some students being present most days while others are less inclined to attend. School is not viewed as particularly important by the parents, in general, although some parents remain steadfastly involved with their children's education. Each Friday, teachers must submit lesson plans for the following week to the principal. The principal, as instructional leader, very likely has little time to go through the lesson plans and the teachers do not necessarily, or even often, adhere to what they had planned for the children. Although the desks in each classroom are arranged carefully in rows, the students are free to move about the classroom. They converge upon the teacher on a regular basis in order to receive a red check mark in their books to show that they are on task, on target and on time.

Classes, as a result, are uniformly raucous and classroom management strategies are largely absent. Teachers shout over the student noise and it often takes two or three attempts to regain most of the students' attention. Much of the educating is done by rote. Information is memorized, practiced and regurgitated on cue, often with hilarious results. For example, if the teacher is to ask a question, the students do not necessarily listen to the question asked, but parrot back the answer from the previous lesson or even from the previous day. Often, questions are closed-ended and require only a "yes" or "no" from students. Again, the correct answer is often guessed at, with the loudest voice carrying the rest of the group. When the question is repeated, students change the answer until the teacher is satisfied.

Testing abounds. Students are tested mercilessly and the results are recorded. Many students do not do well because of the rote nature of their learning. There appear to be multiple disconnects between the teaching process and the act of learning. Frequently, during class activities, the students storm the teacher for the coveted red check mark, amid a cacophony of voices shouting, "Miss, Miss." After having said all of this, the diatribe above is not meant to vilify any one or any part of the school system. It is meant to describe a situation where culturally relevant education and critical pedagogy could offer some assistance to a system that barely offers any form of real education to a group of students who desperately crave to learn.

Even at the elementary level, students' attendance is spotty, as there is little incentive for them to come to school. After finishing the equivalent of Grade Eight, only one student out of a student body of more than two hundred students will be able to continue on to the secondary school in a neighbouring village. Lack of finances and transportation appear to be the main cause of this travesty. Parents often feel that their daughters are better off learning how to be housekeepers, wives and mothers, rather than pursuing an education that they may never be able to put to use. By the same

token, the boys may not need an education because they will eventually work on the farm or at their parents' industry, whatever that may be.

Teacher education programs are woefully inadequate here and teachers typically remain uncertified. The prevailing culture of the school is to teach in a rote manner and to test frequently. By their own admission, the greatest challenge is to keep the principal happy by submitting lesson plans that are rarely followed. Teachers often create their lesson plans during class time. Occasionally, teachers do not turn up to class. More often than not, no reason or even advance warning is given. Other teachers cover by simply adding the absent teacher's class to their own group, often resulting in crowded and frequently interrupted lessons. Although striking students has been deemed unprofessional, hitting a student for misbehavior is common, both in the school and at home. For this reason alone, it is often difficult to use more psychological measures to encourage student engagement.

Even the principal admits that he is under-qualified for his position as instructional leader and is desperately in need of professional development, professional development that will not happen. Resources are few and far between. Technology is largely absent, represented symbolically by an outdated computer printer that has been out of ink for as long as anyone can remember. This is a school in desperate circumstances and appears to be representative of the school systems in this country in general.

### ***2.3. Competing realities***

When asked if obtaining an education was important, parents and educators alike all agreed that it was. However, the reality of this community is vastly different than the espoused aspirations. Children are rarely able to access high school and, even if they could, they have the choice of returning to their community and resuming their work on the land, or moving to a city in pursuit of a better life. If the move to urban centers were to happen on a large scale, many small communities would disappear, as has been the case in so many places ever since the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution (Staton, 2012). As such, this represents a change in the traditional way of life and may even represent an assault on the present culture of the country. For this community, the people are caught between hard realities.

Further to this, even effective and efficient educational systems tend to become absorbed into the exigencies of the globalized economies (White, 2009). At stake is the culture of the country, itself. Consequently and simplistically, such educational systems, as represented within this tiny community, may represent a bellwether for the future. Unfortunately, however, the choices are dire and represent a dilemma – there is choice, but neither choice represents an attractive alternative. School systems can either help to move the economy “forward” as students move into secondary and tertiary occupations rather than remaining in primary industries, or the citizens, students among them, can continue along the current road towards economic servitude at the hands of more globalized countries which seek ever newer sources of cheap labour and raw materials.

Perhaps, however, we might envision a middle ground where countries such as this, and there are many of them, can achieve both a modicum of development while still preserving their own culture. In essence, the position is one of self-determination and, whether it is capitulation in the face of encroaching global economies or preservation of the culture or a combination of the two, it is important that the decision be made by



those who have most to lose, rather than decisions being thrust upon the population by outside forces who have the most to gain.

By way of encouragement, we offer two possibilities – culturally relevant education and critical pedagogy. Each on its own may be a partial solution to the problems of the future; but together, they may represent a force that may help to wittingly forge a future from current chaos, indecision and lack of resources and infrastructure. Thus, school leaders and educators working within ailing economies may be able to capitalize on educational systems in order to for their societies to access a more positive, authentic and socially just process of self-determination.

#### ***2.4. Culturally relevant education***

Regarding the schooling experience described in this article, teachers are charged with relaying what appear to be basic facts using a rote method. Instruction is delivered in English, although, the common languages used in homes are “Kriol” and/or Spanish. The rote method as an instructional delivery choice can be compared to Freire’s banking model. The teacher talks and the students sit quietly listening. “The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students are” (Freire, 1993:72). In the banking model the teacher is singularly essential to student learning. The students are merely empty vessels into which the teacher “deposits” his or her knowledge.

The banking model does not take into account the various ways of knowing that the child brings to school nor the knowledge that a student has already gained before entering into the formal learning of the institution known as school. This model also separates the teacher from the child in the most basic human way – emotionally. Noted African American scholar, bell hooks, states that “to teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (Hooks, 1994: 13). Learning cannot happen unless the student internalizes what the other is conveying. Teaching does not happen until the student has learned. A successful pedagogy must contain the necessary conditions for learning and teaching, and therefore requires a delivery method that is relevant to and values the student.

To guarantee that the teaching strategies employed in classrooms are relevant to the learning styles of all students, they must include components that are relevant to their lives. Geneva Gay defined culturally relevant pedagogy as “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002:106).

Culturally relevant pedagogy, also known as culturally responsive pedagogy, nullifies the deficit-thinking model or “cultural blindness” (Gay, 2010: 22). Since the literature on this model uses the terms responsive and relevant interchangeably, for the purpose of this article, I have adopted the term culturally relevant because teachers are responsive to the culture and associated learning styles of students by ensuring curriculum and instructional delivery are relevant to their lives. Using this model, teachers can no longer ignore the cultural differences of their students or see these differences as impediments to learning. The differences now become the catalyst for delivery of instruction as well as the content of the curriculum.

When adopting a culturally relevant pedagogy model, teachers must know their students. The statement, “Know your students,” has become a cliché in the context of North American Schools. Most teachers teaching in the United States and Canada can recite this when they are discussing assessment data and differentiated instruction. Unfortunately, their efforts are often futile because their differentiation techniques are all variations of the same non-culturally relevant strategies. All instructional strategies, at all academic levels within a classroom, need to consider the cultural learning styles of the children within that classroom. Teaching strategies and styles “must tap the full range of student potential” (Kuykendall, 2004:71). Teaching by rote, as was observed in the Central American classroom, neglects the actual educational needs of the students and therefore stifles the intellectual potential of the child. A teacher, standing before a class in front of students seated in rows expecting students to respond in unison – the loudest voice getting the most attention – neither promotes nor guarantees learning. However, a teacher who plans lessons based on students’ academic and cultural needs with collaborative activities that are relevant to their everyday lives can promote and guarantee culturally relevant learning.

When using a culturally relevant approach, the teacher understands the student outside of the school environment. Culturally relevant teaching incorporates the students’ interests into curriculum activities, and thus the teacher is able to capture the students’ interests and motivate them more effectively. Lessons are built with creativity; this is used to motivate and engage the student at the beginning, middle and end of each lesson. The lessons value and uphold the students’ culture(s). This is easily done through integrating the culture within the delivery method, or pedagogy, and in the content of the curriculum.

For learning to occur, all students must understand (a) what the end result is, (b) why they have to learn a certain topic, (c) how it is relevant to their lives or their future careers, and (d) the process involved (Hale, 2001). In concordance, Davies (2007) states “to ensure success for all students, especially for those who struggle, students need to know what they already know, what needs to be learned and what success looks like” (n.p.). Learning is viewed as a concrete process and an active one. Learning occurs as a result of the “ability of the learner to make meaning of new knowledge by making connections with existing knowledge” (Williams, 2003: 182). Therefore, learning is more than the teacher talking and the students receiving; it is hands-on, cooperative, and creative. As well, when discussing instructional strategies, it is important to remember not to separate assessment from the explicit instruction. They are intertwined.

Authentic assessment-for-learning techniques provide timely feedback to students about their performance and, when utilized, motivate students and help them to improve. Rote teaching and rote responding, as an assessment technique, have the same end result—no guarantee of learning. However, if educators and educational leaders incorporate authentic assessment practices into the art of teaching, they will always know where their students are in terms of the teaching that has taken place and what instructional changes are needed to ensure further learning. Just as importantly, the student will know and understand where they are in their learning process. Teaching in this way allows students to know where they are on their personal journey of learning through frequent feedback (Chappuis, et al., 2005).

Figure 1 was created to synthesize culturally relevant pedagogy. In this graphic, it is possible to see how the principles of culturally relevant pedagogy can be incorporated into any classroom.

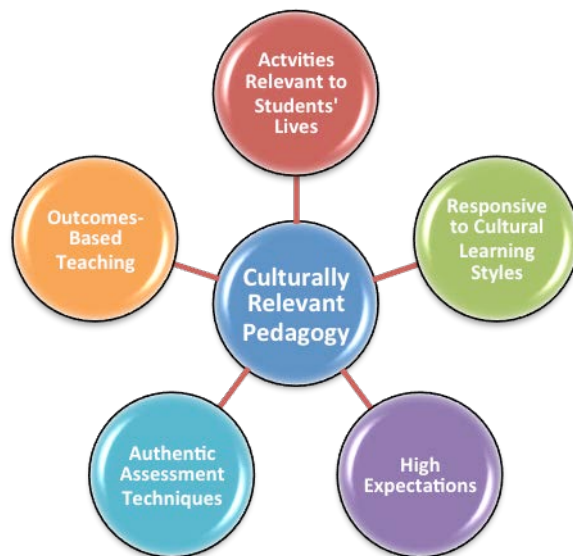


Figure 1. Principles of culturally relevant pedagogy

Note: Elaborated by authors.

To put this in the context of the Central American classroom described, primary students were learning to read and write using the English language, even though English is a minority language in this context. Instead of learning the actual letter names, the teachers taught their students the letter sounds as a proxy for the names of the letters. Instead of learning the letter “R,” the students were taught “rrrr.” For the letter “B,” the students were taught “buu.” At no time were they given the actual letter names or provided with a connection to prior knowledge the students may possess.

During her research in Papua New Guinea, Lisa Delpit (2006) observed that, although the country was multilingual, the instructional language in schools, because it was the language of the trade economy, was English. There was another school system however, in which children were taught first in their indigenous tongue. From her research she concluded that, “Children learn to read only once, and if they learn to read in a language they already understand orally, they become literate much more quickly and effectively than do those who learn in a foreign language” (p.88).

If the instruction the Central American children received were to become culturally relevant, they would first learn their own language in print and use that knowledge to learn to read in English. In this way, the learning activity would be relevant to the lives of the students because it would be responsive to their ways of knowing and doing. Delpit (2006) reported that the immersion system of learning was seen as a success by both the system and the home. There was no question that students could become more successful in this system. Likewise, the teachers, having high expectations for their students’ academic success, demonstrated their understanding of established curriculum outcomes.

### ***2.5. Accountability for student success***

Becoming skilled in culturally relevant pedagogy, as successful at it seems, does not occur simply by completing a degree program in Education or by obtaining a teaching license. Besides the obvious professional development required by teachers in order to teach in a culturally responsive manner, school systems must operate within a vision that would allow culturally relevant pedagogy to flourish. A system in which policies and curriculum, created using research-based pedagogical instructional strategies and practices based on students' cultural and academic needs, is required to set the foundations for success.

When these systems are in place, there is still the need for accountability. The work of ensuring research-based instructional strategies, as well as a culturally relevant approach to delivering curriculum would fall to the role of the school principal. No longer can the principal merely exist as the person accountable for managing time and attendance of teachers and accounting for inventory. The principal must be the lead instructor of the school and, therefore, the instructional leader. The instructional leader would also provide needed instruction for the teachers, ensuring that they have the skills needed to teach in a manner conducive to the learning styles of students.

### ***2.6. Critical pedagogy***

In tandem with culturally relevant teaching, or on its own, critical pedagogy is a powerful tool that can be employed to interrogate systems of oppression. Pierre Bourdieu, whose work was primarily concerned with the dynamics of power in society, is revisited by Albright & Luke (2008) to examine how cultural differences relate to school performance. Educational rewards are won by those who feel most at home within the system. Those who are certain of their abilities may pursue ideas and vocations that interest them and their teachers, while non-mainstream students struggle to acquire the academic and other cultural attributes that appear to come naturally to mainstream children. Unfortunately, the further the distance from the mainstream culture, the more difficulty students from outside that culture will encounter in acquiring requisite academic and cultural attributes through the educational system.

This struggle is often perceived as a sign of inferiority by mainstream participants. Instructional leaders frequently struggle to take this into consideration as they attempt to ensure that their schools are teaching in culturally relevant ways. However, one way that the instructional leader and his or her teachers can ensure that they are being responsive is to incorporate critical pedagogy into their culturally relevant repertoire.

Critical pedagogy as an educational ideal is a moral enterprise in that failure to take as central the fostering of students' abilities and dispositions to think critically fails to treat students with respect as persons, and therefore fails to treat them in a morally acceptable way. If we agree that exclusion, marginalization and oppression are morally wrong, critical pedagogy is crucial at all levels of education (Hare, 2009), as educational institutions must become more sensitive to minority group needs, including protection from hegemonic domination of dominant cultures that exert power over a specific culture, even though that culture may exist in a separate country.

While school cultures may take complex and heterogeneous forms, the principle that remains constant is that they are situated within a network of power relations from which they cannot escape (Giroux, 1983). It is crucial to recognize that schools

represent contested terrains (Brosio, 2000) in the form of inter-subjectivities, but that this terrain is heavily weighted in favour of the dominant culture. It is this contradictory nature of school life that provides a site for teachers to explore how the knowledge and meanings of subordinate groups are experienced and interpreted. Teachers can develop an understanding of how the dominant culture becomes embedded in the “hidden” curriculum in order to negotiate the meanings that relegate schools to a particular relationship with the dominant society (Brosio, 2000; Fairclough, 1995; Giroux, 1983), within or outside of national boundaries.

The “hidden” curriculum is an inherent contradiction of education, where lessons learned are not the intended lessons (Martin, 1983) and may include, but are not limited to the transmission of norms, values, and beliefs that are conveyed in the classroom and the social environment (Giroux & Penna, 1983) and, therefore, may encompass ideological instances of the schooling process that structure and reproduce hegemonic assumptions and practices. Knowledge is being constructed (Fernandez-Balboa, 1993) as often as truth is being discovered, and voices must ask, “Whose knowledge?” “Who benefits?” (Boyles, 1998; Fabos and Young, 1999; Young, 1994) or “Whose interests are being served and at what price?” (Barlow & Robertson, 1994; Fernández-Balboa, 1993). As a result of this interrogation of systems of power, emphasis may be shifted from cultural reproduction to a concern with cultural intervention and social action, thus providing a foundation for using schools as important sites to wage counter-hegemonic practices (Corson, 1995; Cummins, 1995; Fairclough, 1995; Giroux, 1983). This can be accomplished by challenging present beliefs through asking whose interests are being served and linking the internal constructions to external social, political and economic conditions that create social injustice (Fernández-Balboa, 1993) now and in the future.

John Willinsky (in White & Cooper, 2015) takes us into a typical Humanities program in order to show us what this would look like in practice. He suggests that teachers should select texts that complement or are incongruent with the text at hand in order to more clearly understand what perspectives are being presented or what is being left out in the companion texts, or to provide a new perspective altogether. As such, it must be noted that critical pedagogy is more of an attitude towards texts than a method that can be practiced in the same way each time a new text is chosen. By proceeding in this way, students gain opportunities to understand what it is that is being promoted. In this way, they can begin to become critical thinkers in view of not only the canon of authorized texts, but of the responses to that canon as well. Perhaps critical pedagogy may be a useful instrument to develop not only a more democratic form of governance but also one that will allow a certain understanding of ourselves, one another and of the world around us.

Another task for the critical educator is to provide conditions for individuals to acquire a language allowing them to reflect upon and shape their experiences and to transform such experiences in the interests of a larger social responsibility (McLaren & da Silva, 1993). Senior administrative leaders, school principals and teacher leaders can also analyze school knowledge as part of a wider universe of knowledge (Wortham, 1995) in order to understand the reproductive functions existing between external dominant cultures, as forms of power and control, and to focus on questions aimed at dominant culture and the school culture (Brosio, 2000; McLaren, 1994).

Teachers and their instructional leaders must also attempt to unravel the issue of meaning from the issue of mastery embedded in the structure of classroom knowledge.

It is important for educators to reject educational theories that reduce schooling to training, or learning theory to technocratic rationality that ignore social change, power relations, and conflicts within and outside of schools, the society in particular and the rest of the world in general. Critical pedagogy offers one potential solution.

In the absence of general membership in community-based institutions such as churches, recreation centers and social groups, schools have become the default mechanism for the mounting of social change. As such, the life of the school is not only amazingly complex, there are many competing demands for the very precious time allotted during the school day for the education of future generations. However, critical pedagogy can become imbedded in our individual schemas and, like democracy itself, is engaged with, enacted and performed daily. It is, in essence, an attitude, a position, a stance that is transposable from one discipline, age group or grade level to another.

The issue for educators is how one comes to grips with a particular point of view without silencing those who hold that viewpoint, or to silence those who hold opposing viewpoints. Carolyn McKinney (in White & Cooper, 2015) promotes the view that all perspectives, even those from the point of privilege, are valid views and that, in order to gain greater equity and social justice, greater democracy notwithstanding, it is only by tussling with incongruent perspectives that we can influence attitudes and hope to fashion some degree of equity and fairness for all. The power in this approach is that we can begin to view each other as real people rather than a sum of attributes and traits that cause them to be viewed as objects, rather than as people. Thus, these people can come together and learn together and, given a modicum of trust, can actually work towards authentic, valuing relationships.

It is essential that a balance be struck between the teacher's agenda and that of the learners. Should learners' aspirations be suspended or distorted in pursuit of the teacher's learning objectives or the school curricula, and if the teacher's agenda consistently overrides that of the students, the critical pedagogic approach founders. When learners spend time meeting the school or teacher's objectives to the exclusion of their own, this distracts them from focusing on, criticizing and developing strategies that may influence how they interact with the world (Swann & Burgess, 2005) around and beyond them. Using the critical pedagogic approach, however, students are initiated into the practice of critical discussions, while building knowledge.

Transmission models of pedagogy must be replaced by classroom social relationships in which students are able to challenge, engage, and question the form and substance of the learning process. Students must be taught to think critically and logically, to move beyond literal interpretations and fragmented modes of reasoning. Development of a critical mode of reasoning may permit students to appropriate their own histories, to delve into their own biographies and systems of meaning, to provide conditions that give students the opportunity to speak with their own voices to authenticate their own experiences. By doing this, linkages between schools and the wider society can be identified and transformed for the greater good of the entire society and beyond.

### **3. Teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Teaching is a difficult and complex endeavor and, assuming that educators in schools wish to transform their teaching practices, they first need to view their roles as helping

their students construct and apply new knowledge and skills, generally through the process of trial and error (Popper, 1979). Teaching cannot be reduced to a set of prescribed technical activities where students of the same grade or age group are required to complete similar tasks. It is more than teachers having a deep knowledge of subject matter, curriculum, resources and of their students, individually or collectively, that would add to their pool of knowledge. It requires teachers to make decisions as to how similar age-group students can apply the concepts in the prescribed curricula in different situations so as to construct knowledge. In fact, teachers who have a good knowledge of their subject matter may find it more difficult to teach their subject matter well because they fail to understand why some of their students cannot learn the materials or are not interested in the materials prescribed for them.

Teachers of the twenty-first century have the task of instructing an extremely diverse student population that resists “cookie-cutter” solutions (Kinsler & Gamble, 2001). These demographic changes also increasingly make traditional whole class instruction less practical as a dominant mode of teaching because the situation demands the flexible and skilled use of a variety of instructional and organizational approaches (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996). It appears that, if we want our students to succeed and become autonomous, our school system would have to open the door to new thinking. We need to create environments where learners are given the opportunity to test their assumptions and/or hypotheses to find the weaknesses contained within their theories. Perhaps it is as Shimizu (2001) suggests, we really need to change our relationship with our students by making them co-researchers in the inquiry into learning. This is a reconsideration of some very basic notions, such as contemplating what the nature of knowledge is. If we agree that it is more than merely a compilation of facts, we must then identify it as a process of accepting new data into our pre-existing schema. This requires time and reflection and it also begs questions about the very nature of learning itself. Learning is coming to be viewed more as a social activity than an activity that is done independently and in isolation from others. Schools should never become places where there is only one method of teaching (Feyerabend, 2010).

However, improving the nature of teaching and schooling does not mean merely focusing on what the teachers do. We need to look at the larger context in which teaching and learning happens as well, such as in the school, district or province. We also need to look at the curriculum framework, the assessment approaches, and the school culture, among others. Additionally, because of the complexity of the teaching and learning process, knowledge of techniques and methods is insufficient to provide solutions to issues in teaching. Not only does teaching require deep content knowledge, as well as a wide repertoire of teaching strategies, but also an intimate knowledge of students so as to engage them in inquiry, discovery, and practical problem-solving with concentration on higher order thinking (Cole & Knowles, 2000).

In keeping with the cultivation of higher-order thinking and the asking of critical and culturally relevant questions, students require a safe place where they are permitted and helped to seek out and identify mismatches between their current expectations and experience and to articulate some of the mismatches that they have discovered – marginalization, exclusion and oppression not excepted. In providing an arena of culturally relevant inquiry, examination and research, the teacher fosters the value of imagination and creativity, a critical stand towards ideas and the confidence to take risks in one’s own learning and to learn from their own mistakes.

One of the many benefits of adopting a culturally relevant and critical pedagogic approach is that, while the students are learning from prescribed curricula, they are also contributors and evaluators of their own learning. Moreover, through this approach, teachers are also presented with opportunities to develop classroom dialogue and peer and self-assessment of students' work (Spiller 2012).

#### **4. Back to the jungle**

When the pre-service teachers arrived and after adjusting to their new surroundings as quickly as could be expected, a rapid change began to take place. Practicing teachers were happy to learn about new techniques, and many said that they truly appreciated the creativity of the pre-service teachers and were learning a great deal from this experience. In the absence of technological assistance, pre-service teachers often stayed up late creating resources, honing interesting and engaging lesson plans and discussing how best to fit in with the prevailing school culture while trying to bring knowledge generation (Weber, 2014) into the existing schema of the school. Everyone was pleased, and attendance at school began to increase. Some claimed that this was because of the new and interesting additions to the school, while others claimed that attendance usually peaks by mid-week and falls off towards weekends.

As the month progressed, pre-service teachers found that, although they were having a significant impact on the culture and climate of the school, the situation was also impacting them. Some pre-service teachers began to find that their psychological interventions were less effective than those interventions that the students were used to. They began to adopt the more vocal approach to bringing students back to order. Pre-service teachers often felt that their lessons were compromised due to lack of resources, student inattention and lack of support from their co-operating teachers. By now, we were nearing the end of our one-month stay and I began to see that the positive intercessions that had been created were of a fleeting nature. I liken this to clearing a small plot of land in the middle of the jungle. If left untended, this land is quickly reclaimed by our Mother, the jungle. So it seems with the school system here in this tiny country. As I noted before, the focus of this article is not who to blame but to attempt to understand the issues and to move forward in as positive a manner as possible.

It is fairly evident that, given the relatively weak teacher education programmes, the lack of principal leadership courses and the general lack of any discernable professional development, this is a school system in difficulty. If we return to the espoused purposes of schooling as a means to develop employment opportunities, knowledge for its own sake, development of social skills and citizenship (Goodlad, 1984), this school system is providing little of that. It is irrelevant for work, as most students will remain at home in the house or on the land. Rote learning represents an accumulation of unrelated factoids rather than real knowledge that can be applied and developed into wisdom. Social skills and citizenship are indoctrinated rather than encouraged. So what is to be done? Clearly, this is a problem that must be addressed by senior administrators higher up the chain of command. Learning becomes understanding and understanding becomes knowledge and knowledge is power because it provides some form of certainty in an increasingly uncertain world.



## 5. Conclusion

The nature of teaching is changing and, to use Linda Darling-Hammond's (1995) words, "teaching is not talking and learning is not listening any more" (p. 9). In a world that is becoming more global and transient and therefore our classrooms, more multicultural, one has a duty to be culturally aware and prepared to deal with cultural differences thrown at us each day in our schools. There is a very real danger that many educators, parents and the students themselves will embrace thinly veiled corporate ideas, contexts and initiatives, which, after a while, will no longer be apparent (Winner, 1997). With culturally relevant teaching and critical pedagogy, educators can affirm that even small steps toward critical consciousness are worth taking (Shor, 1993; Young, 1995). Such a perspective is concerned with a critique of regimes of exploitation in their various guises, out of which differences are produced (McLaren, 1994).

To this end, Paul Gorski (2010) lists twenty things that an educator can do in order to be a more culturally responsible and culturally relevant teacher. Among the items on this list, Gorski notes that one of the most important things is that students need to feel welcome and valued in the classroom and this can assist in improving one's teaching along the way. Such instructional perquisites involve preventing discrimination in the classroom and enacting culturally relevant classroom practices (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). Such practice may include, but are not limited to, suitable organization of the physical environment, establishment of expectations for behavior, consistent communication, creating inclusive classrooms, working with families, and dealing appropriately with behaviors.

In addition, Picucci et al. (2002) recognize the role of the principal in creating a positive and culturally competent school culture is extremely important. The importance of building caring and safe spaces in one's school is paramount. Allowing students to feel like they are represented and valued and that their culture is important should be at the root of all educators, especially those cast in the role of instructional leaders.

The entire world order is in flux, as we continue to be affected by globalization, but not by a global culture. Poore (2005) cites the need for unity on a world scale. As culturally relevant and critical pedagogues Poore states that our role is "to ensure our students are educated in an environment which bridges the lack of a universal language and causes them to transcend the limits and differences of individual cultures" (p. 355). Perhaps one way to proceed is by becoming acquainted with culturally relevant teaching and with an accompanying critical pedagogy. By devolving a modicum of power to those who have not yet had an opportunity to explore, inquire and to make changes that benefit the least advantaged rather than those who are most advantaged, perhaps we may be able to avert impending future disasters such as environmental destruction, ignorance and impoverishment, and marginalization at the hands of those in positions of greater power. Perhaps we may even be able to trade notions of equality for those of equity. By adopting a position of culturally relevant and critical pedagogy, perhaps we stand a chance. After all, what could possibly go wrong?

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## El Equipo Directivo como Promotor de Buenas Prácticas para la Justicia Social: Hacia un Liderazgo Inclusivo

### The Management Team in Promoting Social Justice: Towards Inclusive Leadership

### Equipe de Gestão como Promotor de Boas Práticas para a Justiça Social: Rumo a uma Liderança Inclusiva

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El presente artículo describe parte una investigación cualitativa realizada un centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria considerado como promotor de buenas prácticas para la justicia social desde un enfoque inclusivo. Para ello, hemos realizado un estudio de caso en dicho centro utilizando como instrumentos las entrevistas, observaciones y análisis de documentos teniendo como objetivo analizar, describir, contrastar e interpretar la gestión de la diversidad y las buenas prácticas directivas inclusivas del equipo directivo de un centro público de Educación Infantil y Primaria de la capital de Huelva acogido al Plan de Educación Compensatoria. Para ello, durante un curso académico hemos sido espectadores y participantes de la realidad educativa propia del centro. Hemos visto como la apuesta por un proyecto de dirección basado en la colaboración e impulsado por la ilusión de construir una escuela para la justicia social lleva consigo la respuesta adecuada para atender a las necesidades de todo el alumnado. Así, hemos concluido que el liderazgo inclusivo conlleva la apuesta por un liderazgo distribuido y colaborativo abierto a la comunidad educativa, una cultura colaborativa, una organización de centro y de aula abierta al entorno y una serie de características necesarias en las personas que trabajan en el centro educativo, especialmente, el equipo directivo.

**Descriptor:** Directores escolares, Liderazgo educativo, Educación inclusiva, Buenas prácticas, Investigación cualitativa.

This paper describe a part of qualitative research carry out to Childhood and Primary Education School which is considered as promoting of good practices for social justice with a perspective of inclusive education. We have made a case study using as instruments interviews, observations and documents analysis being a main aim to analyze, to describe, to compare and to interpret the management of diversity and inclusive management practices of the management team in a public Nursery and Primary Education schools with Compensatory Project. Accordingly, during an academic year we have been spectators and participants own educational reality of downtown. We have seen how the commitment to a project management based on partnership and driven by the dream of building a school for social justice carries with it the right answer to meet the needs of all students. In conclusion that inclusive leadership involves a commitment to an open education community, a collaborative culture, an organization of school and classroom distributed and

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collaborative leadership open to the environment and a some features required for people who work in the school, especially the management team.

**Keywords:** Principals, Educational leadership, Inclusive education, Good practices, Qualitative research.

Este artigo descreve uma pesquisa qualitativa realizada uma educação pré-primária e primária considerada como a promoção de melhores práticas para a justiça social a partir de uma abordagem inclusiva. Para este fim, foi realizado um estudo de caso neste centro utilizando como instrumentos as entrevistas, observações e análise de documentos com o objetivo de analisar, descrever, comparar e interpretar a gestão da diversidade e as boas práticas de gestão, inclusive da equipe de um centro de gestão berçário público eo capital Primária Huelva saudou o Plano de Educação compensatória. Assim, durante o ano lectivo, temos sido espectadores e participantes, na verdade próprio centro educacional. Vimos como o compromisso com um projeto de gestão baseado na parceria e impulsionado pelo sonho de construir uma escola para a justiça social traz consigo a resposta certa para atender às necessidades de todos os alunos. Assim, concluímos que a liderança inclusiva envolve um compromisso com uma comunidade de ensino aberto, uma cultura colaborativa, uma organização da escola e da sala de aula aberta ao meio ambiente e uma série de recursos necessários para as pessoas que trabalham na liderança distribuída e colaborativa escola, especialmente a equipe de gestão.

**Palavras-chave:** Diretores de escolas, Liderança educacional, Educação inclusiva, Boas práticas, Pesquisa qualitativa.

## Introducción

La cuestión de cómo desarrollar prácticas más inclusivas en educación es posiblemente el mayor desafío al que se enfrenta la escuela en la mayoría de los países del mundo. En los países pobres, la preocupación principal se encuentra en todos los niños/as que nunca ven el interior de un aula. Mientras que, en los países ricos, a pesar de los recursos, la preocupación se centra en aquellos jóvenes que abandonan la escuela con calificaciones bajas, aquellos que reciben una prestación especial, o aquellos que simplemente abandonan la escuela porque la educación les aburre (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Frente a estas situaciones, surge el desafío y un mayor interés por la idea de educación inclusiva. Sin embargo, el terreno sigue siendo confuso en cuanto a qué medidas deben tomarse a fin de avanzar en políticas y prácticas que vayan en esta dirección. (Ainscow, 2008a) Esto hace que la dirección escolar y el liderazgo surjan como aspectos claves para llegar a cumplir dichos desafíos.

Este artículo refleja una investigación centrada en la dirección escolar en el ámbito de la diversidad. En dicha investigación se pone de relieve la importancia de las actitudes de los equipos directivos ante la diversidad en todos los aspectos ya que partiendo de actitudes positivas ante la diversidad podemos propiciar equipos directivos comprometidos con la misma y que, por tanto, lleven una adecuada gestión de ella. Así, describimos un estudio de caso en una escuela de Educación Infantil y Primaria de Andalucía, concretamente de la provincia de Huelva, situada en un contexto desfavorecido de la capital, partiendo de las premisas desarrolladas en investigaciones llevadas a cabo en otros contextos desfavorecidos (Ainscow y West, 2008).

Esta investigación, por tanto, mediante la metodología cualitativa, a través de un estudio de caso en el cual hemos utilizado instrumentos tales como las entrevistas, la

observación y el análisis de documentos, basa su análisis en un sistema de categorías donde se estudia el acceso a la dirección, las actitudes, el papel del equipo directivo y la gestión de la diversidad, cultura escolar que promueve el equipo directivo, el concepto de diversidad en el centro, la formación ante la diversidad y las consideraciones a tener en cuenta en centros diversos describiendo a través de éstas las prácticas directivas desarrolladas en el centro para una adecuada gestión de la diversidad. A través de éste, realizamos un análisis y discusión de los resultados obtenidos, para llegar a las conclusiones que presentamos en este artículo.

## **1. Fundamentación teórica**

Numerosas investigaciones demuestran que la dirección escolar es un factor clave para conseguir una escuela eficaz (Álvarez, 2007; González, 2008; Gunter, 2002; Murillo, 2004, 2006; Northouse, 2004; etc.).

Haciendo referencia a las investigaciones referentes a las prácticas directivas inclusivas y la gestión de la diversidad por parte de los equipos directivos encontramos un vacío en el discurso investigador educativo. Investigaciones como las de Coronel (1996), Murillo (2006), Murillo, Barrio y Pérez-Albo (1999), nos pueden introducir en la importancia de los equipos directivos en el proceso de cambio y mejora en los centros escolares, pero sólo algunas investigaciones españolas como Antúnez (2007), Essomba (2006), González (2008), León (2001), López López (2001), Murillo y Hernández-Castilla (2011a,b), Navarro Montaña (2008), y otras investigaciones internacionales como Ainscow y West (2008), Ainscow (2009), Leithwood (2005), Lumby y Coleman (2010), Lumby y Morrison (2010), Ryan (2006), etc. nos muestran en sus trabajos la relación íntima entre liderazgo e inclusión escolar y, por tanto, la importancia de la gestión de la diversidad por parte de los equipos directivos para promover prácticas inclusivas que den respuesta a las características individuales y a la idiosincrasia de cada alumno/a, basándose la mayoría en la necesidad de un cambio en los equipos directivos y el profesorado para poder atender las necesidades de todos los alumnos y alumnas sin hacer exclusiones.

El liderazgo que hoy demandan las escuelas no es un liderazgo centrado exclusivamente en las estructuras formales sino un liderazgo apoyado en fundamentos que apuesten por la participación y colaboración de la comunidad educativa, siendo todas las personas líderes en algún momento. Así, como hemos visto, los estudios del liderazgo en las escuelas apuntan hacia el liderazgo distribuido eliminando la identificación de esta función exclusivamente con el director o equipo directivo del centro, comenzando a concebir que el liderazgo puede ser compartido a través de una estructura de gestión en todos los niveles en la comunidad escolar.

De esta forma, esta investigación surge y se justifica, en parte, en la escasez de investigaciones sobre la gestión de la diversidad por parte de los equipos directivos, la influencia de sus actitudes en la dirección de un centro diverso y las buenas prácticas inclusivas directivas en centros de Educación Compensatoria o escuelas urbanas.

Los escasos trabajos que existen sobre la gestión de la diversidad y el liderazgo de escuelas inclusivas a cargo de los equipos directivos, (Ainscow, 2013a,b; González, 2008; Leithwood, 2005; León, 2001, 2012; López López, 2001; Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2011a,b; Navarro Montaña, 2008; Riehl, 2000; Ryan, 2003, 2006), apuntan a que es necesario un liderazgo distribuido y colaborativo para construir un verdadero liderazgo

inclusivo que tenga como propósito una escuela para todos desde la participación de todos.

El liderazgo inclusivo conlleva el desarrollo de prácticas directivas sustentadas en valores por parte de los directivos tales como la colaboración, intencionalidad, compromiso, atrevimiento, transparencia en las decisiones como actitud y flexibilidad (Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2011a). Así, los equipos directivos, según Leitwood (2005) apoyado por Murillo y Hernández-Castilla (2011a) deben tener a) la visión y entusiasmo viendo a los directivos como soñadores y promotores de prácticas; b) el fomento del crecimiento de la comunidad, siendo los equipos directivos los potenciadores de la cultura de apoyo y colaboración mutua; c) trabajo por una cultura inclusiva, donde exista una serie de valores y actitudes compartidos; d) favorecer procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje inclusivos, con directivos que busquen soluciones innovadoras para los docentes; e) colaboración entre familia y escuela, con directivos que estrechen fuertes lazos entre ambos; f) revalorizar a los estudiantes, los líderes inclusivos tienen en consideración tanto en la perspectiva como en las prácticas las diferencias de raza, género, clase socio-económica, cultura, capacidad, orientación sexual y otros aspectos que tradicionalmente han sido causas de exclusión.

Consideramos que los resultados de esta investigación pueden abrir caminos para el desarrollo de prácticas directivas que lleven a la lucha por una escuela para todos respetando el derecho a la educación de todos los niños y niñas.

## 2. Método

### 2.1. Contexto y selección del caso

La investigación que se presenta se enmarca en el contexto andaluz dentro de una investigación de mayor envergadura<sup>1</sup>. Para determinar la estructura de la muestra llevamos a cabo un procedimiento intencional para seleccionar los casos. Concretamente, se centró en el estudio de centros de Educación Infantil y Primaria con planes o proyectos innovadores para atender a la diversidad que fueran desarrollados por los equipos directivos y tuvieran una trayectoria de al menos cuatro años. La Consejería de Educación de la Junta de Andalucía seleccionó los centros de Educación Infantil y Primaria que estaban acogidos al Plan de Educación Compensatoria. El total de centros correspondía a un número de 350. De estos centros, los coordinadores de Educación Compensatoria de cada una de las delegaciones andaluzas seleccionaron una muestra proporcional de cada provincia quedándonos en la primera fase con 22 centros. Para la selección de nuestro centro objeto de estudio aplicamos lo que Coller (2000) define como muestreo motivado y Goetz y Lecompte (1988) como selección de criterios simples, se eligió un centro teniendo como criterios la accesibilidad al campo, la inclusión del centro en el Plan de Educación Compensatoria, la existencia de un equipo directivo con más de

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<sup>1</sup> La investigación que se presenta viene precedida por una fase extensiva en el marco andaluz de Andalucía donde se seleccionaron 22 centros de Educación Infantil y Primaria acogidos al Plan de Educación Compensatoria seleccionados por la Administración Educativa, contrastando los resultados con el estudio de tres centros de la ciudad de Manchester donde el desarrollo de investigaciones y programas inclusivos viene siendo característico de dicho contexto (Ainscow y West, 2008)



4 años en el centro y el desarrollo de buenas prácticas remarcadas por el propio centro en la primera fase y por la Delegación Provincial de Educación.

El estudio de caso (Yin, 2014) se llevó a cabo en el curso 2009-2010. La escuela donde se realizó el estudio es un centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria acogido al Plan de Educación Compensatoria situado en la capital de Huelva, concretamente en un barrio ubicado en el Distrito V. Es importante que situemos el mismo dentro de su barrio y enmarcado en su distrito ya que en éste se trabaja de tal forma que todas las instituciones que están dentro de él desarrollan sus funciones siguiendo unos objetivos comunes que se encuentran recogidos en el Plan Integral del Distrito V<sup>2</sup>, es decir, llevan a cabo su trabajo de forma comunitaria o global. Está situado, por tanto, en la periferia de una ciudad periférica de Andalucía y de España, y por tanto, de la Unión Europea; que, sin embargo, se encuentra en el centro de la Economía Mundial (OLE, 2005).

Centrándonos en la barriada en la que se encuentra nuestro centro, podemos decir que se construyó en el año 1977, como consecuencia de un Plan Municipal para la erradicación del chabolismo que aglutinaba a una población procedente de diversos sectores. Según datos catastrales recogidos para estudio de mercado del Distrito V en 2005, la barriada cuenta con 1488 viviendas y 56 locales comerciales. Desde su creación, ha sido una barriada socialmente conflictiva que tiene su reflejo en aspectos como el notorio deterioro urbanístico, la imagen que tiene la ciudad respecto al barrio, el bajo nivel de seguridad y confianza de la zona; por poner algunos ejemplos.

El centro en el cual nos hemos sumergido es un centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria de titularidad pública, siendo el primer centro público que se abrió en la barriada.

El equipo directivo llega al centro en el curso 2003/2004, en estos momentos el centro tenía sólo una línea y nueve unidades, como actualmente. Su plantilla estaba compuesta por diecisiete maestros y maestras, sólo uno menos que en el momento que se realizó el estudio.

El centro a partir de la década de los noventa ha ido perdiendo número de alumnos de nuevo ingreso en cada curso, hasta llegar al curso 13/14 donde han recibido siete matriculas para Educación Infantil de 3 años. En el curso 2009/2010 contaba con dieciocho maestros y maestras para atender tres aulas de Educación Infantil (3 y 4 años y 5 años), seis aulas de Educación Primaria y un aula de Educación Especial para acoger a un total de ciento treinta y seis alumnos/as (número no estable en el curso por las altas y bajas de alumnos y alumnas que se mueven por problemas de custodia o de trabajo de sus familiares), de los cuales un 90% aproximadamente pertenecen a la etnia gitana. La ratio de alumnos y alumnas por aulas es muy baja, hay aulas que sólo tienen nueve niños y la que más tienen son dieciséis.

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<sup>2</sup> El Plan Integral del Distrito V surge en el año 2000 en la Fundación Valdocco. Esta idea es presentada a la Junta Municipal del Distrito V, ante la necesidad de ofrecer soluciones conjuntas a las diversas problemáticas que confluyen en el territorio. La complejidad y la evolución no satisfactoria de la situación, especialmente en dos barriadas, hizo nacer la inquietud de tratar el mejoramiento de la zona desde una nueva perspectiva que resolviera por fin esta situación. La gravedad de la problemática llevó a la mencionada Junta a aprobar la realización de un diagnóstico socioeconómico inicial, como primer paso para la elaboración de un plan integral. La Junta Municipal encargó a la propia fundación Valdocco este trabajo, el cual realizó con la ayuda del Observatorio Local de Empleo de la Universidad de Huelva.

En este contexto, la investigación pretendía realizar el estudio de caso de un centro para analizar, describir, contrastar e interpretar la gestión de la diversidad y las buenas prácticas inclusivas del equipo directivo de un centro público de Educación Infantil y Primaria de la capital de Huelva acogido al Plan de Educación Compensatoria.

## ***2.2. Obtención de datos***

Durante todo un curso académico visitamos dicha escuela, en los tres primeros meses hicimos una toma de contacto, siendo en los seis meses restantes cuando asistimos al centro todos los días de la semana. Los datos fueron recogidos a través de diferentes instrumentos: las observaciones, las entrevistas y el análisis de documentos.

- *Observación:* Se utilizaron varias formas de observación (García, González y Ballesteros, 2001). La observación, tanto participante como no participante, ha sido uno de los instrumentos más utilizados. Necesitábamos entrar y conocer la realidad del día a día de la escuela y también quisimos conocer el barrio, observar su población, observar sus edificios, observar en sí la realidad circundante, porque esto era realmente lo que nos podía dar una idea clara de la cultura que se vivía y respiraba en él, y, sobre todo, nos podía ayudar a entender muchas de las cosas que ocurrían en el centro. Esta observación no participante, consistía exclusivamente en contemplar lo que estaba aconteciendo en la escuela o en el barrio, intentando evitar la interacción con el entorno; era ver y registrar los hechos desde un plano objetivo. Por otro lado, la observación realizada en el centro ha sido participante, centrándonos en nuestro objetivo y estableciendo criterios para realizar el registro sin llegar a utilizar una observación sistematizada. Para contrastar los datos aportados por la observación participante y no participante y otros instrumentos utilizados en la investigación, hemos apostado por lo que algunos autores como Pozuelos (2000), denominan como observación indirecta o con medios, haciendo referencia al registro de situaciones mediante determinados aparatos electrónico, en nuestro caso se limitó a la elaboración de fotos y videos teniendo en cuenta el derecho a la intimidad de los niños y niñas.
- *Entrevistas:* En total se realizaron 20 entrevistas, no todas grabadas en audio para evitar la coacción que producen los medios tecnológicos aunque sí la mayoría: 15 a los maestros y maestras del centro, 1 a cada miembro del equipo directivo (3), 1 al equipo directivo en su conjunto, 1 al monitor escolar, 1 a los miembros de la Asociación de Unión Romaní, 1 a las alumnas en prácticas de Educación Social del centro, 1 a los miembros del Programa de Desarrollo Gitano del Ayuntamiento y 1 a la Fundación Secretariado Gitano. En los comienzos de nuestro estudio no podemos hablar tanto de entrevista como de charlas con informantes claves informales, No teníamos ningún guión previo para realizarlas, puesto que lo que nos interesaba en esos momentos era dejar a los informantes claves hablar y que nos contasen la historia de centro y lo que conocieran del barrio, para hacernos una primera aproximación a ellos. En referencia al barrio estas charlas se desarrollaron en el primer mes y se realizaron a los profesionales que trabajaban en los servicios sociales del ayuntamiento, a personas que trabajan en las distintas asociaciones que existen en los barrios, etc. a vecinos del barrio, a personal que han trabajado en programas puntuales desarrollados en los barrios, etc. Elaboramos un guión de

las entrevistas previo, adaptado a cada uno de los participantes en la investigación, siendo éste flexible. Estos protocolos iniciales se validaron a través de dos procesos, el análisis de un experto en la materia y la revisión por parte de algún miembro del equipo directivo. De esta forma, conseguimos depurar las preguntas relacionándolas con cada uno de los objetivos de la investigación, reformulamos aquellas cuestiones que eran imprecisas y suprimimos aquellas que se repetían o eran innecesarias. Las entrevistas fueron tanto individuales como en, algunos casos, en equipo.

- *Las Notas de campo:* El diario de investigación o Cuaderno de Campo. Las notas de campo han sido el instrumento utilizado para registrar tanto las observaciones como las entrevistas o charlas realizadas que no han sido grabadas, todas ellas han ido formando nuestro diario de campo. Esta técnica del diario de investigación se ha utilizado de forma transversal, es decir, por una parte, ha constituido una técnica propia, independiente de las demás pero por otra se ha insertado como parte fundamental de otros instrumentos, como las entrevistas de las cuales se han anotado las expresiones no verbales del entrevistado y todas aquellas impresiones y reflexiones de los investigadores pre y posterior a la entrevista, o como en el caso de de las observaciones, en las que se ha reservado un espacio para las anotaciones relacionadas con aspectos como el tiempo y el espacio, perspectiva de la investigadora, etc. Estas notas se han ido tomando a lo largo de todo el proceso de investigación y han ido recogiendo lo que veíamos y observábamos in situ, para después ser comentadas y reflexionadas, lo que ha dado lugar a que en ellas encontremos desde datos físicos hasta percepciones personales sobre actitudes, tanto hacia la investigadora como hacia la realidad del barrio. En las notas de campo se intentaba recoger las anécdotas que ocurrían en el centro o los episodios que alguien te contaba que había sucedido en otros tiempos, y que le daban respuestas a muchas de las actuaciones que se desarrollaban en la actualidad en él.
- *Revisión de documentos:* En nuestra investigación hemos efectuado una revisión de los documentos oficiales del centro: su Plan Anual de Centro, Memoria Final de Curso, actas de Consejos Escolares y Claustros, Plan de Educación Compensatoria y Plan de Convivencia, así como informes de prácticas de alumnos de la Diplomatura de Educación Social. También hemos consultado informes realizados por el centro para distintas jornadas y encuentros. Asimismo hemos consultado memorias y proyectos elaborados por las distintas asociaciones que trabajan en los barrios, asociaciones como Unión Romaní y Secretariado Gitano. Por otro lado, hemos consultado estudios realizados por el Observatorio Local de Empleo, entidad dependiente de la Universidad, que está realizando trabajos sobre la exclusión social y económica como el Plan Integral del Distrito V de gran importancia en el barrio, así como comunicaciones presentadas a Jornadas y Congresos realizados sobre exclusión. Además, con un carácter más informal, hemos revisado noticias de prensa de varios periódicos locales: Odiel Información, Viva Huelva y Huelva Información.

### 3. Resultados

El análisis de los datos que realizamos a lo largo de la investigación fue un proceso arduo y difícil, ya que la información que recolectamos fue muy abundante y provenía de muchos instrumentos. Este análisis se llevó a cabo en el curso 2010/2011 y se ha actualizado en el curso 2013-2014.

Siguiendo a la mayoría de los expertos apostamos por un análisis basado en la reducción, la categorización, clarificación, síntesis y comparación de los datos, poniendo especial énfasis en la utilización de categorías para ello. (Goetz LeCompte, 1988; Huber y Marcelo, 1990 y Pérez Serrano, 1994). Así, se realizó el procesamiento y análisis de la información artesanalmente, de tal forma que se realizó una lectura cuidadosa y comprensiva del contenido extrayendo a mano las unidades de análisis en las que nos apoyábamos. Para ello, una vez ordenadas y codificadas las diferentes técnicas, elaboramos un sistema de categorías apoyado también en el sistema de categorías que habíamos utilizado en la fase anterior de la investigación que hemos comentado. Este sistema de categorías fue el resultado de desglosar cada uno de los objetivos en diferentes temas que dieron lugar a las categorías y subcategorías de esta fase de la investigación. Dichas categorías fueron: acceso a la dirección, actitudes, papel del equipo directivo y gestión de la diversidad, cultura escolar que promueve el equipo directivo, concepto de diversidad en el centro, consideraciones a tener en cuenta en los centros diversos y formación ante la diversidad.

Tras el análisis de los datos, partiendo de dichas categorías, llegamos a la obtención de los resultados de este estudio de caso. Las buenas prácticas del equipo directivo del centro que hemos analizado se fundamentan en cinco aspectos:

#### ***3.1. El papel del equipo directivo en el centro y la identidad como equipo***

Nuestra investigación refleja la importancia de la identidad como equipo en el desarrollo de prácticas directivas que atiendan a la diversidad del alumnado. Así, podemos concretar que todos los miembros del equipo directivo que hemos analizado coincidían en pensar que es fundamental para dirigir un centro de estas características la unión de los miembros de este equipo y el claustro. Este equipo directivo lucha por desarrollar una línea en el centro que ellos están de acuerdo que es la más adecuada para atender a las necesidades de todo el alumnado. En todo momento, observamos la gran compenetración entre los tres miembros y su complicidad delante del claustro, es admirable ver que tres personas son una ante el claustro, aunque previamente en sus reuniones hayan discutido las ideas. Por tanto, es evidente que este equipo directivo tiene una gran identidad como equipo, no sólo es importante el director sino que ellos apuestan más por una dirección de equipo a su vez apoyada y llevada también por el claustro. Así lo explicaba el director:

*Tenemos identidad como equipo. Sí, totalmente. Aquí no tomamos decisiones así importantes sin hablarlas bien. [...] Nos reunimos habitualmente. Normalmente no porque eso significa haber tenido un horario y no nos lo hemos puesto nunca, lo hemos intentado pero al final no nos sale los horarios. Por lo cual nos reunimos cuando no podemos más y nos hartamos. Pero lo hacemos con asiduidad.* (Entrevista 3: Director del centro, p.10).

*Este equipo directivo se reunía diariamente ya que todos los días coincidían bien a primera hora, en la hora del café, en el recreo o a la salida y se mantenían informados de todos los aspectos que consideraban importantes.* (Diario de Campo: 08/02/2010).

*Todos los maestros y maestras y los miembros del equipo directivo estaban de acuerdo en que el equipo directivo tiene gran influencia en el centro. En este caso, el equipo directivo es el promotor de una línea concreta que afecta a todas las piezas que construyen el centro. "Cada centro es diferente según el equipo directivo, eso está claro. (Entrevista 9: Maestro/a de Educación Primaria, p. 5).*

Además, esta identidad de equipo conlleva una serie de características propias en el mismo que lo definen como equipo y lo caracterizan, rasgos que le han hecho construir poco a poco una identidad de equipo cada vez más sólida. Los participantes de la investigación piensan que el equipo directivo que trabaje en estos contextos tiene un perfil especial:

*También el equipo directivo tiene que tener un perfil, tiene que estar al pie del cañón, dispuesto a todo, a atender a las familias a cualquier hora, a ir a reuniones del barrio, apoyar a los maestros... ¿en? (Entrevista 1: Jefe de estudios del centro, p. 5).*

Consideramos que ese perfil especial que este equipo manifiesta es un perfil combativo, marcado por un gran sentido de lucha en defensa de los intereses de sus alumnos y alumnas, lo que les mueve a asistir a todas cuantas reuniones sean necesarias, asistir a congresos y jornadas como ponentes y como oyentes, atender a las familias en todo momento, estudiar la legislación, etc. en pos de una mejora para éstos.

Este equipo tenía ilusión y ganas por mejorar las circunstancias sociales y culturales del alumnado y atender a las carencias que éstos tienen. Es solidario y humano no preocupándose solo de los resultados académicos, que también, sino que se preocupa por cada una de las problemáticas que presenta cada alumno y alumna del centro.

La mayoría de los maestros consideran que las personas que forman el equipo directivo están haciendo no sólo una labor educativa sino también social, son personas que se preocupan por el otro, son empáticas e intentan luchar al máximo no sólo por el alumnado sino también por el profesorado. Una maestra los describe de esta forma:

*Hombre, pues el director es muy alegre, eso también es muy positivo porque te recibe con una sonrisa, te anima "venga que hoy está tú muy bien, hoy te veo mejor que nunca" como ha hecho hoy, eso te alegra ¿no? Que te reciba siempre contento. La secretaria también es muy cariñosa, te da de vez en cuando un abracito. Y luego el jefe de estudio algo bueno, el jefe de estudios es... el jefe de estudios es para mí como el que más... Él siempre está pensando en los niños y es que no tiene otro pensamiento más allá de eso y es que es verdad. (Entrevista 9: Maestros/as de Educación Primaria, p. 6-7).*

La clave de la identidad de este equipo directivo está en que todos ellos tienen un mismo concepto de la educación en este centro y un mismo objetivo (Análisis de documentos). Este equipo directivo pone en el centro de la diana las necesidades del alumnado y a partir de ellas comienza a crear un línea de trabajo que está abierta siempre a cambios, una línea de trabajo fundamentada en una educación que apueste por actuaciones de éxito, es decir, que mejoren aspectos como los resultados académicos, el absentismo escolar, la convivencia, etc.

Otro de los rasgos de este equipo directivo es su conciencia de equipo de trabajo, es decir, ellos conciben la dirección como un trabajo en equipo aunque en algunos momentos se decanten más hacia unos y en otros más hacia otros, pero la realidad es que todos desarrollan un trabajo de equipo. Comenta la secretaria: "Hombre dentro del equipo directivo lo que está muy claro es que nosotros intentamos ser eso un grupo de trabajo." (Entrevista 2: Secretaria del equipo directivo, p. 9).

Como todo equipo dentro del mismo hay un líder y ese es el director del centro. Él en muchos casos tiene que tomar la última decisión pero en la mayoría tiene en cuenta no sólo la voz de su equipo sino también la del claustro de profesores. Es un líder democrático.

Hemos observado en nuestra investigación como esta identidad se construye a través de las reuniones que tiene el equipo directivo a lo largo de la semana. En estas reuniones, hablan de la programación de la semana, los conflictos que se dan en el centro, problemas como la llegada de los piojos (DC: 08/02/2010), actividades extraordinarias, organización de las jornadas de exclusiva y, en el tiempo que yo he estado sobre todo han dialogado sobre el tema de comunidades de aprendizaje.

Otro aspecto a resaltar en dicho equipo es la amistad siendo ésta otra de las clave de este equipo directivo. Las buenas relaciones personales entre ellos hacen que el equipo siempre esté en sintonía y crezcan sentimientos de comprensión, cariño, aprecio, empatía, preocupación, etc. de forma que se da verdaderamente el famoso refrán de “hoy por ti y mañana por mí”.

La coordinación entre compañeros y compañeras parte, en primer lugar, de una coordinación entre los propios miembros del equipo directivo. Por ello, en todo momento nuestro estudio se ha centrado en el equipo directivo y no exclusivamente en el director del centro, ya que ésta es la concepción que el propio director tiene de dirección, y además, así lo manifiesta tanto el profesorado como el personal no docente o madres y el resto de los miembros del equipo directivo.

De esta forma, este equipo directivo muestra lazos fuertes entre ellos los cuales han forjado en los siete años que han trabajado forjando una identidad propia que les ha hecho ser únicos en la dirección. Una maestra de Infantil remarca dicha importancia:

*Bueno yo lo primero que veo que es un equipo, eso para mí es lo más importante, porque yo he estado en centros en los que el equipo directivo no era un equipo sino que eran tres personas y cada una hacía su papel y punto. Aquí no, aquí yo lo que más destaco positivo es que realmente es un equipo ¿en? Y todo lo que se hace, las decisiones que se toman, se toman en equipo y bueno también cuentan con nuestra opinión, que no se toman muy literalmente ¿no?. (Entrevista 6: Maestra de Educación Infantil, p. 3).*

### **3.2. El equipo como promotor de buenas prácticas**

Tras la anterior fase de la investigación (Gómez, 2012), observamos que una de las funciones más cruciales de los equipos directivos en contextos desfavorecidos como en el que investigamos en el estudio de caso, es ser el dinamizador y promotor de buenas prácticas que den lugar al desarrollo integral de todo el alumnado.

Asimismo, vemos como el equipo directivo estudiado concibe que son ellos mismos los que deben de velar porque se den las prácticas más adecuadas para atender a dicho alumnado, de tal manera que son ellos los que intenta promover no sólo prácticas determinadas para el aula sino una organización que favorezca la atención a la diversidad del alumnado.

*Claro, pero es importante porque de... verás, la dirección del centro gestiona absolutamente toda la... los planteamientos educativos del centro. Entonces depende mucho de la dirección ¿en? Entonces depende mucho de la dirección el que un proyecto de esta envergadura vaya para delante, porque la dirección anima también al claustro, si la dirección no anima hay un parón, eso es... eso es... (Entrevista 1: Jefe de Estudios del centro, p. 17).*

Por tanto, este equipo directivo nos muestra una constante lucha porque toda la comunidad educativa vaya hacia el mismo rumbo que ellos. Ellos han adquirido un compromiso, desean que se atiendan todas las necesidades del alumnado y persiguen que se mejoren los resultados, pero reconocen que no sólo depende de un buen funcionamiento de la locomotora del centro sino también de un buen rodaje de los vagones del tren. Así, el equipo directivo considera que no sólo él debe dinamizar y hacer propuestas sino también otras personas que participan en el centro pueden colaborar siempre y cuando todo se dirija hacia un mismo destino.

*Bueno, nosotros hacemos propuestas, sugerencias... Además, animamos pero muchas veces también me gustaría que hubiese una doble dirección y que dijeran "oye ustedes estáis... ¿qué pasa? ¿Os habéis relajado en este sentido?" Eso es lo que me gustaría. Porque si yo me relajo, por ejemplo, y no me dicen nada los compañeros del claustro ¿tú qué piensas?.* (Entrevista 1: Jefe de Estudios del centro, p. 15).

Es decir, apuestan por un liderazgo compartido, aunque reconocen que como equipo directivo tienen el deber de velar y promover líneas favorecedoras de una educación para todos y todas los alumnos y alumnas. Esto lo podemos ver en actividades escolares concretas promovidas por el equipo directivo como la convivencia de final de curso donde se reúnen docentes, familiares, alumnado y personal de administración y servicios para pasar un día en el campo y convivir; el desayuno escolar de cada día dando respuesta a la necesidad de una alimentación sana y saludable para el alumnado; el cepillado de dientes como rutina de higiene para el alumnado; las reuniones informativas de todo el claustro al comienzo de la jornadas de exclusiva, etc. Y también, en actuaciones de gran envergadura como la promoción de una metodología concreta y una organización determinada.

### ***3.3. La convivencia como base de las prácticas del centro***

Es importante la convivencia escolar en la mejora de los resultados académicos. El director, jefe de estudios y secretaria del centro intentan luchar y hacer comprender al profesorado que la convivencia es para este contexto un arma para combatir los conflictos y poder llegar a superar situaciones pudiendo posteriormente pasar al desarrollo del aprendizaje académico. Es decir, en otras palabras, el director siempre nos dice:

*Si un niño da problemas en el aula, interrumpe el trabajo de la misma y por tanto, la maestra o el maestro no puede enseñar contenidos, hay que enseñar a convivir entre ellos para cuando tengamos un clima adecuado poder impartir las clases con otra forma sí, porque la metodología tradicional aquí no..., pero desarrollando contenidos académicos.* (DC: 13/05/2010).

Para mejorar esta convivencia dentro del aula, el equipo directivo junto al claustro decidieron que había que trabajar las habilidades sociales tales como la autoestima, valores, autonomía personal y social...dentro y fuera del horario lectivo; programar actividades de tutoría: programa de habilidades sociales: ser asertivo, autoestima, técnicas que favorezcan la conversación, los derechos míos y de los demás, el trabajo en equipo, resolución de conflictos a través del diálogo y del consenso, asunción de responsabilidades, educación en valores (compartir, respetar ideas y opiniones,...); potenciar la dinámica cooperativa; emplear una metodología activa, participativa para que el alumno/a se exprese con libertad, no sexista; basada en la tolerancia y respeto a las ideas y diferencias; permitir la crítica constructiva, siempre en un marco de respeto y tolerancia; establecer estrategias referidas a cómo solucionar los problemas; introducir ideas previas, debate sobre los problemas más habituales; trabajar la expresión de

sentimientos: listado de sentimientos; utilizar como estrategias didácticas: la motivación, los errores como fuente de aprendizaje, la reconducción de situaciones conflictivas mediante el análisis de las causas, hechos y consecuencias transformando los conflictos en propuestas positivas de cambio, el respeto en el uso de la palabra, promover en el alumnado la ponderación, la felicitación, ... elaborar de forma consensuada las normas de clase acompañadas de los correspondientes premios y sanciones que se deriven.

#### ***3.4. La dirección llevada a cabo desde la comunidad: apostando por un liderazgo distribuido, pedagógico y transformacional***

La ley establece o delimita una serie de funciones para cada miembro del equipo directivo, pero también es cierto que el equipo tiene autonomía propia para decidir qué funciones desarrollará cada miembro del mismo siendo conscientes de que hay que cumplir con la delimitación establecida por la ley para el director, el jefe de estudios y el secretario.

En el equipo directivo de nuestra investigación, cada uno tenía sus funciones propias, pero trabajaban de forma colaborativa, como comentaba el monitor escolar:

*Yo, en muchos caso, no veo diferencia entre ellos, aunque cada uno debe desarrollar unas funciones, pero es una evidencia que son una piña entre ellos e intentan serlo con el claustro. (Entrevista 7: Monitor Escolar, p. 8).*

El trabajo no estaba repartido en cajones estancos:

*Este es un equipo muy particular ¿sabes? Porque yo lo mismo hago asuntos de jefatura que hago asuntos de secretaria que hago asuntos de dirección ¿sabes? Y ellos igual ¿sabes? Y ellos igual, esto están compensados, está distribuido el trabajo. Por carácter, pues el director si tiene un carácter digamos más más abierto, más fuerte, entonces quizás sea una cara más visible del centro, y le viene muy bien, le viene muy bien. (Entrevista 1: Jefe de Estudios del centro, p. 9).*

E incluso en estas funciones se le daba cabida a cualquier otro maestro o maestra que pudiera ayudar en un momento determinado. Son muchos los momentos en los que el equipo directivo reconocía que no tenía la capacidad para cubrir algunas de sus funciones y pedía ayuda al profesorado. Pero esto ha sido un proceso, en los primeros momentos el equipo directivo y las maestras que llegaron con él mismo hacían todo, por “la inseguridad” que tenían de que algo pudiera fallar y la actitud de reticencia del resto del claustro:

*... además al principio los que estábamos éramos los cinco que entramos y nos teníamos que conocer entonces... los que estaban dentro estaban un poco “a ver a ver cómo vienen estos y en qué plan vienen” porque también es duro ¿en? Tú no sabes a que... Viene un grupo de 5 pero tú no sabes cómo vienen, qué ideas tienen, qué quieren hacer... entonces al principio fue ese el momento de conocernos, de ver cómo respirábamos cada uno y así nos hemos tirado, bueno... (Entrevista 5: Maestra de Educación Primaria, p. 7).*

No obstante, aunque hemos visto que las funciones de los tres miembros están divididas en la ley pero entremezcladas en la realidad, también existen funciones que, según la normativa, deben ser realizadas por todo el equipo directivo. En nuestro centro, hemos observado que muchas de las cuales deben ser realizadas por alguno de los miembros es compartida con otros, por tanto, no es un inconveniente para este equipo realizar algunas funciones de forma colegiada, no sólo entre el equipo directivo sino contando también con la colaboración de las personas que forman la comunidad educativa.

Para este equipo directivo también era importante conocer la opinión de los maestros y maestras de la mayoría de las cosas que se llevaban a cabo en el centro, tanto es así que



cada lunes en la jornada de exclusiva lo primero que existía y permanece es una reunión informativa de todo el claustro y, no sólo esto, sino que cualquier miembro del equipo directivo en la hora del café o cuando va a alguien al despacho le pide consejo sobre algunas decisiones.

También el equipo directivo ofrecía la ayuda y consejo a las familias, concretamente:

*... las madres, las madres se sienten escuchadas y se consideran parte del centro ya que, sobre todo el director, está siempre dispuesto a escuchar los problemas de las familias a cualquier hora de la jornada escolar, permite la venta ambulante dentro del centro en horario de recreo para ayudar a las familias, él es el primero que compra, les rellena documentos, etc.; de tal forma que están siempre a disposición del equipo directivo<sup>3</sup>. (DC: 10/02/2010).*

Esta forma tan peculiar de tratar a las familias, en concreto, por parte del director sobre todo, puede ser debido a que “el director tiene mano izquierda con las familias” (Entrevista 4: Educadora social del PGD, p. 4), como nos dicen algunos maestros y maestras y otros miembros de la comunidad educativa, pero, también es cierto, que se han dado circunstancias en el centro donde no sólo funciona la mano izquierda sino el diálogo tranquilo y sereno, que el director ha puesto en práctica<sup>4</sup>.

*El director es el que siempre va... el que lleva a los padres, que creo que los lleva bastante bien, aunque algunas veces, hombre, como en todo también estará hasta donde, pero yo creo que él los padres lo respetan. Hasta en situaciones extremas, él utiliza el diálogo y les dice a los padres que se calmen que con la violencia no se va a ningún lado. (Entrevista 9: Maestro/a de Educación Primaria, p. 6).*

Otras veces necesitan imponerse, imposición que para muchos es necesaria en más ocasiones con el alumnado:

*A lo mejor mira yo creo que dan mucha flexibilidad y yo creo que deberían de ser menos flexibles, depende de las situaciones y depende de los momentos, pero a lo mejor menos flexibles sí, no tenían que ser tan flexibles porque aquí la picardía que tienen es que son muy flexibles, entonces claro los padres pues se ajotan a todo. Pero ya te digo hay cambios que es muy importante ¿no? Creo que es eso la flexibilidad a lo mejor. (Entrevista 15: Educadora Social del PGD, p. 4).*

Nuestro equipo directivo se basa en las redes de colaboración, es decir, considera que la atención a la diversidad en este contexto debe partir de la idea de comunidad y la participación de todos en el centro. Dentro de esta colaboración, es fundamental la coordinación del personal docente, ya que son estos los máximos responsables de la educación de los niños y niñas dentro del centro educativo.

Para ello el equipo directivo, establecía tiempos para que cada equipo de ciclo acordara líneas de actuación comunes, consensuara y trabajara con los mismos criterios, desarrollara programas de transición en los cambios de etapa educativa y estableciera

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<sup>3</sup> La participación de las madres, en general, es escasa, pero es cierto que existe un número de madres que participan cada vez que el equipo directivo o los tutores lo demandan.

<sup>4</sup> *Durante mi estancia en el centro se dio una situación muy delicada de la cual no voy a dar detalles por petición del equipo directivo. El equipo me comentó que en sus 6 años nunca se habían encontrado con una situación similar. Si hoy la recuerdo es porque cabe destacar la serenidad del director y el jefe de estudios y su templeza ante la situación. Ambos utilizaron el diálogo e intentaron calmar la situación sin llegar en ningún momento a perder los nervios. Sólo puedo decir que otras personas en su lugar podrían haber perdido los estribos y llegar a una situación aún más delicada. (DC:26/02/2010).*

reuniones con todo el equipo educativo que interviene en el ciclo y el equipo de orientación educativa. Es decir, nuestro equipo promovía una organización que facilitara la coordinación entre maestros/as de tal forma que se pudiera dar una respuesta a las demandas del alumnado guiada hacia unas mismas metas y mediante caminos similares

### ***3.5. La organización como eje principal de prácticas inclusivas. Sintetizada en el Plan de educación compensatoria y Plan escuela espacio de paz***

La clave del proyecto de dirección de este equipo directivo estaba, entre otras cosas, en el eje de su actuación que se situaba en el Plan de Compensación Educativa y en el Proyecto de Paz.

De esta forma, una vez que decidieron acceder a la dirección de este centro, teniendo en cuenta las características del alumnado, el contexto y el centro elaboraron un Plan de Compensación Educativa que daba respuesta a todas las necesidades que en aquel entonces se daban en el colegio.

Este Plan de Compensación Educativa era el máximo exponente de la dinamización y promoción por parte del equipo, es decir, ellos se esforzaban en promover este plan como la base del trabajo que se desarrolla en el centro. Tanto es así, que

*... el profesorado que llegaba al centro debía acogerse a este plan, es más desde la dirección del centro se consiguió que los maestros y maestras que entraran en el centro fueran seleccionados de tal forma que sólo fueran elegidos aquellos que estuvieran dispuestos a llevar a cabo este plan, ya que éste era considerado la base de la atención de la diversidad y las necesidades del alumnado de este centro. (DC: 03/05/2010).*

Ellos consideraban que el Plan de Compensación Educativa era un “Proyecto Integral”, eje vertebral de toda su acción educativa y que respondía, una vez analizada las necesidades del centro, a las distintas dimensiones y aspectos que forman parte de la vida del mismo: académica, organizativa, relacional y socio-comunitaria. Partían de un concepto de escuela inclusiva y equitativa, una escuela que responda a la diversidad en todos sus aspectos. Intentaban crear una cultura de centro que les facilitara una reflexión constante sobre la práctica educativa. Apostaban por una visión humanizadora de la enseñanza que les llevara a su verdadero objetivo: educar.

Uno de los aspectos más significativos de este plan, nos explica el jefe de estudios, es que todos los proyectos se engloban integralmente, de tal forma, que es el funcionamiento de los mismos de forma global lo que les lleva a responder algunas necesidades básicas del alumnado como la adquisición de normas, la asimilación de rutinas y hábitos de alimentación e higiene, la disminución de conductas disruptivas, etc.

Esta idea de globalidad y de buscar un desarrollo de proyectos integral es plasmada en la realidad del centro a través de rutinas y actividades concretas que encajan como si fueran piezas de puzzle consiguiendo que al final se vea una bonita figura que no es más que el resultado de la promoción de este plan por parte del equipo directivo.

Así, hemos visto que los alumnos y alumnas de este centro cada día siguen un menú de recreo. Cada aula decide cuál es este menú pero todos ellos están basados en los hábitos de alimentación saludable considerando necesario que en la semana los niños tomen lácteos, frutas, dulces y bocadillos, de tal forma que se sientan motivados a ello. Los niños y niñas que lo cumplen suelen ser recompensados.

Por otro lado, comprobamos que la elección de las normas en el aula aumenta la asunción de las mismas y también el refuerzo del cumplimiento de éstas.

Las conductas disruptivas disminuyen porque el Plan de Convivencia y el Proyecto de Paz se toman como pilares del resto de planes. No hay, generalmente, actuaciones concretas, pero es la organización del centro, en general, la que promueve un clima tranquilo dentro del mismo (lo explicaremos más adelante).

La puesta en marcha de todos estos proyectos es un engranaje complicado pero que funciona y da respuesta a las principales demandas que percibe nuestro equipo directivo. Los proyectos que ellos promueven y creen que son básicos para este centro son:

La organización del centro y del aula gira en torno al seguimiento del absentismo, la apertura del centro al barrio a través del Proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje, la inclusión del alumnado de incorporación tardía, la facilitación del aprendizaje al alumnado inmigrante, etc. Para ello, se llevan a cabo actuaciones de éxito o buenas prácticas organizativas tales como la inclusión de un segundo maestro/a en el aula en todo el horario lectivo, los grupos interactivos, las tertulias literarias, la organización por comisiones de trabajo en el centro... teniendo siempre como eje fundamental la apertura del centro al entorno.

#### **4. Conclusiones**

Estableciendo lazos de unión entre nuestro estudio de caso y las investigaciones ya existentes relacionadas con la dirección de centros educativos para atender y gestionar a la diversidad hemos realizado un análisis exhaustivo de nuestros datos vislumbrando diferentes conclusiones.

Mediante el estudio de caso hemos llegado a una perspectiva para gestionar la diversidad basada en la inclusión escolar (Ainscow, 2001a,b; Essomba, 2007). Realizando el análisis de un equipo directivo en un centro concreto hemos podido describir buenas prácticas directivas para gestionar la diversidad, llegando a un perfil concreto que pensamos que puede hacer frente a las características de las escuelas donde la heterogeneidad está muy presente (Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2011a).

La promoción de una cultura inclusiva es uno de los aspectos destacados por todas las personas implicadas en nuestro estudio de caso (Ainscow, 2001; Kungelmas, 2003, 2001; Kungelmas y Ainscow, 2004; Leithwood, 2005; Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2011a,b). Todas ellas coinciden en que la base de la cultura del centro está en la convivencia. Para ello, el equipo directivo ha mostrado gran preocupación por la misma y ha promocionado valores relacionados con el diálogo y el respeto, siendo estos fundamentales para entablar lazos entre todos los componentes de la comunidad educativa. De acuerdo con Murillo y Hernández-Castilla (2011a) concluimos que para que se dé una cultura inclusiva no podemos tener líderes segregadores. De esta forma, vemos cómo el equipo directivo, junto a toda la comunidad educativa, trabaja en una misma línea basada en la búsqueda constante de nuevas metodologías didácticas y organizativas que atiendan las necesidades de todo el alumnado, teniendo un mismo ideal de educación y una misma filosofía educativa. Además, lo más importante es, como dicen estos autores, no sólo se comparten metodologías de aula u organizativas, sino que se comparten valores, actitudes, creencias, etc. se comparte un mismo proyecto común educativo, elaborado por todos, donde se encuentra la esencia de la educación por la que apuesta el CEIP "La Ilusión": el plan de Educación Compensatoria.

Coincidiendo con López (2001) consideramos que para una adecuada gestión de la diversidad es necesaria la colaboración de toda la comunidad educativa y del entorno que engloba a la escuela. Por unanimidad, vemos cómo todos los participantes de nuestra investigación destacan la colaboración o el liderazgo distribuido como una característica básica para una gestión de la diversidad eficaz (Ainscow, 2009a). En el caso que hemos estudiado, vemos cómo las redes de participación que se han establecido con la escuela, la familia, distintas asociaciones, entidades, servicios sociales, etc., han hecho que cada día la escuela sea más inclusiva, dando respuesta a las necesidades de cada uno de los alumnos y alumnas que están en el centro. Un ejemplo de esto lo vemos en la bajada de los índices de absentismo escolar, los cuales han decrecido por la colaboración y alta implicación de la escuela con las familias y la participación del Programa de Desarrollo Gitano.

La colaboración y liderazgo distribuido en el centro se puede visualizar en una toma de decisiones conjunta a través de las sesiones informativas que tiene el profesorado todas las semanas, de las conversaciones del director cada mañana en la puerta del centro, de las reuniones del Foro de Educación para la coordinación del distrito o de las constantes reuniones entre los miembros del equipo directivo.

El equipo directivo es el eje dinamizador de la gestión de la diversidad en el centro (González, 2008; López, 2001; Lumby y Morrison, 2010; Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2001; Ryan, 2006). Es el equipo directivo el promotor de buenas prácticas inclusivas y además tiene visión y entusiasmo por promover la atención a todo el alumnado. Todos los miembros del centro coinciden en que en el centro lo más importante son los niños y niñas. De esta forma, es el equipo directivo el que promueve una línea concreta en el centro en los aspectos relacionados con enseñanza-aprendizaje, sin embargo, son todos los miembros de la comunidad educativa los que creen en ella. Es esta otra de las claves de la gestión de la diversidad de este centro de Educación Compensatoria, su alto interés por los procesos de enseñanza aprendizaje (Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2011b). El equipo directivo es dinamizador, porque como dicen los maestros/as del centro, sin un equipo directivo unido no podríamos luchar por una escuela para todos. Vemos un claro ejemplo de dinamización en la puesta en práctica del Proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje, proyecto que es impulsado por el equipo directivo en un primer momento, pero apoyado por todo el claustro como medida inclusiva para gestionar la diversidad del centro (Ortega y Puigdel·lvoll, 2004).

El proyecto de comunidades de aprendizaje es una apuesta del equipo directivo basada en una cultura inclusiva ya establecida en la escuela que pretende organizar la escuela por y para la diversidad.

La organización del centro en este caso, es otra medida para gestionar la diversidad. La organización es llevada a cabo basada en medidas inclusivas destacando entre ellas la inclusión de dos maestros/as por cada aula, el desarrollo de estrategias organizativas de aula basadas en la organización por grupos interactivos y la puesta en práctica de los apoyos dentro del aula. Además de la organización de todos los proyectos en un solo proyecto de forma integral, de tal forma que todas las actividades del centro se organizan en base al Plan de Educación Compensatoria y están incluidas en una serie de rutinas propias del centro que hace que éste sea único e inclusivo, tales como el desayuno escolar o el cepillado de dientes.

En definitiva, apoyándonos en Murillo y Hernández-Castilla (2011), concluimos que la gestión de la diversidad se lleva a cabo a través de prácticas directivas inclusivas tales como el entusiasmo del equipo directivo, la promoción de la cultura inclusiva en la escuela (estableciendo actitudes, creencias, valores... comunes a toda la comunidad), teniendo como objetivo la mejora de las prácticas de enseñanza-aprendizaje y la colaboración de toda la comunidad educativa y de otras instituciones.

De esta forma, consideramos que son necesarios estilos de gestión de la diversidad basados en estas prácticas directivas inclusivas que tienen como base teórica la inclusión escolar (Parrilla et al., 2010), el derecho de todos los niños y niñas a tener una educación de calidad (Ainscow, 2008 a,b).

Además, podemos decir que la gestión de la diversidad, en algunos casos no es percibida como una función más, sino que, por el contrario, algunos de ellos asumen la diversidad como una característica más del centro y no le dan especial prioridad a la misma, sino que, por el contrario, la gestionan sin tener conciencia de ello. Desde esta perspectiva, habríamos llegado a la aceptación de la diversidad y no tendríamos que abordar el tema como algo “fuera de lo común” sino que verdaderamente tendríamos interiorizado que la diversidad es una característica más de nuestra sociedad, que no hay que darle una respuesta “especial”, apostando por la inclusión escolar sin ser conscientes de ello.

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## Applied Critical Leadership through Latino/a Lenses: An Alternative Approach to Educational Leadership

### Liderazgo Crítico Aplicado a través de Lentes Latinas: Un Enfoque Alternativo de Liderazgo Educativo

### Liderança Crítica Aplicada através da Lens Latinas: Um Abordagem Alternativo do Liderança Educacional

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The aims and objectives of this research were to investigate and better understand ways in which race and gender play out as differences of significant consequence in applied leadership practice. Utilizing qualitative case study methodology coupled with counter-story, a critical race theory approach, the authors analyze data on two Mexican descent educational leaders in the US: one Latino K-6 principal and one Chicana university Dean. Findings indicate evidence supporting positive identity leadership traits as practiced through raced and gender lenses, resulting in effective socially just and equitable leadership outcomes for the participants in the study. These findings are new and particularly relevant as demographic shifts in the US and the world include high numbers of Latino/a and Mexican descent individuals. The strategies employed by participants suggest subaltern ways of educational leadership not previously considered in research and literature. The authors discuss evidence of characteristics supporting applied critical leadership (ACL), an emerging leadership theory, in the leadership practices of the participants. Finally, mainstream implications and guidelines are provided for application in multiple educational leadership contexts.

**Keywords:** Educational leadership, Culturally responsive leadership, Latino/a school leadership, Applied critical leadership.

El propósito y objetivos de esta investigación fueron investigar y comprender mejor las formas en las que la raza y el género generan importantes consecuencias en la práctica del liderazgo aplicado. Se realiza un estudio de caso cualitativo con contra-historia con un enfoque teórico-crítico sobre raza. Los autores analizan datos sobre dos líderes educativos de ascendencia mexicana en los EE.UU.: uno director de una escuela K-6 latina y el otro, director de una universidad chicana. Los hallazgos evidencian rasgos de identidad positiva de los líderes que permite la puesta en práctica de un liderazgo equitativo y socialmente justo entre los participantes del estudio. Estos hallazgos son novedosos y especialmente relevantes en EEUU y en el resto de países donde viven un alto número de descendientes de latinos y mexicanos. Las estrategias empleadas por los participantes sugieren alternar formas de liderazgo no consideradas ni en la investigación ni en la literatura. Los autores discuten las evidencias encontradas que definen la teoría emergente del liderazgo crítico aplicado (ACL). Por último, se aportan directrices para su aplicación en diferentes contextos.

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**Descritores:** Liderazgo educativo, Liderazgo culturalmente sensible, Liderazgo de escuela latina, Liderazgo crítico aplicado.

A finalidade e objetivos desta pesquisa foram investigar e entender melhor as maneiras em que raça e gênero têm implicações importantes para a prática da liderança aplicada. Foi feito um estudo de caso qualitativo com contra-história é com uma abordagem teórica e crítica à raça e gênero. Os autores analisaram dados de dois líderes educacionais de ascendência mexicana em EUA: um director de um K-6 escola latina e no outro, diretor do faculdade chicana. Os resultados mostram traços de identidade positiva de líderes, que permite a implementação de uma liderança justa e socialmente justa entre os participantes do estudo. Estes resultados são novos e particularmente relevante em os EUA e outros países onde vivem um elevado número de descendentes de latinos e mexicanos. As estratégias empregadas pelos participantes sugerem formas alternativas de liderança não considerado ou pesquisa ou literatura. Os autores discutem as evidências encontradas que definem a teoria emergente de liderança crítica aplicada (ACL). Finalmente, orientações para a aplicação em diferentes contextos são fornecidos.

**Palavras-chave:** Liderança educacional, Liderança culturalmente sensíveis, Liderança da escola latina, Liderança crítica aplicada.

## Introduction

Educational leadership as a discipline is increasingly linked to addressing academic and other gaps that persist in schools in the U.S. from Kindergarten classrooms all the way to university settings in higher education (K-HE) (Grogan, 2013). White and sometimes middle class learners, regardless of race, culture, or heritage language, have traditionally attained school success as measured by high school completion, college graduation, and job attainment. Latino/a learners, many of who are Mexican descent but may also is of Central American, South American or Caribbean descent, and most heritage Spanish speakers of these ancestral origins in particular, do not fare as well. Reported and very real disparities in school experiences of a large and growing Latino/a segment of our population warrant closer strengths-based approached inquiries and other innovative research rich applications, before education loses its ability to become “the great equalizer” in the U.S. Like other researchers who conduct their inquiry from a social justice and equity perspective, the authors of this contribution argue that “without participation of individuals of all racial/ethnic backgrounds and genders”, we stand to compromise the position of the United States as a global leader in education and other disciplines (Riegle-Crumb & King, 2010:656).

In terms of objectives, our inquiry aims to build upon foundational research reviewing the status and characteristics of women and people of color in educational leadership and administration, responding to the need for a deeper look at potential benefits of diverse leadership (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; McGee Banks, 2007). Although there is a growing body of research on leadership in diverse contexts and leadership toward diversity, there is a lack of empirical research examining the roles race and gender play in leadership practice and very little with regard to potential benefits of diverse leadership as practiced by leaders who are themselves from systemically marginalized or socially excluded backgrounds. Given the prevalence of achievement gap literature in the United States in particular, wherein Latino learners come in last in every academic area as compared to their European descent and Asian peers, an examination of ways in

which leadership with a Latino/a perspective may be effective in these and other leadership contexts, where challenges persist, is clearly warranted.

This article adds to literature on educational leadership for social justice with a fresh perspective, considering the intersectionality of race, gender, and leadership practice. Expanding research with a leadership for social justice and equity focus that often comes out of an etic or outsider's perspective, this contribution brings to the forefront the voices and experiences of Latino/a administrators facing common challenges in education K-HE from an emic, or insider's perspective. Leadership practiced by individuals from historically underrepresented groups who race themselves outside of whiteness (Haney Lopez, 1998), in this case Latino and Chicana both of Mexican descent who have been affected by institutional racism and discriminatory practices as part of their own 'schooling', reveal ways in which their leadership practices are shaped by their lived experiences.

To complement and prepare for this research study, we reviewed literature on transformational leadership, critical pedagogy, and critical race (LatCrit) theory in order to better understand the ways in which these intersections play out in the leadership practices of the leaders featured. Using this understanding, we provide evidence for applied critical leadership (ACL), an emergent educational leadership theory that explains ways in which diverse leaders approach educational challenges. In the past, research on educational leadership often suggested there was no difference of significant consequence with regard to race and gender (Bass, 1981). More current findings, however, indicate qualitative differences in leadership practice that are raced and also gendered (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Jean-Marie, Williams, & Sherman, 2009; Lloyd-Jones & Jean-Marie, 2011; McGee Banks, 2007; Tillman & Scheurich, 2013). In this contribution, we build upon that premise, focusing on Latino and Chicana perspectives, voices typically absent in academic literature on educational leadership (Alemán, 2009; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Parker & Villalpando, 2007).

Using data from interviews, observations, and institutional documents collected over the course of one year, employing qualitative case study methodology, we examined (1) how the identity (e.g., race, gender, class, culture and perspectives) of Latino/a leaders affect their leadership goals, decisions, and practice; (2) what kinds of effective leadership strategies they use in their daily practice, and (3) in what ways those strategies differ from effective strategies identified in mainstream educational leadership literature. Finally, we compared educational leadership practices against indicators of transformational leadership, LatCrit theory, and critical race theory and sought evidence of ACL in the individuals' leadership practices. In sum, our article provides an alternative to existing leadership theories and models, providing innovative ways to approach promising culturally relevant and appropriate critical leadership for a changing society.

## 1. Theoretical justification

### *1.1. Educational leadership promoting Social justice and equity vs. Applied critical leadership (ACL)*

The literature on women and people of color in educational leadership is relatively new to the discipline (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998; Astin & Leland, 1991; Méndez-Morse, 2000). As recently as 1981, researchers studying more forward thinking models, such as transformational leadership, distributed leadership, and shared leadership, were adamant that race and gender bore no consequence to the way in which educational leadership was practiced (Bass, 1981). While there is a shortage of literature on ways in which race and gender directly affect leadership, namely the leadership practices of women and people of color from their perspectives, there is a growing body of critical work around issues of social justice and equity relating to inequities in educational organizations from the mainstream and therefore etic (or outside) perspectives of scholars, researchers, and advocates who promote equitable educational leadership practices, calling for a reduction of inequitable broad scale educational practices, closure of academic and other gaps in schools, and an end to every other known or conceivable educational inequity being practiced (McKenzie et al., 2008; Normore, 2008; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Skrla & Scheurich, 2003; Tooms & Boske, 2010). Leadership for social justice and educational equity also suggests improved practices for individuals or groups with limited access to education, susceptible to historical oppressions, or societal exclusion based on our country's shared legacies of genocide, slavery, racism, and discrimination. Beyond individuals of African, Latino/a, Native, Asian, and Pacific Island descent, individuals from lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, and queer/questioning groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals and groups from low socio-economic households are considered disenfranchised, at-risk, and educationally underserved. This advocacy-grounded work is valuable, necessary, and of significant value in addressing educational inequities in our country.

Similarly, McGee Banks' (2007) review of literature on women and people of color in educational leadership reflects the reality of ways in which race and gender impact leadership practice. The review focused on the more positive roles these particular dispositions can have directly from perspectives of raced and gendered individuals, providing insider or emic perspectives from the viewpoint of the individuals or groups in question. This contribution provides another research perspective in subtle, yet significant, contrast to research on educational leadership practices that promote, foster, or work toward social justice and equity. This work, like that of McGee Banks', considers Latino/a men and women, with the express understanding that research on each distinct group warrants its own research agenda. This article continues the emerging academic dialogue on ways in which Latino/a-centric leadership, practiced by men and women, can benefit educational practices for Latino/as and all learners in schools today. Among recent studies that consider this emic or insiders' perspective, researchers seek to pose new questions about educational leadership, provide an alternative to traditional educational research theory, reframe known concepts, and propose an innovative vision of educational leadership (Bordas, 2013; Grogan, 2013; Tillman & Scheurich, 2013).

What makes applied critical leadership (ACL) unique and sets it apart from leadership for social justice and equity is that it values or privileges the raced and gendered experiences of Latino/a educational leaders as resources, or what Luis Moll and associates refer to as “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992:133). These leadership-based ‘funds of knowledge’ serve to inform, enhance and positively affect relevant and appropriate leadership practices for culturally and linguistically or otherwise diverse individuals. Building on this premise, Hargreaves (2007), a well-known mainstream educational researcher, acknowledges the contemporary need for resourcefulness grounded in renewal, trust, confidence, and appropriate emotional responses to educational dilemmas. ACL practices, grounded in the positive identities of leaders of color, suggests the need for new, fresh, and different leadership practices for the resolution of the most challenging educational issues of our age. This work takes research-based leadership practices and sound educational theories, adding a new twist on seminal ideas.

Based on ACL, we glean much about approaching educational inequities from literature about equitable leadership practices. We stand to learn even more from individuals who are able to apply transformational leadership to disrupt status quo practices and critical pedagogy to challenge assumptions and organizational norms, while, at the same time, choosing to lead assuming a critical race theory lens or perspective. For example, ACL asks leaders to ask themselves questions such as, “In what ways does my identity (i.e., subjectivity, biases, assumptions, race, class, gender, and traditions) interrupt my ability to see other perspectives and therefore provide effective leadership?” (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012:23). In other words, applied critical leaders ask themselves how reflecting on the ways they inherently are, and their individual ways of knowing, may potentially need to be interrupted in order to improve their ability to lead. Rather than just reflect on the question, in this inquiry, applied critical leaders offer an alternative way of leading or a ‘counter-story’ about effective educational leadership that is different from what we know about effective educational literature from mainstream research and literature (Alemán & Alemán, 2010; Solórzano & Yasso, 2002). Ah Nee-Benham and Cooper (1998) were pioneers of this type of counter-storytelling to alter discourse about effective educational leadership in their contribution featuring the narrative voices of culturally and linguistically diverse women in educational leadership. Similarly, Astin and Leland (1991) sought multiple cross-generational stories of highly effective educational leaders, who were also women, sacrificing personal and professional happiness to meet demands at work and home.

Two seminal studies offer evidence of unique leadership practice that is raced and gendered from a Latino/a worldview (Alemán, 2009; Parker & Villalpando, 2007). Our work builds upon these strong foundations, offering multiple perspectives interrupting, and adding to, academic discourse on educational leadership (Santamaría, 2013; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Without knowing definitively if these patterns are similar for Latino/a leaders as a group, a conclusion about ACL as a leadership paradigm for this subpopulation of educational leaders is unknown and open for further exploration.

In this appreciative inquiry, in the traditions of critical race theory inquiry, we offer a Latino/a counter-story to expand previous research that examines ways in which race and gender impact educational leadership practices for Latino/a leaders K-HE, with particular regard to potentially increasing academic access, achievement, retention, and

support of Latino/a learners at every level (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As the national shortage of Latino/a leaders in educational leadership becomes direr, White males continue to hold the vast number of administrative positions in K-12 and HE institutions (McGee Banks, 2007). Therefore, we investigate ways in which race and gender enhance leadership practice to provide impetus for increased efforts by White males and other mainstream leaders in educational contexts to realize the inherent value and resourcefulness (Hargreaves, 2007) of Latino/a leadership in educational settings as the key to finding innovative solutions for Latino/a learners in U.S. schools at every level.

## ***1.2. Latino/a-centric issues and challenges faced by educational leaders today***

### *1.2.1. Schooling as an issue*

Factors that challenge Latino/a students in educational settings in the US, and like countries, run the gamut from less prepared for academic pre-school learning students to consistent high school drop-out rates to issues with persistence in higher education. Inter-group diversity has become an issue for Latino/a descent students whose ancestry can be many different countries with varying levels of English language proficiency, level of generations removed from an immigration experience, languages other than Spanish spoken at home (e.g. Mixteca, Nahatl...), parents' experience with education, and socio-economic status. Previous literature informs the educational leadership community that the largest number and fastest sub-population of Latino/as in the US are Mexican or of Mexican descent. Therefore, we consider two individuals of Mexican descent in this study who, despite academic and societal odds, find themselves successful in education at the top of their careers in educational leadership. Yet they each have stories revealing layer upon layer of institutional-isms that have hindered, and in some cases continue to hinder, each educational leader as they swim like salmon upstream and against the tide, pushing themselves and their organizations toward excellence.

### *1.2.2. Latinas/Chicanas in educational leadership*

In recent years, research indicates there are few women of color in educational administration positions in the United States (Jones & Montenegro, 1982; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Montenegro, 1993; Ortiz, 2000). The educational leader of Mexican descent in this study, who is female, refers to herself as a Chicana. The rarefied Chicana experience is imperative for educational leaders to understand because it reveals a critical leadership experience in higher education that is authentic and transparent. The absence of research featuring Chicana leadership in education is telling. There are few researchers who explore the lives of Latinas, and even fewer still that consider the experiences of these women in educational leadership positions (Méndez-Morse, 2000). Learning about a Chicana application of critical leadership practice will challenge existing stereotypes associated with Latina women and “contribute to expanding the understanding of leadership in general and recognition of the importance of certain leadership abilities” (Méndez-Morse, 2004:561). Informed by this educational leader's path, other educational leaders may learn how to best identify, recruit, and hire Latina educational leaders, as well as ways in which to provide conditions for Latina leaders to thrive.

### *1.2.3. Latinos/Chicanos in educational leadership*

According to Iglesias (2009), the “omission of Latino leadership narratives from educational circles, research journals, and the mainstream media limits educators’ ability to understand and develop ways to improve schools and communities for children of color” (p. 1). As a form of practice, a critical examination of the lives of Latino leaders can be instructive, as educators try to deconstruct the success and failure of Latinos in schools, the role of language, and the need to close the achievement gap (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). The instructive power of the Latino administrator narrative, as an example for aspiring educational leaders hoping to have an impact on students’ lives, cannot be overstated (Iglesias, 2009). Because they are hard at work and not represented well in research and literature, we do not see them; however, there are many practicing school and district administrators of Latino descent all over the nation. In Iglesias’ study, Latinos administrators’ identities were created by their personal understandings, cultural influences, and professional experiences within the context of schools, schooling, and educational systems.

Counter-stories, as a part of critical race theory (CRT), are imperative to add to academic discourse in educational leadership, in that the dominant story often told about Latinos is from a subtractive and/or deficit-model (Alemán, 2009; Valencia, 2005). CRT allowed the Latino administrator’s narratives to be heard, countering dominant and negative popular notions of Latinos, especially in some educational circles. These newfound voices were able to express themes of language, culture, and race, and engaged in open discussions to promote the lived experiences of Latinos as having a positive impact on their career and career choices (Yosso, 2006).

For example, poverty helped to build character, being bicultural engendered empathy, and academic struggles fostered understanding. In the analysis of Latinos’ stories, Latino men drew upon their multiple experiences to navigate past structures and institutions once considered impenetrable. Yosso’s (2006) Community Cultural Wealth model demonstrated the ‘capitals’ required for Latino’s to successfully navigate societies/institutional hierarchies. These experiences were categorized in the following ways: aspirational capital, familial capital, social capital, linguistic capital, resistant capital and navigational capital.

A pipeline issue was also found to be of importance for Latino administrators to be. Yosso (2006) asserted that Latinos who were to participate in the education pipeline had to have the proper tools. Tools such as economic capital and wealth may not have been accessible to many Latinos. However, tools such as aspirations, linguistic abilities, familial experiences, and resistant ideologies did help in creating the opportunities for them to fully engage the pipeline. Furthermore, these four capitals helped Latinos expand their tool kit by eventually adding navigational abilities and social capital. Pipeline issues were under the power of outside self-forces. Navigating through and past external forces, such as social institutions, was not a given for many Latinos – it was a skill set learned outside of one’s internal dialogue. Exposure to such navigation, without the aid of a mentor, could have been damaging and hurtful to participants’ self, career, and aspirations.

From Iglesias’ (2009) research findings, mentoring emerges, as does an ambiguous hidden curriculum associated with educational leadership (Magdaleno, 2006). It is apparent that for critical leaders of color, the notion of an additional education is

necessary if these leaders are going to be successful in navigating more subtle aspects of educational leadership that are not colorblind, neutral, subjective, or accessible to aspiring leaders of color who do not have generous, successful, and oftentimes White, mentors.

#### *1.2.4. Applied Critical Leadership as a solution*

There is little prior research on educational leaders who are Latino/a and their leadership practice. For example, the role a Latino/a's 'funds of knowledge', and that of particular 'tools' as described by Yosso (2006), is virtually unknown. We do not know to what extent a Latino/a's identity contributes to their ability to lead effectively, increase academic achievement for Latino/a and all learners, or improve other academic outcomes relative to K-12 and HE settings. However, we do know there is at least one alternative educational leadership theory that takes into account the race and gendered experiences of educational leaders who race themselves out of whiteness: applied critical leadership (ACL).

*Applied critical leadership is the emancipatory practice of choosing to address educational issues and challenges using a critical race perspective to enact context specific change in response to power, domination, access, and achievement imbalances; resulting in improved academic achievement for learners at every academic level of institutional schooling in the U.S. (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012:34)*

Although critical leaders often represent or identify with members of historically underrepresented groups in our country, a critical race theory lens, we assert, is present in other marginalized leaders and fully accessible by all leaders regardless of identity (Santamaría, 2013).

Therefore, according to this premise, it seems likely Latino/a educational leaders might practice leadership that is transformational using critical pedagogical strategies to do so, while providing leadership through a critical raced theoretical lens, thereby practicing ACL. Our disciplined inquiry provides the opportunity to further explore this issue.

## **2. Methodology and Design**

### ***2.1. Data***

This study was part of a larger qualitative case study (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009) informed by a year-long investigation which included interviews, an identity survey, a prompt with interview questions, as well as supporting documents from each participant's educational context. The range of data collected ensured appropriate triangulation of data for the purposes of theory validation as a result of the study. In order to answer the research questions, nine culturally and linguistically diverse educational leaders, kindergarten through higher education in public elementary and high school districts including state supported public universities in Southern California, were queried through interviews, observation, and document analysis. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using grounded theory data analysis methodology. Case studies were developed for each participant. Two of the participants are featured in this study, Julian and Mona, as they self-identified as Mexican-American and Chicana. The other seven participants from the larger case study represented other ethnicities (e.g., Japanese-Okinawan, European, Arabian, and Jewish).



## ***2.2. Participants and data collection***

Julian and Mona were practicing educational leaders. Julian was a K-6 elementary school principal in a rural district in Southern California. Mona was the Dean of Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Research at a midsized university in the same city. These participants were selected because they represented a range of Latino/a educational leaders working in academic settings pre-kindergarten through to higher education.

Julian and Mona were considered historically disadvantaged individuals serving in educational leadership roles during the time of this study. Bragg, Kim, and Rubin (2005) defined underserved individuals as those who may have been or may be “financially disadvantaged, racial minorities, and first-generation individuals who are not represented in colleges and universities in proportion to their representation in the K-12 educational system or in society at large” (p. 6). Focusing on these educational leaders served to answer the proposed research questions and contribute knowledge to Latino/a-centric educational leadership as a means of addressing the achievement gap.

Julian and Mona were asked to participate as a function of their position as Latino and Chicana educational leaders of color. They were both affiliated with a doctoral program in educational leadership –Julian as an alumnus and Mona as a former faculty member. Interviews, which took place in participants’ school settings, were substantiated by written prompts sent via e-mail. This allowed participants to elaborate on answers over time. Interview transcripts and field note observations were coded along with historical and institutional documents from each participant’s school setting.

## ***2.3. Data analysis***

We took several major steps in order to analyze the data. First, the raw data were explored in order to develop narrative case studies for each educational leader, using a modified grounded theoretical process based on principles of transformational leadership, evidence of critical pedagogy practice, and application of LatCrit Theory, to corroborate or disavow our original hypothesis for the existence of ACL. Then we sought to determine core characteristics of ACL in order to develop a practice-based model.

The analysis of interviews, observations, and documents relied on thematic analysis and elements of qualitative grounded theory (Bogden & Biklen, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), coupled with a systematic coding procedure described by Glesne (2006) to triangulate the data. Data analysis relied on “a process that involves coding and then segregating the data by codes into data clumps for further analysis and description” (Glesne, 2006:147). We began by generating numerous codes as we read through responses, identifying data relating to the hypothesized theory grounding critical leadership (Figure 1). We later began focused coding by reviewing initial codes, eliminating the most unrelated responses, combining smaller categories into larger ones and subdividing categories when appropriate. At the subdivision stage, patterns emerged beyond the hypothesized theory that helped us to further organize codes into themes related to the characteristics of critical leadership. These codes roughly associated with categories substantiating critical leadership (see table 1). We identified emergent themes within these categories in addition to classifying, synthesizing, and interpreting data to identify themes that emerged outside of the categories.

Table 1. Theoretical literature frames grounding critical leadership

<b>CRITICAL MULTICULTURALISM</b> (May & Sleeter, 2010:10-11)	<b>TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP</b> (Shields, 2010:536)	<b>FUNCTIONS OF LATCRIT THEORY AND CRT</b> (Valdes, 1998:3) (Ladson-Billings, 2009)
Integrates and advances various critical theoretical threads of multicultural education and critical pedagogy.	From traditions of critical race and gender theories, cultural and social reproduction, leadership for social justice.	From traditions of critical pedagogy.
Demonstrates the need to build solidarity across diverse communities.	“To create learning contexts or communities in which social, political, and cultural capital is enhanced to provide equity of opportunity” (p. 572).	The cultivation of community and coalition; the importance of transdisciplinary approaches.
Argues the need to embrace struggles against oppression that others face.	Key values are liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice with emphases on deep equitable change in social conditions.	The advancement of transformation; challenge to dominate ideologies wherein liberalism to be critiqued.
Challenges educators to locate selves and own individual and collective histories, critically and reflectively, and associated power relations.	Involves the deconstruction and reconstruction of social/cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity, acknowledgement of power and privilege; as well a critical dialogue between social and individual.	The centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination, resulting in forms of oppression coupled with commitment to social justice.
Gives priority to structural analysis of unequal power relationships.	Considers power to be positional hegemonic and a tool for oppression as well as action.	The expansion and connection of struggles.
Analyzes the role of institutionalized inequities.	As a starting point, challenges material realities outside of the organization that impinge on success of individuals, groups, and organization as a whole.	The production of knowledge; emphasis on knowledge of people of color being legitimate and crucial to understanding racial subordination with storytelling an important forum for exploring race and racism in society.
Names and challenges racism and other forms of injustice.	Foundations are of critique and promise of “anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic, and responsive to class exploitation” practices; leaders of this kind live with tension and challenge as a result of exercising moral courage and activism.	The expansion and connection of struggle(s); the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination, resulting in forms of oppression coupled with commitment to social justice.
Culture and identity are multilayered, fluid, complex, and encompass multiple social categories; dynamic conceptualization of culture.	Few direct references to culture and identity.	Emphasis on knowledge of people of color being legitimate and crucial to understanding racial subordination with storytelling an important forum for exploring race and racism in society.

Note: Elaborated by the authors.

We documented whether participants exhibited characteristics of critical leadership evidenced by the application of transformational leadership and practice of critical pedagogy, using the length of critical race theory as defined in table 1. Originally, we categorized evidence of critical leadership into frequency codes (present/non-present), meaning that a participant displayed critical leadership characteristics or that a participant did not. However, these codes were problematic because we hypothesized critical leadership to be an evolving progression, rather than a static or fixed state. In our work, we recognized that individuals began with unique life experiences and biases, and that working towards critical leadership required time and effort of those engaged in the process. Also, we identified that the degree of critical leadership practiced depends on a number of variables not measured or analyzed in this study. As a result, findings from each data source were juxtaposed to determine data saliency, points of convergence and divergence, including ways in which responses differed between individuals.

### **3. Findings**

Findings are presented as excerpts from case studies first and then organized by characteristics of ACL substantiated by findings of a larger subset of women and leaders of color. Second, common critical Latino/a leadership strategies are presented. These are followed by elements of Latino/a ACL, juxtaposed with functions of LatCrit theory.

#### ***3.1. Mona's case***

Mona is a self-assured Latina woman of Mexican descent who refers to herself as a Chicana. Mona also happens to be one of the four top administrators at a midsized university in Southern California. During quiet times of reflection, she wonders how she became a high ranking educational leader at a university in one of the largest University systems in the country, having worked counter to common stereotypes associated with Latina women in the workplace over the course of 12 years. These looming stereotypes included expectations about the ways in which she related to men, her domestic roles and responsibilities, and perceived limitations for work outside of her home in an educational arena (Andrade, 1982; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Mirandé & Enriquez, 1979). At the same time, and during similar moments, Mona's professional position makes all of the sense in the world. She never aspired to become an educational leader; however, Mona's professional work is grounded by her personal commitment to improve education for students of Mexican descent, as well as other underserved students in the United States of America.

The University where Mona is an administrator has recently been designated a Hispanic serving institution (HIS) per the federal Title V, Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions Program (implemented by the U.S. Department of Education). Mona struggles with being a balanced educational leader, focused on providing effective leadership for all students, while keeping in mind the particular needs of the sociopolitical group with which she shares language, culture, ways of being, and *raza* heritage. She is also preoccupied with the intersectional reality that she is underrepresented by ethnicity and gender in higher education administration. She is one of three Mexican descent administrators at the University and one of 25 in all of the affiliate universities. The statistics for being a woman are even more dismal. Finally, Mona sees herself as female, wife, mother, sister, friend, and colleague before she sees

herself as a university administrator. Balance is tantamount to her ability to lead effectively toward the educational change in which she believes.

Research indicates there are currently few women of color in educational administration positions in the United States (Jones & Montenegro, 1982; Montenegro, 1993; Ortiz, 2000). Mona's case is imperative for educational leaders to understand because it reveals a rarefied critical leadership experience of a Chicana in higher education that is authentic and transparent. The absence of research featuring Latina leadership in education is telling. There are few researchers who explore the lives of Latinas, and even fewer still that consider the experiences of these women in educational leadership positions (Méndez-Morse, 2000). Learning about her application of critical leadership practice will "contribute to expanding the understanding of leadership in general and recognition of the importance of certain leadership abilities" (Méndez-Morse, 2004: 561). Mona's case addresses this exclusion and provides an example of critical leadership through a race-gendered lens. Her case makes accessible a Chicana perspective and the way in which it plays out at a high leadership level in higher education. This case adds to and informs critical images of leadership. By way of Mona's path, educational leaders can learn how to best identify, recruit, and hire educational leaders, as well as ways in which to provide conditions for leaders of color to thrive.

### ***3.2. Julian's case***

After four years as the principal of an elementary school in Program Improvement serving mostly English language learners in rural Southern California, Julian learns that his school is closing due to district restructuring and budget cuts, despite steady gains being made by the teachers and students. During his tenure, Julian has overcome negative institutional racism targeting Mexican descent families, inaccurate teacher and community perceptions related to his age, qualifications, and experience, and had a positive effect on the school culture resulting in improved standardized assessment scores. As a result of the school's closure, Julian has been relocated to another elementary school in the district. In the meantime, he has been charged to bring the school year to a graceful end. This case depicts applied critical leadership during turbulent educational times for a young Latino principal, and the students, teachers, staff and parents participating in a viable learning community in the midst of district reconstruction.

Findings definitively indicate Julian and Mona practice transformational leadership and applied critical pedagogy as viewed through the lens of critical race theory. The data also reveal evidence and characteristics of critical leadership and strategies used by critical leaders to inspire and inform this practice for other leaders in education.

### ***3.3. Characteristics of applied critical leadership***

Below is a brief report summarizing common characteristics, which presented themselves as common emergent themes for Julian and Mona (and for all of our participants) during data analysis. The following themes or characteristics exhibited by critical leaders are indicative of critical leadership as substantiated by prevalence for each leader, beyond Julian and Mona, who were part of the larger study (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012).

Critical leaders are **willing to initiate and engage in critical conversations** with individuals and groups even when the topic is not popular for the greater good of the

whole group (e.g., ageism, institutional racism, affirmative action, LGBTQ issues). As indicated by Julian in his case, these conversations are often data driven with K-6 teachers becoming empowered with the knowledge that comes with disaggregated data. Mona has become an expert at leading critical conversation in large groups. This is appropriate and needed at all levels, but especially in higher education.

Critical leaders who are not from historically marginalized groups **can and sometimes choose to assume a CRT lens** in order to consider multiple perspectives of critical issues. Julian and Mona both mentioned this phenomenon in reference to white and international allies in the workplace. Additionally, they often **use consensus building as the preferred strategy for decision-making**. While working toward consensus, the notion of interest convergence is sometimes the goal, wherein the solution will benefit one or more oppressed groups, as well as members of the mainstream.

Julian and Mona, and other critical leaders of color, were particularly **conscious of “stereotype threat” or fulfilling negative stereotypes in their cases associated with Latino/as** and worked hard to dispel negative stereotypes for Latino/as. In her case, Mona shared ways in which she worked to counter common negative stereotypes in higher education. This was accomplished by her ability to tap into positive attributes of her Chicana, female, and person of color identities for application within her leadership practice. Julian and Mona as individuals felt the need to **make empirical contributions and thus add authentic research based information to academic discourse regarding Latino/as**. This was evidenced by both educational leaders’ current or past participation in doctoral programs of study and other affiliations in academia (e.g. publishing articles, teaching at the university, presenting at conferences, etc.).

Critical leaders feel the **need to honor all members of their constituencies** (e.g. staff, parents, community members). Julian and Mona sought out and wanted to include voices and perspectives of traditionally silenced groups and individuals (e.g. Spanish-speaking parents of English language learners, students, etc.). Julian and Mona **lead by example to meet an unresolved educational need or challenge**. They both lead in order to give back to the Latino/a community with which they identify and that also served to support their own academic journeys. These leaders feel it is their responsibility to bring critical issues with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, and class to their constituents for resolution. Critical leaders feel that if they do not address issues around race, language, and power, difficult issues will not be brought to surface.

Critical leaders feel the **need to build trust when working with mainstream constituents or partners or others who do not share an affinity toward issues related to educational equity**. Julian and Mona felt the need to ‘win’ the trust of individuals in the mainstream, as well as the need to ‘prove’ themselves qualified and worthy of leadership positions. Both Julian and Mona felt “called” to lead. They lead by what they called “spirit” or practice, a variation of servant leadership. Related to this idea, both leaders featured in this inquiry **can be classified as transformative, servant leaders who work ultimately to serve the greater good**.

### *3.3.1. Common critical Latino/a leadership strategies across cases*

Table 2 below illustrates the particular strategies each Latino/a critical leader employed. The strategies are organized using the hypothesized, and now confirmed, tenets of critical leadership: indicators of transformative leadership (TL), the practice of

critical pedagogy (CP), and the use of a critical race perspective (CRP), which comprises a blend of critical race theory and LatCrit theory. A fourth category emerged when analyzing data with the hypothesized characteristics at the forefront: spirit. In the figure below, spirit emerges with regard to particular strategies.

Table 2. ACL Strategies for Julian and Mona

LEADER, LEVEL, AND IDENTITY	STRATEGIES INDICATIVE OF CRITICAL LEADERSHIP: TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP (TL), PRACTICE OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY (CP), AND USE OF CRITICAL RACE PERSPECTIVE (CRP) (INCLUDING LATCRIT THEORY)
Julian (K-6 Principal), Latino of Mexican descent, Male	Strictly followed moral and emotional compass stressing trust and integrity. (TL)
	Assumed critical pedagogy and a belief that education is equal to empowerment. (CP)
	Questioned how identity interrupted or enhanced ability to see alternative perspectives. (CRP)
	Deliberately relational with his teachers and staff. (TL)
	Looked to research-based culturally responsive teaching practices as focus of professional development program. (CP)
	Instituted multiple team visits to school sites with similar populations experiencing positive academic growth to create idea ownership with teachers. (TL)
	Referred to culture, language, and race data first when addressing academic issues. (CRP)
	Used data to teach his teachers how to distinguish between groups, sub groups, goals, etc. (TL)
	Met regularly with each teacher and staff member individually. (TL)
	Mona (HE Dean of Under graduate research), Chicana, Female
Focused on improving educational outcomes for Latino children of Mexican descent, regardless of position and education. (CP)	
Carved and created her own Path of leadership development based on a composite of different qualities and behaviors (Herrera, 1987, p. 21). (TL, CRP)	
Increased campus awareness of Latino enrollment issues. (CRP, TL)	
Encouraged experimentation and creation of adopting promising practices. (TL, CP)	
Pursued aggressive recruitment to create an improved plan for retention and persistence of underserved students. (CRP, TL)	
Creating conditions to increase cultural competency for faculty working with diverse student populations. (CRP, TL)	
Strove to be a balanced educational leader attending diversity trainings to learn about populations with whom she had little experience. (CRP)	
Encouraged constituents to practice balance. (Spirit)	
Practiced transparency, collaboration, and consultation. (TL)	
Practiced forgiveness and gave constituents the benefit of the doubt. (TL, Spirit)	

Note: Elaborated by the authors.

Worth noting, Julian and Mona describe the need to assume multiple identities when working among different groups (e.g. language, dialect, body language, outward appearance), as well as act as “bridges” in order to facilitate communication between divergent groups. Lastly, they regularly perceive crises as opportunities.

Apart from the larger sample, and particular to Julian and Mona as Latino and Chicana critical leaders, five core elements of applied critical leadership were shared that align with functions of LatCrit theory (Valdes, 1998) that might suggest a sub-division of Latino/a applied critical leadership (LatACL) to better describe critical leadership in

these cases. These elements found in Julian and Mona include: lack of leadership guidance or scaffolding, spiritual aspects of leadership practice, importance of family, the use of data in order to make decisions, and the conceptualization of a positive identity. Table 3 illustrates ways in which these elements compare to the functions of LatCrit theory.

Table 3. Elements of LatACL and functions of LatCrit theory

ELEMENT FROM DATA	FUNCTIONS OF LATCRIT THEORY (Valdes, 1998:3)	JULIAN	MONA
Lack of Leadership Guidance.	The expansion and connection of struggle(s).	Lack of role models.	Lack of mentors.
Spiritual Leadership.	The advancement of transformation.	Moral/Emotional Leadership/Compass Leads with Character and Integrity	Open Heart, Generous of Spirit, Acts with Grace.
Importance of Family.	The expansion and connection of struggle(s).	Father as his role model who taught him “intrinsic” leadership skills, leadership is not context-specific.	Parents and Family activists in Raza movement.
Use of Data to drive decision-making.	The production of knowledge.	Improving teaching practices to be more culturally responsive.	Reversing negative stereotypes associated with Mexican descent women.
Positive Identity.	The cultivation of community and coalition.	Staying positive, finding solutions to problems, building bridges and opening doors are ways, he believes, that will lead to more effective organizational, people-based systems.	Positive, strengths-based to improve perceptions of Latinos on campus, students and faculty.

Note: Elaborated by the authors.

With reference to positive identity or cultivation of community and coalition, Julian states, “No matter what other people perceive, I know that I am the type of leader I want to be, that I am making a positive impact on those around me, that I am fostering positive school culture, and that I am supporting others to reach their own potential.” Similarly, when reflecting on ways in which her identity impacts her leadership practice, Mona shares, “I struggle with being a balanced educational leader focused on providing effective leadership for all students while keeping in mind the particular needs of Latino/as and Chicano/as with which I share language, culture, and ways of being.”

#### 4. Discussion and implications

Contrary to mainstream leadership paradigms and practices that focus on detachment, objectivity, and a compartmentalized leadership practice, Latino/a critical leaders blend traditional leadership practice with their personal and professional ‘funds of knowledge’ rooted in their raced and gendered realities and experiences with schooling and then apply that hybridized knowledge to their leadership practice. As a result, the ways in which they lead from their interactions with parents and community members to decision making and budgeting, are qualitatively different from existing leadership models provided by literature in educational leadership.

When asked questions on how identity impacts leadership practice for Latino/a leaders, the participants in this study provided explicit, tangible strategies that offered

leadership solutions for everyday challenges plaguing schools in the U.S. today. Julian and Mona show us that it is not enough to recruit, hire, and support leaders of color for administrative positions in education. Educational leaders who find themselves in situations where status quo practices need to be changed; need to be able to identify educational leaders who are able to use and apply a combination of sound traditional leadership practices (e.g. transformational leadership). They also need to be mindful of and to apply their practice through more critical lenses, such as critical pedagogy, critical race theory or LatCrit theory, as in the case of Julian and Mona. Educational leaders in the highest positions are cautioned with this important detail.

Findings from this study suggest that it is important to emphasize that, beyond opportunities for recruitment and hiring, Latino/a critical leaders, as do all women and leaders of color, need support in order to thrive and provide sustainable leadership practice. The research suggests these supports include conditions created to allow for more than one Latino/a in educational settings to be hired at a time. Trust must be overtly communicated, especially in mainstream contexts. Resources need to be made available to ensure Latino/a educational leaders receive the support they need to co-exist in a mainstream professional environment. All professional staff, including Latino/a critical leaders, must have diversity training in cultural competence, provided with scheduled refreshers, as current leadership preparation programs and professional development leave educators unprepared to serve culturally and linguistically diverse students (Scanlan & López, 2012). Efforts for Latino/a leaders to attain higher levels of education should be supported. Current leadership needs to be willing to mentor or seek out mentors or professional development for Latino/a individuals who express the need for more training. Referring to the California Association of Latino School Administrators (CALSA), Magdaleno (2010) discussed the importance of mentoring for Latino/a school leaders as a means to build cultural capital that draws upon the values of family, respect, service, humility, and care that are unique to Latino/a culture. Developing networks to sustain mentoring opportunities to support new Latino/a leaders results in an increased number of positive role models for Latino/a youth, can “help build and maintain high self-esteem for Latina and Latino students” (p. 94), and can inspire more Latino/a teachers to consider and enter into leadership positions.

Our analysis indicate that remaining successful or persisting at success will only occur when Latino/a critical leaders are not isolated in their dispositions and propensities to lead regarding issues of race, ethnicity, language, and class, which are usually at the forefront of their leadership practice. Organizations with leadership that choose to be more purposeful about recruiting, hiring, and retaining Latino/a critical leaders need to develop plans to hire cadres or groups of Latino/a critical leaders, if they expect critical shifts and changes to occur in their organizations. Professional development, mentoring opportunities, and access to the ‘hidden curriculum’ of the organizations need to be made transparent so that Latino/a critical leaders feel supported in the workplace. Finally, critical leaders, especially those of color, should be aware of, and be included in, diversity training and support for the good of the organization. They should not bear the burden of training others simply because of their background. Nor should it be assumed they know any more about working in diverse settings than their mainstream peers. A diverse life experience may yield empathy, but knowledge of other cultures and cultural competency needs to be supported by professional development (Santamaría, 2013).



## **5. Conclusions**

The Latino/a critical leaders featured in this research do not opt to trade their marginalized identities for hegemonic perspectives. They are grounded in their identities and able to identify ways in which their cultural identities affect their leadership practice. What participants shared with us is that, to some degree, their ability to lead organizations successfully comes directly as a result of their unique difference. Rather than suppress their identities, biases, linguistic ability, ambiguity, and multiple perspectives, Latino/a critical leaders use their “ways of knowing” to inform important leadership decisions in education at every level.

Further work is needed to shed light on further benefits of diverse leadership in educational contexts. Our results clearly indicate the existence of Latino/a leaders who are traditionally qualified and uniquely experientially culturally and linguistically equipped to provide leadership in situations that our system has found perplexing. Critical leaders, Latino/a or otherwise raced outside of whiteness, are able to provide counter-stories and therefore counter-solutions to educational challenges.

Like most studies, ours has its limitations. These limitations include the sample size two Latino/a educational leaders can only provide a limited perspective. Additionally, the two individuals represented a convenience sample that participated in the study voluntarily. The study geographically was limited to Southern California and may be subject to researcher bias as we are raced and gendered leaders of color ourselves. However, it is important to note we would not have been able to collect such detailed data, were it not for our case study research design.

Further, Latino/a critical leaders who participated in this study do not conform to mainstream leadership practice, but engage in practices parallel to known mainstream leadership paradigms. Latino/a critical leaders exhibit fresh, innovative ways of leading to meet increasingly challenging needs and choose change as their primary leadership outcome, based on their adaptive experiences, rather than waiting to react to a failing system. These leaders also express a moral and ethical obligation to lead, being ‘called’ to serve in a leadership capacity. They each demonstrate a strong worth ethic, and are extremely well prepared and educated with regard to being able to provide effective leadership. Furthermore, the leaders are committed to educational change for what they consider to be the greater good, using positive attributes of their Latino/a identities to inform their leadership practice.

In sum, knowledge and resourcefulness held by Latino/a critical leaders are virtually untapped and constrained by traditional ways of thinking about who the best, qualified individuals are for leadership positions. These research findings indicate they offer fresh new ideas to address old persistent problems. Therefore, educational leadership in the U.S. at the highest levels needs to “reset” its approach to recruiting, hiring, and developing educational leaders; otherwise missed opportunities will persist with regard to solving contemporary educational crises, including academic and other achievement gaps separating Latino/a youth from their mainstream, most often white and middle-class, peers. It is critical we aggressively attract, recruit, train, and hire Latino/a educational leaders and other leaders of color to work as equal partners in solving our collective educational crises.

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## Successful Leadership Practices for Schools in Challenging Urban Contexts: Case Studies

### Prácticas de Liderazgo Exitoso en Escuelas en Contextos Urbanos Desafiantes: Estudios de Caso

### Práticas de Liderança de Sucesso para as Escolas em Contextos Urbanos Desafiadores: Estudos de Caso

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This paper examines some of the key aspects of successful leadership practices for schools in challenging urban context. The research question for this paper is: "What are the key aspects of successful leadership practices used by headteachers in schools in a highly disadvantaged urban context?" The study is based on a qualitative case study approach with a comparative perspective. In the study a purposeful sampling approach was adopted. In order to answer the research question multiple methods of data collection were used. The research findings show three following development phases common to the studied schools and successful leadership practices corresponding to those phases: (i) Creation of reliable foundations: toward new qualities; (ii) Building a culture of concern and achievement; and (iii) Searching for synergy: stabilization and consolidation. Teachers' leadership and building the educational partnerships are especially important practices within the phase: "Searching for synergy: stabilization and consolidation".

**Keywords:** Successful leadership practices, Phases of school development, Culture of school success, Teachers' leadership, Educational partnership.

Este artículo examina algunos de los aspectos clave de las prácticas de liderazgo exitoso puestas en marcha en escuelas ubicadas en contextos urbanos desafiantes. La pregunta de investigación para este artículo es: "¿Cuáles son los aspectos clave de las prácticas del liderazgo exitoso utilizadas por los directores de las escuelas en contextos urbanos altamente desfavorecidos?" El estudio se basa en un enfoque de estudio de caso cualitativo con una perspectiva comparada. Se utilizó muestreo intencional. Para responder a la pregunta de investigación se utilizaron diferentes métodos de recogida de información. Los resultados de la investigación muestran tres fases comunes en el desarrollo de las escuelas estudiadas y explicitan prácticas de liderazgo exitoso en cada una de las fases. Éstas son: (i) Creación de bases: hacia nuevas cualidades; (ii) Construcción de una cultura preocupada por el rendimiento; y (iii) Búsqueda de sinergias: estabilización y consolidación. El liderazgo docente y la construcción de las asociaciones educativas son prácticas especialmente importantes dentro de la fase: "Búsqueda de sinergias: estabilización y consolidación".

**Descriptores:** Prácticas de liderazgo exitoso, Fases de desarrollo de la escuela, Cultura del éxito escolar, Liderazgo docente, Asociación educativa.

Este artigo analisa alguns dos aspectos-chave de práticas de liderança de sucesso implementados nas escolas em contextos urbanos desafiadores. A questão de pesquisa para este artigo é: "Quais são os aspectos-chave de práticas de liderança de sucesso utilizadas pelos diretores em contextos urbanos altamente desfavorecidos?" O estudo baseia-se em uma abordagem de estudo de caso qualitativo, com uma perspectiva comparativa. A amostragem foi intencional. Para responder à pergunta de pesquisa foram utilizados diferentes métodos de coleta de dados. Os resultados da pesquisa mostram três fases comuns no desenvolvimento das escolas estudadas e práticas explícitas de liderança de sucesso em cada uma das fases. São eles: (i) Criação de bases: para novas qualidades; (ii) Construção de uma cultura preocupada com o desempenho; e (iii) Procurar sinergias: estabilização e consolidação. Liderança dos professores e criação de parcerias educacionais são práticas especialmente importantes dentro fase: "Procurar sinergias: estabilização e consolidação".

**Palavras-chave:** Práticas de liderança de sucesso, Estágios de desenvolvimento da escola, Cultura de sucesso escolar, Liderança docente, Associação educativa.

## Introduction

Leadership is a significant factor in hampering or facilitating change within schools. This confident statement is supported by analysis of the relevant educational literature. Increasingly this literature includes research reports describing links between leadership, school development and pupils' educational achievements (Day et al., 2009; Madalińska-Michalak, 2012). Academic studies on school development reveal the role which leadership plays in the process of reforming school (Harris, 2002; Harris & Chapman, 2002, 2004). They indicate the need for a new approach to managing schools which concentrates on a headteacher as a leader and on utilising leadership potential which lies in teachers (Michalak & Jones, 2010; OECD, 2014; Rutherford, 2009).

The purpose of this paper is to examine some of the key aspects of successful leadership practices for schools in socially disadvantaged areas and to critically consider the broader socio-cultural-economic context in which the school and the headteacher's work are immersed. The operation of schools in areas, in which the majority of pupils come from marginalised environments or are members of disadvantaged groups, is an area of educational research that deserves more investment and attention. There is a high risk that pupils in such schools may fail to achieve their full potential, which in turn may produce negative impact on their professional and personal lives into the future. Therefore, it seems crucial to study aspects of school leadership that may improve this situation.

The ideas and underpinning research presented in this paper were developed over several years. Key questions were raised for me by my research work on teachers' professional success and the conditions that enabled it (Michalak, 2007). My experiences gained from participation in the international research work entitled "Leading Schools Successfully in Challenging Urban Context: Strategies for Improvement" (Michalak, 2009) helped to further develop my thinking. In deciding to conduct research on successful leadership for schools in socially disadvantaged areas I was convinced that empirical research should emerge from the belief that social life can be better organized. For example that a school, due to its greater sensitivity to the issue of exclusion, can shape conditions of teaching and learning in a way that enhances pupils' educational opportunities. I was equally convinced of the need to conduct educational research which is focused not only on negative phenomena taking place in education such as

deficiencies of teacher and school performance, but rather on positive aspects of school performance. These positive aspects to a large extent depend on headteachers' and teachers' work.

While addressing the issue of successful leadership in schools I would like to indicate in this paper some of the chosen aspects of those leadership practices, which were a particular driving force behind the changes introduced into the lives of the researched schools. Those practices resulted from the headteachers striving to find answers not only to the question 'How to act?', but also 'What should be done?' and 'Why?'

The research revealed development phases common to the studied schools and successful leadership practices corresponding to those phases. The research showed that although there was no single development path for the schools managed by the researched headteachers, the experiences of those schools included distinct similarities. The development paths consisted of three basic phases, which I named as follows: (i) Creation of reliable foundations: toward new qualities; (ii) Building a culture of concern and achievement; and (iii) Searching for synergy: stabilization and consolidation (see: Madalińska-Michalak, 2012). Each of the development phases was connected to dominating leadership practices characteristic of it. They were based on values and behavior standards accepted (shared) in schools, and also on particular goals. It is characteristic of the highlighted phases that when considered together they did not constitute a linear sequence within a school's improvement, but they took the form of a circular flow. The phases were connected one with another and it would be rather difficult to draw distinct boundaries between them. Considered together they constituted evidence for the complexity of leadership within the researched schools. The phases also indicated key aspects of that leadership. Seemingly isolated leadership practices reinforced one another, and their combined existence was conducive to the schools' improvement.

Using the research findings illustrated by selected fragments of statements by headteachers, I will concentrate on the third of the highlighted development phases, that is on the phase I have named: "Searching for synergy: stabilization and consolidation". While discussing this phase, I will highlight some of the leadership practices that were evident in this phase and consider the assumptions underpinning them.

## **1. Methodology and methods**

The research design consisted of two overlapping phases: the first was a literature review to ascertain 'what is known' about the nature and effects of successful school leadership in challenging urban contexts; while the second involved a case study approach (Bassegy, 1999) to explore key leadership strategies used to create a culture of school success "against the odds". The study is situated within a non-positivist and qualitative paradigm, whilst aiming to make use of as many "concrete" reference points as possible such as official reports and data. The methodological approach in the study employs "interpretivist" methods of data collection and analysis, without relying on the data alone for the generation of concepts and theoretical issues.

In the study I adopted the premise that the people participating in the research give symbolic meanings to artefacts, they create norms and values, and personalised ways understand the system in which they function. I perceived my own role as a researcher

in the context of undertaking research activities which would enable me to reconstruct views and assumptions concerning the researched subject through studies of the selected cases which were unique and unrepeatable in themselves. In the course of my research I endeavoured to avoid arbitrarily attributing functional meanings to what I observed. It should be noted that this interpretative approach might tend to create an excessive focus on meanings and motives at the expense of the analysis of conditions triggering particular actions. In order not to burden the research with such flaws, I endeavoured to analyse the process of becoming a successful leader and the key aspects of successful leadership practices in school development. While doing this I took into consideration the involvement of this process and these practices in social, cultural, economic and political dependencies. The analysis of leadership practices of the participants in the research followed the analysis of the context in which these participants operated (school location, school description: history, perception, challenges, teachers, pupils, parents) and of the biographies of the participating headteachers. The research work reported in this study meant, in accordance with the adopted methodological basis, not only the exploration of “the point of view of the participant in a social life” –i.e. the headteachers invited to take part in the research– but also making an effort to learn in what way the experience which is the object of this research is placed in wider, often hidden, social positions, networks, situations and relations. The analysis of the gathered qualitative data was related to particular time, place and situation. In the course of the research process, while trying to reconstruct the process of becoming a successful leader and identify key aspects of successful leadership at school in socially unprivileged areas, I conducted the research not only at the level of an individual (headteachers), but also at the level of a school and its surroundings. This enabled me to take into consideration social, cultural, economic and political situations.

Using a qualitative case study approach one of the research question was formulated as follows: “What are the key aspects of successful leadership practices used by headteachers in schools in a highly disadvantaged urban context?”

The aim of the study was to establish “fuzzy generalisations” through plausible accounts of events and phenomena (Bassegy, 1999). The study, as I mentioned earlier, was an attempt to “get below the surface” of individual leaders’ values and to capture the complex school leadership task in these communities, with trustworthiness being achieved through comparing and contrasting evidence from a range of people and methods. The primary purpose of the research effort presented in this paper was to generate a deeper understanding of what key aspects of successful leadership practices are used by the examined headteachers to create a culture of success “against the odds”.

A purposeful sampling approach was adopted, aiming for “information-rich cases for study in depth” (Patton, 1990: 52). Given the goals of the study, particular importance was placed on selecting schools from highly disadvantaged urban contexts:

- that have a good reputation (schools which aim to raise the achievements of all its students and have successes in improvements in these achievements, schools that achieve a rising level of: 'value-added' results regarding pupils' achievements, pupil attendance and social climate in the school and community);



- are led by the headteachers who (i) are constantly seeking to improve achievements of all school students, (ii) are widely acknowledged by their professional peers as being 'successful' leaders.

Inspectors from Local Authority's Education Service were asked to indicate headteachers whom they regarded as successful on the basis of the school evaluation, student achievement and peer acknowledgement.

In the presented study a comparative perspective was used. It allowed to have a better understanding of the successful key leadership practices in the researched schools in two different countries in reference to the socio-cultural, economic and political circumstances of these countries. According to Michael Sadler, one of the founders of comparative education, "In studying foreign systems of education, we should not forget that the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside (Sadler 1900, quoted in Higginson, 1979:49). It was assumed that analysis of the impact of these circumstances on key leadership practices can contribute to the development of knowledge on successful leadership practices in schools in challenging urban context. Regarding the Sadler's stance that practical benefits from comparative studies of foreign education systems lies in the fact that we begin to better understand our own educational system (ibid.), one can have an assumption that familiarity with foreign solutions can lead to the search for ways to improve national education, supporting the development of institutions and educational activities.

In the presented study qualitative data has been collected from groups of schools in challenging urban contexts in two major cities in England and Poland. These cities (Sheffield and Lodz) are long-established manufacturing centers that have suffered a decline and undergone more recent attempts to reconfigure their local economies, with mixed success. The Yewlands community in Sheffield is in the poorest five percent nationally, according to official data. Inner city Lodz is even poorer in absolute terms than its English counterpart, with incomes 60% below the national median, in a country with low levels of income overall. Both countries have relatively high levels of child poverty and disparity in living standards between rich and poor, with Poland having the highest levels of these in the EU (Marlier et al., 2007).

The final purposeful sample consisted of four primary schools and two lower secondary schools –with the majority of their students drawn from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds (the majority of the students live in neighborhoods which suffer poverty) where attendance and behaviour problems have existed. Whilst the schools did not have to be the most successful, they all met the following criteria: (i) the positive reputation of the school and the positive reputation of the current headteacher, and (ii) evidence of success in terms of students' educational achievements.

In order to explore the key aspects of successful leadership practices used by headteachers in schools in a highly disadvantaged urban context, a research design was constructed that incorporated multiple methods of data collection. Different methods were used to triangulate data, to build rather than test theory.

Multiple methods of data collection included a one-to-one semi-structured interview with the headteacher and an interview with a group of four classroom teachers at each school and interview with the groups of up to six parents and up to six students at each school. Researchers used a common interview protocol. The schedule included themes

like changes in the school, perceptions of success and headteachers role in the school's success, the relationships between the headteacher, leadership colleagues, teachers, students and parents, and the headteachers actions in pursuit of student achievement. In addition, a wide range of documentary data (relevant "concrete" evidence, e.g. inspection reports, performance data) was collected concerning each school. In the early stages of the research, clear sets of ethical and practical guidelines were agreed with the participants.

An interpretivist approach to data analysis established primary patterns in the data and identified meaningful and significant issues (Dey, 1993; Patton, 1990). All interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Transcripts were returned to the interviewees for correction and validation purposes. Interview data enabled in-depth, cross-case comparisons to be undertaken. This analysis led to the emergence of a number of common themes and key findings.

## **2. Findings: searching for synergy**

In the next section of this paper I will focus on some findings connected with the one of the identified phases of school development, which I named: "Searching for synergy: stabilization and consolidation". While discussing this phase I will focus on the successful leadership practices employed and on the assumptions underpinning them.

I named the phase discussed in this section "Searching for synergy: stabilization and consolidation" because experiences of the research participants stressed integration of activities of many educational entities within the school's development in order to increase the chances for educational success of pupils. Research participants were convinced that results gained through synergy are incomparably better than the results of individual actions. The synergy phenomenon is accompanied by activation of collective energy, which in turn appears when people work together. When acting alone you are not able to carry out the things that become the result of cooperation (Corning, 1985).

It should be emphasized that the researched headteachers were involved in discovering cultural patterns and in disseminating and strengthening them (see: Madalińska-Michalak, 2013). In practice, this led to emergence of clear cultural patterns in schools, to implementation of those patterns, and to activities responsible for stabilizing the selected development path of the school. Thanks to this, when discussing this development phase, it was possible to refer to terms like: stabilization and consolidation (Sikorski, 2006). The research participants concentrated on cooperation reinforced by mutual trust not only at school, but also outside of it. In the same way they provided foundations for creation of practitioner communities acting within different learning networks. Key aspects of successful leadership – within the school development phase discussed here – were visible in activities connected to favoring the teachers' leadership. They were also related to building a relationship with the local community in order to create a cooperative network and to promote collaboration between the school and institutions or organizations outside school.

### ***2.1. Teachers' leadership***

The analysis indicates that the researched school headteachers were involved in creating conditions facilitating teachers' participation in management and leadership of the

school. A basic element of the headteachers' approach to school management was increasing the part that the teachers played in the school's life and increasing their involvement in decision-making. This approach also involved increasing information flow between the headteacher and the teachers and this was described by one of the research participants as "sharing the leadership". The research participants appreciated real participation of the teachers; they perceived it as a chance for solving difficult problems occurring in the school. Here is an exemplary, and characteristic, statement:

*I have always assumed that leadership is not something that is innate. On my own example I can see that you can learn leadership. Of course, some predispositions for being a leader are necessary. And that is also something I have learned first hand. Nevertheless, more important than the predispositions are headteachers and their learning ability. It is the headteacher who is responsible for encouraging the teachers, for reinforcing their sense of effectiveness and self-esteem. A team of people and not just one director should manage school. This is my motto at work. These are the convictions that I strove to pass on to my teachers. Step by step I have tried to give everyone at school the opportunity to become a leader, and for everyone to be responsible for the events taking place at school.* (Headteacher, primary school, England)

The excerpt above illustrates that the research participants did not perceive leadership as a defined place in a hierarchy, but rather as a process for which many of the school staff were responsible. Understanding the leadership as connected to a vision of a strong individual, a person able to change the school on their own, was foreign to the researched headteachers. While striving to alter the school's image they rather made an effort to place their trust and respect in the teachers, and above all to encourage them to act. At the same time they were convinced that achieving positive results was much more probable in situations where the teachers took action, rather than merely reacted to actions. Research participants were in favor of including the teachers in the decision making processes through clear and supportive organizational structure of the school. Reconstruction of the professional experiences of participants has revealed that they put an emphasis on their cooperation with the teachers, and as the result of that, in practice decisions of all kinds were not their exclusive domain.

Nevertheless, it was the research participants, as headteachers, who were ultimately liable; they were the ones accountable for the success or failure of their schools. The analysis revealed that the headteachers were conscious of the fact that it was their discretion to what extent the leadership was spread in the school. First of all, it was the headteacher who was responsible for creating the conditions which encouraged the teachers to take up challenges, to participate in decision-making, and to lead others at school and in its environment.

A strong emphasis on leadership distribution was put by the British headteachers, who also stated that the teachers' participation in leadership was the basis for releasing their potential, for facilitating their development, for increasing and reinforcing their sense of responsibility. This can be seen in their statements cited below:

*My work at school taught me to perceive other people's potential. I try to carefully observe what the teachers can give the school from themselves, because this is a very important thing. I always try to encourage the teachers to take on the leadership responsibility for their work and to show them that I am not alone in the school. If we are going to change anything, we have to act together.* (Headteacher, secondary school, England)

*I have learned to observe the principle that leadership in school should not be limited to the school director alone, but to selected teachers. It is important to me for my teachers to be willing to take responsibility for their work. I avoid the role of a main arbiter. Instead, I*

*strive for the decisions to be made together, for the teachers to lead others in their professional development process or in creating curricula.* (Headteacher, primary school, England)

Headteachers in Poland had –especially at the beginning of their work– all kinds of difficulties with releasing the leadership potential among the teachers. There were situations, where they felt they could not, despite their own beliefs, share problem solving with their teachers or making decisions with them. Sometimes the difficulties had a more external nature, sometime they were connected to the headteacher himself/herself. An example of such state of affairs can be seen in the following statement:

*It was important to me to build a sense of achievement in the teachers. I wanted them to start believing that in that school many things depend on them, because they can make important decisions and take responsibility for them. It turned out to be a big problem because, on the one hand, I am inclined to do things on my own and, on the other hand, it was a small school. In practice this meant that I instinctively wanted to take care of different things personally and not involve the teachers. But the realization that it is not right, as well as my previous experiences, told me that I should imagine a red light every time when such a temptation appears.* (Headteacher, primary school, Poland)

The data analysis showed that the basic leadership skill of the headteachers, especially of the Polish headteachers, was their skill of handling the boundaries between an autocratic and democratic manner of decision making. Performing the leading function at school forces the involved person to decide how he/she wants to see themselves in the role of a school headteacher.

*A true involvement takes a lot of time that should be devoted to the teachers. Because it is much more time-consuming than keeping your distance, I have very carefully selected the right moment to directly interact with the teachers. The whole trick is to know how to be close and distant, if it is necessary. My whole problem was that I had to learn how to get involved in the teachers' work without giving the impression that I am their buddy.* (Headteacher, primary school, Poland)

*Many headteachers prefer to keep their distance towards the teachers, because getting involved can entail unpredictable consequences or incline the teachers to ask questions, which they cannot answer, or which they would prefer to avoid. My practice has proved to me that this risk is worth its price. An open, more informal nature of the professional relations helped me discover new areas. Nevertheless, in the beginning I had many problems with leaving that excessive distance, which was it a way imposed on me together with the role of a director.* (Headteacher, secondary school, Poland)

The analysis showed that the researched headteachers acknowledged that some of the managing tasks should be delegated to the teachers, so that their execution involved independent actions by the teachers. Such active participation of the teachers in school management can be conducive to seeing the school's issues in a broader perspective. Headteachers of Polish schools, similarly to the headteachers of British schools, emphasized the importance of the teachers participation in the school management process and of the teachers' leadership connected to that participation. A distinct characteristic of the headteachers' work was their coping with distrust, which they encountered at schools. The professional experiences of researched headteachers suggest that both parties (the headteacher and the teachers) have to be prepared for participation in school management process. Sharing the leadership in school means accepting the importance of involvement and responsibility of each member of the school community. Research participants pointed out activities and circumstances that weakened trust, especially in the early stages of their work, and how this contributed to

the difficulties of building relations between the headteachers and the school's teaching staff.

## ***2.2. Educational partnerships***

Analysis of the data shows that the headteachers gave priority to the school's openness to cooperation with parents and with local community. The headteachers put an emphasis on circumstances that would allow for active support of the students' development by giving their parents a part in the education of their children and by tightening the relations with parents. One of the headteachers of primary school in England stated that "if parents are not on your side, you lose" and this would stand as a motto for all of the research participants. Because of this the headteachers strove not only for the school to offer the parents various opportunities for cooperation, but perceiving the parents as their allies, with whom their common ground is their concern for the child's development, they also put much effort into convincing the parents to engage with the school.

In the early stages of the headteachers' work cooperation with parents in all of the researched schools was a kind of everyday "problem". Both parties, school and parents, were at least in part responsible for this state of affairs. The headteachers, not wanting to maintain this state any longer, tried to change the situation at least partially. During the interviews the headteachers discussed this directly. Below a few excerpts from their comments are cited.

*I was shocked when I have observed something that could be called pro-school passivity of the parents. I was wondering where it came from. I turned my attention to teachers. And I must admit that if someone observed this school for a longer while they could get an impression that some of the teachers treated cooperation with the parents like a heavy burden. There was no way that this could be ignored. (Headteacher, secondary school, England)*

*If teachers complain about the lack of cooperation with parents, I think that first and foremost they should take a long good look at their own work. It is often the case that the teachers complain because the teachers do not strive for that kind of contact. Someone always has to make the first step. If we just keep sitting around, nothing is going to change. We just need to meet the parents halfway. If parents do not make that first step, then we have to do it. And then tell them we are organizing for example aerobics for mums. And it does not matter that there are going to be only two mums. But they are the ones that want to do this. (Headteacher, primary school, Poland)*

These comments indicate that in the researched schools both teachers and parents were convinced that they were mutually responsible for their behavior towards each other, for their relation to the importance of cooperation and for its implementation, for their realization of activity goals and of the means they had available. One of the chosen comment below illustrate further this state of affairs:

*You cannot rest on your laurels here. Every day is a challenge for someone else. Everyday brings something new. We learn different things. At any moment a superintendent of schools can approach one or another person and tell them something that makes your hair stand on end, so this is a challenge. For a person who does not like to be bored, yes, this school is a right place for such a person. Things are happening all the time here. So if you like nice and quiet, you need to find yourself a more peaceful, more stable school, where you will be able to work quietly until the day you retire. I will say that again: I like those kids because they are honest. I like those parents because even when they do not have a spare cent they will come and ask – not all of them – how they can help or "I don't have any money but I do have time, so maybe I could help paint something". Those parents, when they had been shown that*

*something is changing in this school, that we want to actually do something, they started to come to us of their own will.* (Headteacher, primary school, Poland)

Convincing parents to play a part in the school's work was perceived as a difficult task by all the researched headteachers. The basis for such difficulties was lack of educational aspirations prevalent in the family environment and a particular disbelief in the possibility of changing the personal situation. One of the headteacher commented it as follows:

*All the projects we organize for parents and for the local community are very difficult. Recently, together with other schools, we organized a 3-day event. Unfortunately, only a handful of parents decided to participate in it. Reasons for this reservation can be found in the local history and in the culture of this environment, which is characterized by a significant distrust and lack of aspirations.* (Headteacher, primary school, England)

This statement was complemented by conversation on the same topic with teachers. One of them said:

*Recently I have talked to one of the pupils about her plans for the future. When I asked her what she would like to do when she finishes school, she told me: <nothing>>. So I asked: "What do you mean by: <<nothing>>." And she said "OK, my dad doesn't do anything, my brother doesn't do anything, my grandfather didn't do anything and I won't be doing anything... <<nothing>>".* (Teacher, primary school, England)

Analysis of the collected data shows that the headteachers of primary schools were in a somewhat better situation when it came to tightening relations with the parents, than the headteachers of lower secondary schools. Each of the researched primary headteachers in the course of interview emphasized that the effort they invested in stimulating cooperation with parents resulted in noticeable success. Parents were more and more involved in school and they played a part in the school's life. On the other hand, at the secondary school level parents were barely involved in school and not very active. As the child moves to a higher level of education the parents become less and less active and unwilling to get involved in the school issues.

Despite this general picture the researched headteachers were satisfied with what they managed to achieve, in terms of making their schools more open to parents. Comments by the parents' and teachers' clearly spoke of positive changes where cooperation between the school and parents was concerned. The researched headteachers, especially British ones, emphasized that parents participated in all kinds of independent study teams, which were available to them at schools. Work in those teams helped the parents to understand the meaning of education and to build hope around the opportunity to change their personal situation and the situation of their children. Children who could observe change in their parents' attitude, expressed through their involvement in solving various problems, or in their greater persistence in undertaken tasks, approached their school duties with greater enthusiasm themselves and treated school as a place that was important for their development.

The headteachers' statements strongly emphasized cooperation, building educational partnerships – not only with the family environment of the students, but also with the local community. Research participants were well aware that if the schools managed by them were to develop, then they needed a strong rooting in the local environment. Hence they really valued building close relations with local communities and with education authorities. For the research participants it was important for their school to be visible in the local environment, to be needed not only by pupils but also by their parents and the entire community.

The headteachers strove to combine the potential of subject teachers, guidance counselors and school psychologists, specialists from all kinds of establishments and institutions located in the school's vicinity. In their comments the headteachers also mentioned building social capital. They stressed the benefits their work could bring to the local community. They talked about their schools being open to the local community, its needs and its peculiarities. Researched parents often used the expression "our school". This indicated how important a role the school plays in their lives and how strongly they were attached to that school.

Polish headteachers tried to create, as one of the headteacher of Polish school described it, "a coalition supporting the students' development", which necessitated ensuring conditions that would allow for effective everyday cooperation of this "coalition", as well as developing standards and rules of cooperation. In contrast the headteachers of British schools created networks facilitating learning. These networks were used for exchanging experiences, sharing knowledge and skills, and searching for problem solutions through team work. British headteachers attributed a special role to headteacher networks and to problem networks. Within those networks meetings were organized, during which areas of work, goals, and schedules for activity were established. Once the planned activities were implemented the headteachers worked out recommendations and proposals for further work. Specialists who were able to support the work of each network were invited to subsequent meetings.

The findings show that when British headteachers talked about changes in school and about a changed school, they emphasized the importance of learning, especially organizational and systemic learning. Polish school headteachers, on the other hand, when talking about learning and change in the interviews, did not mention systemic learning. British headteachers acted in accordance with the rule, mentioned by John MacBeath in the work: "What do we know about learning?" (2009), that four levels of learning can be distinguished at school: students learning, teachers learning, organizational learning, and systemic learning. Systemic learning means going beyond the concern for a single institution by building a network in order to improve the communication process and to build social capital (MacBeath, 2009:6-7).

The reasons for British headteachers' strong interest in the environment, in work for the local community, can be found in changes present for a long time now in the British educational policy and in local education conditions. In the last decades of the 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st century many programs were created whose goal was to involve parents and local community in school education. Local education authorities, in accordance with the newest legal regulations, have been responsible for ensuring quality in schools and for promoting high education standards for students of school age in their areas. The basic assumption of educational policy developed within "Every Child Matters. Change for Children" (DfES, 2004) was integration of services provided to children, as well as a more effective reflection of the real needs of children and teenagers, and of their families, in the services provided. At the end of 2007 a Children's Plan was published, which included a long term vision for improving the educational system and the services for integrated family support. One of the key elements of this program was establishing the school's role as the center of local community. Relations between parents, schools, health benefits sector, and other institutions providing services for the youngest are supposed to pave the way to happiness, health, and good conditions for learning for all the children. British

headteachers, according to “National Standards for Headteachers”, are obliged to develop and maintain an effective partnership with other schools, children agencies, local authorities, universities, and employers. Building on the support of the local community the school headteacher is responsible for creation of a learning environment that corresponds to the child's needs and is conducive to their development.

### **3. Discussion and conclusions**

The analysis has revealed key aspects of successful leadership in schools. Within the school development phase described here, leadership activities of the researched headteachers favored teachers' leadership and "opening" the school to cooperation with parents and the local community by developing educational partnerships.

Researched headteachers strove to create an environment, where all the teachers would feel responsible for improving the school and for achieving elected goals together. Teachers' involvement in the work connected to planning activities important for the school's life and for decision making processes and these activities strengthened their sense of responsibility. The headteachers stressed what each person could give to the school and they appreciated the teachers' contribution in improving the school. At the same time they tried to discourage the teachers from the type of thinking that assumes that the headteacher is supposed to "solve" all the school's problems. Leadership of the researched headteachers, after Thomas Sergiovanni (1992), can be referred to as a moral leadership, a serving-oriented leadership, a leadership that is determined by personal value systems rather than by instrumental, managerial affairs.

The headteachers were involved in leadership concentrated on people, encompassing constant creation, maintenance, and renewal of learning among pupils, teachers, parents, and local communities. As Norman Longworth and Keith Davies (1996) would say – they have received from an excessively demanding society a task impossible to fulfill (*ibidem*, p. 40). However, these headteachers retained hope, optimism, and trust in their own abilities, which are important sources of an successful learning and of positive changes at school. Together with acceptance of the responsibility for a constant development of schools and for creating opportunities for better teaching and learning, these qualities never left them despite ever growing levels of accountability, emphasis on test results, unending school audits, and increasing bureaucracy.

Each of the schools managed by the researched headteachers treated cooperation as a source of strength that contributes to the development of leadership and improves the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, establishing contact with local community in the British context seems to have been somewhat easier than in Poland. In Poland it seems to have been more difficult to build educational partnerships with other schools, especially with schools of the same type, located in a neighboring school district. The reason for such state of affairs is strong competition between the schools that still exists. Meanwhile, together with the new assumptions of British policy there appear foundations for the schools to strive towards cooperation, to create educational partnerships described by David Frost, John MacBeath and Jorunn Møller in the work: “Leaving a legacy: helping schools to collaborate in a climate of competition” (2009).

The research has shown that the headteachers can be perceived as leaders, who preferred to release a sense of power in the teachers rather than hand power to them.



Those headteachers not only guided, organized and supervised activities, not only built relations with school community, they also focused their attention on values which were supposed to ensure cohesion of the school. They acted in a way that excluded autocratic decision making at school, preferring for the decisions to be dependent on team activities.

The researched headteachers concentrated on values that guided them in their work. Their leadership originated in their ability to act together with others and to create conditions for others to act, but not under their power and control. These interesting conclusions are consistent with Mahen Tampoe's (1998) research and with findings from the project "Successful School Leaders", supervised by Christopher Day, Mark Hadfield, Alma Harris, Harry Tolley and John Beresford (2006).

The results of the research pertaining to successful leadership in schools within socially disadvantaged areas authorize me to draw the conclusion that there is no one successful model of leadership. The headteachers invited to the research followed in their work similar values. Their actions were aimed at similar goals. Ways in which the researched headteachers acted were influenced by all kinds of social, cultural, economic, or political dependencies. Headteachers, who took part in the study, tried to respond with their actions to the context in which they functioned. At the same time, they tried to change that context, in accordance with the saying "change the environment that tries to change you".

The research results have revealed the importance of the culture-forming role of the headteacher as educational leader, and they have indicated that changes introduced by a headteacher require a well thought-out idea about the school, its place in a society, and the role it is supposed to play. Researched headteachers showed consideration for shaping the school's culture (see: Madalińska-Michalak, 2013). In their everyday work they were guided by the principle that "a favorable school culture is not just a coincidence". It can be concluded that the headteachers strove to create an organizational culture that is networking, partnering, open, and friendly (see: Sikorski, 2006) because these are seen as the conditions for a culture of success "against the odds".

The conclusions presented in this paper are consistent with findings in the literature on leadership and social justice. This literature identifies schools that have demonstrated remarkable success not only with white middle-class and affluent students, but also with students from varied racial, socio-economic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Maynes & Sarbit, 2000; Oakes et al., 2000; Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002; Scheurich, 1998). A lesson learnt from these schools and from the literature on school change is that exemplary leadership points to the necessity for change and helps make the realities of change happen (Bell, Jones, & Johnson 2002; Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Fullan, 1993; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002; Lyman & Villani, 2002; Rapp, 2002; Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002; Solomon, 2002).

Regarding the issues of successful school leadership practices and the conditions of creating a culture of success "against the odds", the presented study revealed not only what can be important within the school but also beyond it. The headteachers showed a considerable knowledge as far as cultural relations and conscious shaping of them goes. They influenced thinking and behavioral patterns of their teachers, striving to sensitize them to the benefits of learning in cooperation and of a collaborative search for solutions in response to various challenges. The headteachers aimed at making their school a

place of learning. They ascribed a special role not only to pupils' learning in classes but also to the school's learning as an organization. They treated teachers' learning at school both as their being capable of taking part in the school community's life, and as their ability to offer that community something of themselves, which is synonymous with involvement in social activity. The headteachers perceived teachers' learning as integrated with experiencing participation and with uniting around common values. They strove to reinforce teachers' learning by using internal potential of the school as a workplace, but also by opening that school to its environment. They were conscious of the fact that school should be the "subject of change". Hence, while leading the school they strove to inspire activities and learning of various educational subjects not only to adjust a culture to the needs of its members, but also to adjust "its members and their ways of knowing to the needs of the culture" (Bruner, 1996: 43).

We can learn from the presented study that the headteachers, running leadership roles, can –even in schools situated in disadvantaged areas– encourage practices, which raise the cohesion, integration and participation of everyone in the school. In order to develop this they should have explicit principles and values aimed to reducing and criticize the injustices in society that tend to perpetuate. They should be aware of the challenges of their roles in the in the development the school culture that promotes educational process for all students learn to their maximum capabilities.

Contemporary research on educational leadership and social justice tells us that there is not just a single model of leadership at school and there are no an exclusive practice for raising the inclusion, equity and justice. The most important contribution of the headteacher as an educational leader is to use strategies that are worthy to answer the needs school and its context (Harris, 2002; Harris & Chapman, 2002, 2004, 2006; Kugelmass, 2004; Michalak & Jones, 2009, 2010; Muijs et al., 2007), that –as we can learnt from the presented in this paper study– constitute a way to build the capacity for change in schools.

The presented study provokes to pose the questions about the role of the leaders in the school (not only the role of headteacher as a leader), about the way in which educational leaders can create a creative, inclusive educational environment at schools and how they can reverse the processes that embed inequities. It is especially important to identify, reconstruct and describe practices that are linked to social justice, its principles and ways to promote it.

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**REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN  
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## Why the Leadership and Management Divide Matters in Education: the Implications for Schools and Social Justice

### Por qué Dividir el Liderazgo y la Gestión en Educación: Implicaciones para las Escuelas y la Justicia Social

### Por que Dividir a Liderança e Gestão na Educação: Implicações para as Escolas e Justiça Social

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Talk of school leadership has become highly significant in the context of current education policy developments and discourses in many parts of Europe and the Americas. This article seeks to explore why the leadership and management divide matters in education and what the implications for schools and social justice are. The article makes a contribution to the understanding of the concepts of leadership and management through identifying that the increasing obsession in education with leadership, and denigration of management, is firstly based on a decontextualized conception of what it means to run educational organizations and systems; and that this decontextualized view of leadership has no concern for, or capacity to address, matters of social justice. A historical approach is used to analyse the particular meaning of the divide of leadership and management in education before going on to draw on theoretical analyses of problems with the sharp division between leadership and management and the critiquing of 'leadership' as a concept. It is argued that a very different understanding of what it means to lead schools is needed in order to cultivate and sustain a better education systems and organizations to promote social justice.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Management, Leadership rationales, Education policy, Social justice. Schools.

Hablar de liderazgo escolar en los discursos políticos sobre el desarrollo de la educación se ha convertido en un elemento muy importante en muchas partes de Europa y las Américas. Este artículo busca explorar por qué la división entre liderazgo y gestión educativa, así como determinar cuáles son las implicaciones que esta división genera en las escuelas y la justicia social. El artículo profundiza en la comprensión de los conceptos de liderazgo y gestión educativa a través de analizar la creciente obsesión hacia el liderazgo educativo, y por el contrario, la denigración asociada a la gestión. Este hecho se basa, en primer lugar, en una concepción descontextualizada sobre cómo liderar organizaciones y sistemas educativos; y, por último, en que se trata de una visión descontextualizada del liderazgo que no se preocupa ni por la capacidad de dirección, ni por asuntos de justicia social. Se utiliza un enfoque histórico para analizar el significado particular de la brecha de liderazgo y gestión educativa, y a continuación se recurre al análisis teórico de los problemas asociados a la marcada división entre el liderazgo y gestión educativa y la crítica de este concepto de "liderazgo". Se argumenta que es necesario cambiar la forma en la

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que comprendemos lo que significa dirigir las escuelas de manera que se fomente la mejora de los sistemas y organizaciones educativas que promuevan la justicia social.

**Descriptores:** Liderazgo, Gestión, Fundamentos de liderazgo, Política educativa, Justicia Social, Escuelas.

Falando de liderança escolar em discursos políticos sobre o desenvolvimento da educação tornou-se um elemento muito importante em muitas partes da Europa e das Américas. Este artigo procura explorar por que a divisão entre liderança e gestão educacional e identificar as implicações que essa divisão gera nas escolas e justiça social. O artigo explora a compreensão dos conceitos de liderança e de gestão educacional, analisando a crescente obsessão com a liderança educacional, e, inversamente, difamação associado à gestão. Este fato baseia-se, em primeiro lugar, em uma concepção descontextualizada de organizações como líderes e sistemas de ensino; e, finalmente, quando se trata de uma visão descontextualizada de liderança que não se importa nem a liderança, nem questões de justiça social. Uma abordagem histórica é usado para analisar o significado especial do gap em liderança e gestão educacional, em seguida, a análise teórica dos problemas associados com a divisão nítida entre liderança e gestão educacional e crítica do conceito de "liderança" é usado. Argumenta-se que é necessário para mudar a nossa forma de entender o que significa para executar as escolas para que os sistemas e organizações educacionais melhoria que promovam a justiça social é promovida.

**Palavras-chave:** Liderança, Gestão, Fundamentos da liderança, Política de educação, Justiça social, Escolas.

## Introduction

Talk of school leadership has become highly significant in the context of current education policy developments and discourses in many parts of Europe and the Americas. This article seeks to explore why the leadership and management divide matters in education and what the implications for schools and social justice are. The article makes a contribution to the understanding of the concepts of leadership and management through identifying that the increasing obsession in education with leadership, and denigration of management, is firstly based on a decontextualized conception of what it means to run educational organizations and systems; and that this decontextualized view of leadership has no concern for, or capacity to address, matters of social justice. A historical approach is used to analyse the particular meaning of the divide of leadership and management in education before going on to draw on theoretical analyses of problems with the sharp division between leadership and management and the critiquing of 'leadership' as a concept. The article ends with a consideration of where these debates take schools and the cause of social justice and what the possible ways forward might be.

The dominance of the term 'leadership' to the exclusion of 'management' can be seen in the education policy statements of the United Kingdom (UK) government with the exhortations that everyone is a leader (DfES, 2003) rather than seeing both terms as inextricably linked concepts (Bush, 2008). It is worth pointing out that the UK contains four constituent countries in which education policy and governance has diverged increasingly since devolution so what happens in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales does not necessarily occur in England, and vice versa. However, titles such as 'senior leadership team', 'middle leaders' and 'key stage leader' now dominate school structures and discourses in England. Yet, it has been argued, the conception of leadership within



these titles conceals a narrow concern with the short-term implementation of government policy (Gunter & Thompson, 2009). Therefore, as other countries European and in Latin America increasing seek to reform schools and colleges through the leadership terminology and discourse (Bush, 2014; Slater 2013) concerns need be raised about the implications of the concept of leadership for social justice in education and wider society.

A recent special issue of *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* (Bush, 2014) explored the growing field of school leadership in Europe. The issue includes articles about transformational leadership in Norway along with calls for more use of transformational leadership and its psychological cousin emotional intelligence in Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. It is a little worrying to see such calls as the ideas behind transformational leadership as the only preferred form of leadership and denigration of other approaches and historical discourses has important implications for social justice. The same special issue also include articles from Iceland and Italy which are more sceptical of the claims of 'leadership' to solve all the problems. However, Slater (2013) that transformational leadership is the 'unifying approach' which schools in Mexico, Spain, and the United States should be drawing upon it to promote student achievement and well-being. He makes good points that school principals can help to enhance teacher motivation and that educationalists in each country could learn from examining the practices of each other but that transformational leadership is the only 'answer' to the perceived problem is more debatable especially if it is accompanied a decontextualized version of leadership.

This article contends that the division of leadership from management has negative implications for improving education for all and the achievement of social justice. It is the practice of 'running' schools and other educational organizations that should be focused upon rather than the laden terms or labels of administration, management and now leadership. I use the word 'running' as a noun in relation to the idea of the operation and functioning (OED, 2011) because, in English, it has multiple meanings and some vagueness that helps to distance the practice from the other labels or terms. The professional practice of running schools is loosely defined doing the things that need to be considered and done (in addition to that which teachers do in the classroom) so that an educational organization and system can live and flourish. Understanding how teachers teach and how students learn is one of those considerations but it is not the only aspect of the practice. Of course there should be a concern for students' learning but it is not the only thing that makes for a flourishing educational organization and promotes social justice. It is a form of reductionism to think education and schooling is just about fitness or readiness to learn, that is to say, a mechanistic approach in which students are given, and defined by, their roles. Instead the practice of running schools also involves advocacy for social justice within the educational organization, the wider education system and society (Anderson, 2009).

The article begins with the use of a historical framework to uncover the peculiar relationship that the education sector has to leadership and management debates as a result of the comparatively late stage at which education professionals became engaged in its theorization and practice. It is argued that this ahistoricism leaves many education professionals with little appreciation of the contested nature of these key terms and the implications for social justice. This analysis draws and expands upon the historical development of the terms administration, management and leadership (Gunter, 2004;

Bush, 2008) which sees one word replaces another to indicate a 'better' form of the contested concept of that activity of making schools and educational organizations 'happen'. The article then moves to analyse the problems with 'leadership' as a concept through the decontextualize of the practice of running schools (Mertkan, 2013) the vacuous nature of the concept itself (Eacott, 2013), and use of short term goals and means often contrary to the concerns of social justice leading to the death of education leadership and the rise of 'leaderism' (Gunter, 2011; O'Reilly & Read, 2010).

## **1. Methodological Approach**

This conceptual article combines the use of two analytical approaches to generate new insights into the leadership and management debates and the implications for schools and social justice. Firstly, a historical analysis is used to uncover the peculiar relationship that the education sector has to leadership and management as a result of the comparatively late stage at which education professionals became engaged in its theorization and practice. Historical analysis has been somewhat under used to understand organizations (Mutch, 2014) yet any developed understanding of how organizations (educational or otherwise), and the people who work in them, operate needs to draw upon experiences and events which are historical and embedded within those generative mechanisms which combine to bring them about. In other words, to claim an understanding of the practice of running schools which is decontextualized makes no sense as schools are organizations with specific contexts formed within their histories and the culture around them. Therefore, a historical analysis of how the term 'leadership' has emerged to dominate the practice of running of schools is illuminating and essential before the implications for social justice can be identified. Secondly, analytical tools are used to uncover the current uses of the term leadership and draw insights from theorists who question the dominance of leadership discourses (Eacott, 2013; Gunter, 2011; O'Reilly & Reed, 2010).

## **2. A very short, and not entirely accurate, story of Western history of the move from administration to management to leadership**

The next two sections seek to outline a Western history of the move from administration to management to leadership as one term replaces another. However, there are, as the sub-heading suggests, many caveats to this story. Firstly, that it comes from very particular contexts of the United States and the UK; secondly that is very brief and there are more twists and turns to events than may be suggested below; and thirdly, that the briefness means some interesting diversions and contributions to the field are unfortunately missed out or passed over. However, the story is one that illuminates why leadership has become divided from management in English schools and enables an exploration of the implications for social justice.

The development of the 'science' of management comes after the advent of the industrial revolution and at the same time as the development of the professions in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to which it is linked. Management as a discipline (or subject) was largely focused on manufacturing and it has been suggested that management's true genius lies in 'turning complexity and specialization into performance' in organizations

(Magretta, 2003:2). In its 'classical' form, writers such as Henri Fayol (French), Fredrick Winslow Taylor (USA) and Max Weber (German) sought to identify the perfect or ideal way to manage an organization such as a factory (Cunliffe, 2008; Pugh, 2008), though in an example which illustrates the dangers of inaccuracy in this short story, it should be noted that Weber was not particularly an advocate of bureaucracy but someone who sought to describe it. Yet the practice that was often referred to as administration and the science of management was not applied to educational organizations in terms of the literature with the exception of the United States of America (USA).

In the USA writers such as Joseph Mayer Rice and John Franklin Bobbitt were keen to develop Taylor's (1911) scientific management principles as part of the 'social efficiency movement' (Bellman, 2013). Rice published his book entitled 'Scientific Management in Education' in 1913 just a couple of years after Taylor's 'Principles of Scientific Management' (1911). Yet in many other countries of the world this application of scientific management did not happen at this time. Perhaps European countries with their established histories of education and advanced provision of higher education, in which the state either had direct control of, or else benign support for, schooling had less need for these ideas when compared to the poorly developed schooling system in the USA with its teachers who had extremely low levels of education (Bellman, 2013). Bobbitt was appointed as a professor of educational administration at Chicago University in 1909 and he applied Taylor's approach conceiving the school as a factory so seeing students as the workers and teachers as the lowest level of supervision and management. For Bobbitt, these general principles were needed to standardise a young and struggling education system but it was from his writings and those of his student Ralph Taylor that the efficiency idea of education administration emerged.

The two world wars left many countries needing to substantially rebuild their economic and manufacturing infrastructure, and also to promote and react to the demands of their populations for a society which was more prosperous, equal and democratic. Management and the role of the professionals were to play a crucial role in addressing the above needs and wants. Management theory moves away from the 'classical' approach with its 'one perfect way' model to the Modernist 'Systems and Contingency theories' which sought to find the best system for the particular organization taking into account the variables of the situation. There was much emphasis on team work and all those in the organization working together so breaking down rigid hierarchies often proposed by the classical management theorists. The new theories were interested in the insights of psychology and motivation (Cunliffe, 2008).

The work of Nigel Balchin in the UK as an academic writer and an industrial psychologist during the 1930s and onwards presents a sophisticated understanding of people and systems combined with a critique of the managerialist aspects of practice (Collett, 2009). Balchin worked as an academic and in industry developing a greater appreciation of how to motivate workers and ensure positive working relationships which might be at odds with the mechanistic understandings of earlier writers such as Taylor who tended towards simplistic assumptions that economic incentives were all that were needed in these areas. Yet Balchin, writing under the name of Mark Spade (1934), also begins to critique the administration and management culture through the use of humour to identify the failures of some scientific theories and the increasing self-importance of practitioners. Little if anything is written about the management of

educational organizations in this period with the exception of USA where, as the schooling system became increasingly complicated and complex, the scientific management principles continued to be promoted as management becomes a evermore popular term. Yet Callaghan's 'Education and the Cult of Efficiency' (1962) is a notable exception where he critiques the social efficiency ideas, promoted by earlier writers such as Bobbitt, and he begins to questions what educational administration and management has contributed in reality to schools in the USA.

Following the rapid economic, social and political developments of the 1950's and 1960's, the events of the 1970's leave the wider public with the perception that management, as exercised by the professionals, has failed. It is Schön (1983) writing from his context in urban planning and management education in the USA (that is to say the education of professionals) who articulates this perception by saying, 'In such fields as medicine, management and engineering, for example, leading professionals speak of a new awareness of a complexity which resists the skills and techniques of traditional expertise' (Schön, 1983:14). Management and the professionals who exercise it are found wanting and a new type of management is required that will address the need for change in society whilst exercising a greater concern for using limited resources more effectively, which becomes termed and labelled as 'leadership'. More is being written about education administration or management at this time but the place of education in society comes under scrutiny as part of the examination of the failure of professionals. However, Schön's solution of the reflective professional (rather than leadership and deprofessionalisation) was not the answer chosen to solve the problem of education and elsewhere (though it could have been) and, instead, transformational leadership emerges in the mid-1980's as the solution to (every) problem bringing about the next replacement as the term leadership becomes distinguished from, and then presented as superior to, the word management.

### **3. The 1980's and Onwards: The Leadership and Management Divide and Distinction**

Bennis and Nanus (1985) publish 'Leaders: the strategies for taking charge' as they argue for a new form management which is leadership. Both of the authors were concerned with management in commercial setting rather than education specifically but their division and separation of 'the leader' from the 'the manager' comes to have great influence in a number of education organizations and systems in the 1990s including that of the UK. They write,

*We have here one of the clearest distinctions between the leader and the manager. By focusing on a vision, the leader operates on the emotional and spiritual resources of the organization, on its values, commitment and aspirations. The manager by contrast, operates on the physical resources of the organization to earn a living. An excellent manager can see to it that work is done productively and efficiently, on schedule, and with a high level of quality. It remains for the effective leader, however, to help people in the organization know pride and satisfaction in their work. Great leaders often inspire their followers to high levels of achievement by showing them their work contributes to worthwhile ends. It is an emotional appeal to some of the most fundamental of human needs- the need to be important, to make a difference, to feel useful, to be part of a successful and worthwhile enterprise. (Bennis & Nanus, 1985:92-93)*

The authors want people who run organization to become familiar with, and draw upon, more sophisticated psychological understandings of their workers. Yet these insights

from psychology and sociology were already part of the literature from the 1930's onwards so this aspect in itself is not new. Perhaps it is the combination of such insights with a desire for a better world which energises Bennis and Nanus's call for the adoption of 'leaders'. Their extensive use of religious language in words, such as 'vision', 'spiritual', 'inspire' and 'aspiration', is redolent of the ethical purpose they had for the new management that would lead a still young nation on to greater things after the turmoil of the 1970s. In emphasising what is new and distinctive about 'leaders', they characterise 'managers' as being stuck in the old ways of thinking with the concerns around productivity and efficiency but it is difficult not to interpret this characterisation as a negative one which recalls those people who had committed atrocities in the Second World War and Vietnam who had resorted to the discredited defence that they were following orders and being efficient soldiers or generals.

So it is crucial to understand that the distinction sharply drawn by Bennis and Nanus between 'leaders' and 'managers' is part of the reaction to the crisis of professionalism and the aspects of 1980's thinking that placed its emphasis on change for a better world and more careful use of resources. That the distinction may have an element of hyperbole in order to drive the point home should also not be ignored. It is particular context of the USA at that time which gives rise to the thought and expression of this division between 'leaders' and 'managers'. Again, it is important for understanding Bennis and Nanus's context that they were concerned with commercial management rather than the education sector in particular.

However, it is at this stage in the 1980's that education professionals in the USA and UK become more engaged in the theorization and conscious practice of management. Some writers in the education sphere, such as Cuban (1998) and Bolam (2002), seek to sharply distinguish leadership from management following Bennis and Nanus. Yet what happened with later iterations of this division is that the reasons behind the call for a new management with a greater concern for social justice and better society were forgotten and a reified divide was put in place. That view of 'leadership' in the 1990's amongst academics was that it could provide an idea 'more capable of foregrounding the moral, professional and democratic dimensions of running educational institutions' (Glatter, 2006:70), was lost in later iterations (see Grace, 1995, for these original hopes for the application of leadership to schools). A concern with 'leadership' as a better way to manage the change required by government dominates UK education policy and much of what is written in education management (see Bell & Stevenson, 2006) as can be seen by this later outlining of the 'leadership' discourse from the UK government department for schools.

*To achieve their full potential, teachers need to work in school that is creative, enabling and flexible. And the biggest influence is the Head. Every teacher is a leader in the classroom. Every Head must be a leader of these leaders. And the Head's greatest task is the motivation and deployment of their key resource: staff.* (Department for Education and Skills, 2003:26)

The above quote exemplifies the use of the label 'leader' to the exclusion of 'manager'. Yet crucially the concept of leadership is one that draws upon the transformational leadership discourse from the USA in the 1980's but it takes on a different form in the first decade of the twenty first century as leadership becomes a tool of government in the education sector. The claim that the head teacher is 'the biggest influence' is one that is not founded in research which alternatively suggests that he or she is a

significant but not the most significant influence as that remains teachers teaching in classroom (Day et al., 2009; Sammons et al., 2011).

In summary, this brief history outlines the change of terminology which Gunter refers to when she writes that there has been a 'historical relabeling of this professional practice as successively administration, management and recently, leadership' (Gunter, 2011:130). On one hand these are just labels for the same practice of running schools, yet on the other hand the label have a significant impact upon how that practice is conceived, implemented and enacted. The sections that follow explore some of these impacts though critiques of the leadership and management divide and the very concept of leadership as it is being used by governments in the UK and elsewhere.

#### **4. The Decontextualisation of the Practice of Running Schools and the Vacuous Concept of 'Leadership'**

It is worth remembering that there are alternatives to the sharp division of leadership and management and the denigration of the latter. Two further views of the divide which maintain both concepts intact include that leadership and management are overlapping concepts and activities 'particularly in respect of motivating people and giving a sense of purpose to the organization' (Fidler, 1997:26). Lumby (2001) suggests an 'androgynous' approach which does not see leadership and management as opposites whilst Bush and Middlewood (2005) contend that 'leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools and colleges are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives' (p. 4). Another approach to the discourse of education management theory sees leadership as part of management (albeit an important one) along with planning, organizing and coordinating (Bush & Bell, 2002).

More recently, Mertkan (2014) has attacked the sharpness of the leadership and management divide in education when she writes of a 'homogenised perspective' of a decontextualised leadership which had become hegemonic in many advanced economies with a shift to towards decentralisation, marketisation and performativity. 'This shift in the focus of reform has created a relentless preoccupation with educational reform through leadership development and led to declined official interest in school management' (p. 226). So the practice of running schools has been recultured and restructured through various mechanisms of theory and policy. As a result, leadership as a term has come to dominate the discourse around the practice and theory of running schools

*...with the vast majority of literature in the field of school management and administration addressing the issue of leadership and neglecting the issue of management. These studies present, almost exclusively, a universal and decontextualised discourse of educational leadership, which presents leadership as a combination of inspiration, vision and the ability to manage competing tensions while building organisational capacity and leadership capacity in others. (Mertkan, 2014:227)*

She sees her research with head teachers in Turkish Northern Cyprus as showing that the leadership discourse is in reality a barrier to educational effectiveness and reform. Yet Mertkan's conclusion is slightly disappointing as she maintains the distinction between leadership and management arguing for their equal importance and does not seem inclined to abandon that distinction instead hoping for a time when her Turkish

Cypriot head teacher participants can exercise such leadership when the authorities devolve more powers to them.

Other writers have gone further in the critique of 'leadership' itself by showing it to be a vacuous concept which simply needs to be abandoned in education and other contexts. Torrance and Humes (2014) critique the lack of conceptual underpinning for the educational leadership discourse in terms of international trends and the response to those trends in Scotland so identifying a move against the professionalism of teachers inherent with the discourses of that 'every teacher is a leader', and popular forms of this such as 'distributed leadership' and 'teacher leadership' (Harris, 2003). However, Eacott (2013) attacks the very concept of leadership by uncovering how it is an epistemic concept rather than an empirical one so must be treated and understood accordingly.

Eacott notes that current writing on the topic does not examine the difficulties inherent 'with confusing a socially constructed label with an assumed empirical reality' (Eacott, 2013:92). He argues that, 'leadership remains a vacuous concept connected to attributes, factors, behaviours, interventions, all of which lack a solid grounding in a specific context. It is, however, the context that gives behaviours or interventions meaning and significance' (p. 98). So leadership is both a contested and ambiguous term with questionable use in academic research but the leadership which has become the 'label of choice' by governments in the USA, UK and Scott's Australia is, in reality, part of a managerialist project of the state rather than the more ethical, less technicist practice of running organizations envisaged by those aforementioned theorists of the final two decades of the twentieth century.

So government policy in the UK and discourses adopted in schools promote the term leadership and clearly indicate a wish for all education professionals to engage in leadership as part of their professional practice. The references to education management become few and far between during the first decade of the twenty first century in UK government documents. The terms such as 'senior leadership team', 'middle leaders' and 'key stage leader' dominate structures and discourses especially in schools and early years settings where managers or co-ordinators are out of favour. Yet this discourse promotes a hierarchy which the organizational structures and cultures ensure that 'every teacher performs'...and... 'where control is secured through organizational structures (roles and job descriptions), cultures (compliance and commitment), and performance (integrating cognitive and emotional processes), and so every teacher leader delivers' (Gunter, 2005:30).

## **5. 'Leaderism' and the Death of Education Leadership**

The attractiveness of leadership and leaders to education professionals may also lie in the negative ideas associated with the word management because of 'managerialism' and New Public Management with the ideas of performance and accountability. Perhaps 'leadership' is seen by education professionals as a more attractive and 'fun' label which is professionally more fulfilling. However, O'Reilly and McDermott (2010) point out that this form of leadership is just managerialism dressed up in a smart uniform as something else and they name this 'Leaderism'. Leaderism is a romantic idea of leaders that thinks they can solve all the problems, it creates unrealistic expectations of leaders by those they purport to lead but also in the minds of government and the wider

community which ends with the condemnation of leaders when they fail to meet these unrealistic expectations.

This leaderism is seen by as a development and re-branding of managerialism which has 'been utilized and applied within the policy discourse of public service reform in the UK' (O'Reilly & McDermott, 2010:960). It is not the leadership promised and looked forward to by earlier theorists but a vehicle for strengthening and complementing the New Public Management discourses which are so often identified as not bringing about the promotion of social justice but, unwittingly or otherwise, complicit in widening social inequality. Leaders become those who implement the visions of others rather than creating their own. Leaders are people who react to demands of customers within the constraints of stakeholder governments and commercial interests. The idea that school leaders might challenge existing inequalities in society is not part of the leaderist agenda though it might well be presented in an emancipatory manner through the use of transformational and religious language for something which is in reality something different. Helen Gunter's policy analysis of school leadership in England shows how such a situation can be brought about.

Gunter contends that education leadership is dying in England (Gunter 2010, 2011). She identifies 'the obsession with hierarchy and supplying governments with evidence about how a particular type of leader, leading and leadership can work better' (Gunter, 2011:128-129) as the problem before outlining how this parlous state of affairs has been reached by the government's tight redefinition of the role and practice of leadership (under the New Labour regime that came to power in the UK 1997) to ensure that schools leaders would deliver its national reform programme for schools at a local level. Gunter asks questions about knowledge, knowing and those who know in order to explore how New Labour set about the transformation of leadership. The premise is that the government 'drew on functional approaches to knowledge where the purposes of knowing were to remove dysfunctions from the system and so the rationales were about outcomes and the narratives about targets, plans and data' (Gunter, 2011:2). Gunter uses the 'conceptual architecture' of Bourdieu to conceive knowledge production as a social practice linked to a 'game' involving 'regimes of practice' and 'players' involved in 'symbolic capital exchange'.

The New Labour government drew on a global discourse of standards in which the 'problem' was presented as one of low standards as measured by crude statistical outcomes. Headteachers were regarded as ultimately responsible for the outcomes of schools but they needed to be 'better leaders' in order to raise standards so the 'solution' was 'the production of a new type of headteacher' (Gunter, 2011:98) who would be a transformational leader implementing government reform. Leadership was seen as 'a good thing' so promoting 'a school system reform based on leaders rectifying failure' (Gunter, 2011:4). Therefore, New Labour created a 'leadership industry' comprising preferred knowledge producers such as the National College for School Leadership and a range of private networks from individual entrepreneurs and consultants through to large-scale international companies as, 'The leadership of schools game could only work if those who were at a distance from classrooms had the status of knowing more and better than those in classrooms' (Gunter, 2011:119).

The New Labour government dealt with the game players by allowing only 'trusted knowers' to play the game so removing democratic debate and negotiation around the reforms. They needed to ensure that institutional leaders were on message and ready to



deal with 'change-blockers' so the only legitimated forms of knowing were 'Common-sense beliefs statements combined with correlations and/or normative claims regarding the correctness of particular leadership structures, cultures and practices' (Gunter, 2011:133). Gunter notes how some head teachers either attempted to pragmatically influence the New Labour agenda to mitigate the damage or else more stridently located themselves in opposition to New Labour Policy Regime's discourse by holding on to values of social justice.

Gunter challenges the idea of the 'single transformational leader' and its rebranding as distributed leadership which, she argues, remain integral to replicating social injustice. Gunter argues that there is a need to 'knock leadership off its pedestal' because, as the research shows, working in an inclusive manner with teachers and children is more important in improving outcomes 'than producing correlations about output data from outstanding and failing schools' (Gunter, 2011:126). Leadership is important but 'as a dynamic process that enables productive pedagogies and assessment, and is underpinned by a commitment to social justice' (p. 126). Gunter notes that little has changed with the Conservative led Coalition as, despite the disinvestment in the education sector, the dispositions to frame problems and their solutions through neo-liberal mind-sets continues as does the 'cult of standards and standardisation'. Her analysis illuminates the dangers for the promotion of social justice in schools by an obsession with a very particular idea of leadership which is concerned with delivering government policy rather than creating a more just world for the school and the wider community (see also Gunter & Forrester, 2008; Gunter & Thompson, 2009).

## **6. Conclusion**

This article has sought to explain why the education sector and many of the professionals who work in it have little understanding of the management context for leadership and take an ahistorical view of leadership and management. It is argued that this ahistoricism leaves many education professionals with little appreciation of the contested nature of these key terms and the implications for social justice in the global society (Anderson, 2009). Seeing leadership leads to the situation where the wider importance of the discipline and insights of management (and older) theory and practice are ignored whilst an obsession with leaders is promoted rather than addressing important issues of resource allocation and social justice (Anderson, 2009; Morrison, 2009).

The attractiveness of leadership and leaders to education professionals may also lie in the negative ideas associated with the word 'management' because of 'managerialism' and New Public Management with the ideas of performance and accountability. Perhaps 'leadership' is also seen by education professionals as a more attractive and 'fun' option which is professionally more fulfilling. Yet this leadership or leaderism is just managerialism dressed up in a smart uniform (O'Reilly & McDermott, 2010). The dull, unattractive and painfully difficult parts of education management theory and practice are left to others to sort out through private companies and outsourcing so diminishing the educational professionals ability to ensure and fight for fairer distribution and reallocation of these resources.

So whilst talk of school leadership has become highly significant in the context of current education policy developments and discourses in many parts of Europe and the

Americas, it is of great concern that the leadership and management divide will be replicated in the discourses of reform in these countries to the detriment of schools and the promotion of social justice. This article has outlined why the leadership and management divide matters in education and makes a contribution to the understanding of the concepts of leadership and management through identifying that the increasing obsession in education with leadership, and denigration of management, is firstly based on a decontextualized conception of what it means to run educational organizations and systems; and that this decontextualized view of leadership has no concern for, or capacity to address, matters of social justice.

A very different understanding of what it means to lead schools is needed in order to cultivate and sustain a better education organizations and systems to promote social justice. Finally, underlying this article is a critical realist perspective which enables leadership to be abducted and reproduced (rather than decontextualised) so that reality can be distinguished from what is not real. The emancipatory endeavour of critical realism can be used to promote social justice in education and especially that professional practice which cultivates and nurtures educational organizations and systems (Thorpe, 2014).

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**REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN  
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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

## Elaboración y Evaluación Psicométrica de la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación (EAJSE)

### Development and Psychometric Evaluation of the Scale of Attitudes toward Social Justice in Education (EAJSE)

### Desenvolvimento e Psychometric Avaliação da Escala de Atitudes em relação à Justiça Social na Educação (EAJSE)

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En este artículo presentamos el proceso de elaboración y evaluación de la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación (EAJSE) elaborada por el Grupo de investigación Cambio Educativo para la Justicia Social ([www.gice-uam.es](http://www.gice-uam.es)), de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Dicha escala parte del concepto multidimensional de Justicia Social compuesto por tres elementos: Redistribución, Reconocimiento y Representación; y consta de tres subescalas: Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social, Papel de la Educación en la Justicia Social, y Compromiso personal con la Justicia Social. Después de su primera elaboración; y la posterior validación de caso único y por expertos, se realizó una validación experimental para su mejora y evaluación psicométrica. Para ello se aplicó a una muestra de 518 personas: estudiantes de Magisterio en Educación Infantil y de Educación Primaria, y profesores en activo de Educación Secundaria. Tras los pertinentes ajustes, se elaboró la escala final, con una fiabilidad global de 0,83; y de 0,83, 0,75 y 0,87 para cada una de las subescalas. Además se verificó tanto la validez de constructo como la convergente y divergente. En el Anexo se presenta la versión final de la escala.

**Descriptor:** Justicia social, Escala de actitudes, Educación para la justicia social, Validación, Psicometría.

This paper presents the production and evaluation of the Attitudes toward Social Justice in Education Scale (EAJSE) developed by the Research Group Educational Change for Social Justice ([www.gice-uam.es](http://www.gice-uam.es)), Autonomous University of Madrid. The scale is built based on a multidimensional concept of Social Justice, composed by three elements: Redistribution, Recognition and Representation. It consists of three subscales: Attitudes toward Social Justice, Role of education in Social Justice and Personal Commitment to Social Justice. After its' initial development and subsequent single case validation by experts, an experimental validation for improvement and psychometric evaluation was conducted. A 518 sample responds to the scale: Graduate student of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, and professors of Secondary Level. After adjustment, the final scale was developed with an overall reliability of 0.83; and 0.83, 0.75 and 0.87 for each subscale. Also both

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construct validity as converging and diverging has been verified. The Annex presents the final version scale.

**Keywords:** Social justice, Attitudes scale, Education for social justice, Validity, Psychometrics.

Este artigo apresenta o processo de elaboração e avaliação da Escala de Atitudes para com a Justiça Social na Educação (EAJSE), desenvolvido pelo Grupo de pesquisa Educacional Mudança para a Justiça Social ([www.gice-uam.es](http://www.gice-uam.es)), Universidade Autónoma de Madrid. A escala do conceito multidimensional da Justiça Social composto por três elementos: Redistribuição, Reconhecimento e Representação; e é composto por três sub-escalas: Atitudes para com a Justiça Social, Papel da Educação na justiça social e Compromiso Pessoal com a Justiça Social. Após seu desenvolvimento inicial e posterior validação de caso único e especialistas, uma validação experimental foi realizada para melhorar e avaliação psicométrica. Para isso foi aplicado a uma amostra de 518 pessoas: professores de estudantes na Grado de Primeira Infância e Ensino Fundamental, e professores das escolas Secundárias. Após o ajuste, a escala final foi desenvolvido com uma confiabilidade total de 0,83; e 0,83, 0,75 e 0,87 para cada uma das sub-escalas. Também, tanto na validade do construto tão convergentes e divergentes foi verificada. No Anexo da versão final da escala é apresentada

**Palavras-chave:** Justiça social, Escala de atitudes, Educação para a justiça social, Validade, Psicometria.

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## Introducción<sup>1</sup>

¿La escuela reproduce las desigualdades sociales?, ¿las legitima?, ¿o es un motor para el cambio social?

Aunque puede parecer una contradicción, seguramente las tres preguntas tienen, o pueden tener, una respuesta afirmativa. Efectivamente, ya desde los años 60 tenemos evidencias de que la escuela es una institución que reproduce las diferencias sociales. Así lo defendían los sociólogos franceses clásicos (p.e. Bourdieu y Passeron, 1964), y así lo demostró Coleman en su famoso informe (Coleman et al., 1966). Como diría este prestigioso sociólogo norteamericano ya fallecido, los niños de familias pobres acabarían siendo pobres, independientemente de la escuela donde estudien. O, dicho de otra forma, la variable individual que más incide en lo que el alumno aprende, y con ello la titulación que alcanza y su estatus socio-económico futuro es el nivel educativo de la madre (p.e. Murillo y Román, 2011).

Pero también hay que reconocer que la escuela juega un papel determinante en la legitimación de las diferencias socio-económicas. La sociedad da a la escuela la competencia de otorgar y denegar títulos académicos. Títulos que, a la postre, serán los que justifiquen que una persona tenga un buen trabajo y con ello un buen sueldo, y otra gane el salario mínimo.

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<sup>1</sup> Agradecemos la colaboración en el desarrollo y validación de la “Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación” (EAJSE) a Herbert Apaza, Sofía Flores, Lucía Lomba, Marta Olmo, Paloma Páez, Alba Pancorbo, Haylen Perines y Miguel Stuardo, del grupo de investigación “Cambio Educativo para la Justicia Social”.



Y, por último, nadie duda de la capacidad de la escuela como promotora del cambio social. Como diría Freire, la educación no cambia el mundo, cambia a las personas que van a cambiar el mundo.

Que la escuela, cada escuela individual, tenga un mayor peso como reproductora, legitimadora o transformadora depende de ella misma. Depende de lo que la comunidad escolar piense y haga en su día a día cotidiano. Así, podemos encontrar escuelas elitistas que fomentan las diferencias empezando por seleccionar y discriminar a los estudiantes, hasta escuelas justas que trabajan por la Justicia Social. Centrándonos en estas últimas, de todos los factores que indican en su configuración, quizá el más relevante es la existencia de una cultura escolar que fomente la justicia social y lucha contra las exclusiones y discriminaciones (Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2014).

Entendemos por cultura escolar el conjunto de creencias percepciones, relaciones, valores y normas, escritas o no, compartidas por la comunidad escolar y que configura una forma de hacer de la escuela y que influye el funcionamiento cotidiano de la escuela (p.e. Peterson y Deal, 2011). Las escuelas que tiene una cultura escolar inclusiva y de trabajo por la Justicia Social contribuyen en mayor medida que otras en la construcción de una sociedad más justa.

Uno de los elementos que favorecen la configuración de la cultura escolar son las actitudes de los miembros de la comunidad escolar individualmente, especialmente de los y las docentes. Es posible definir actitud como una tendencia a reaccionar, de manera positiva o negativa, hacia un valor social (Boherner y Dickel, 2011). Las actitudes poseen un componente afectivo, es un modo de responder hacia una idea, un valor, una persona o un grupo. Una actitud favorable hacia la Justicia Social en Educación, especialmente aquellas actitudes ligadas al compromiso e implicación personal con la justicia social sin duda contribuirán a la configuración de una cultura escolar para la Justicia Social.

Un primer paso para modificar una realidad es conocerla, de tal forma que si queremos favorecer las actitudes de los docentes para la justicia social, es necesario conocer cuáles son. Sin embargo, en la actualidad no existen buenos instrumentos que midan las actitudes de los docentes hacia la justicia social en educación.

En esta investigación presentamos el proceso de diseño y evaluación psicométrica de la “Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación” (EAJSE), desarrollada por el grupo de investigación “Cambio Educativo para la Justicia Social” (GICE), de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid en 2014. Para su estudio se aplicó a una muestra de 518 docentes en formación y en activo, y, a partir del mismo se analizó tanto su fiabilidad como validez de constructo. De su estudio se mejoró la escala.

## **1. Marco Teórico**

### ***1.1. Concepto de Justicia Social***

La naturaleza dinámica del concepto de Justicia Social hace que dependa y se construya en función de la sociedad en la que se enmarca; este hecho conlleva que sea especialmente complejo medir las actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación. Pero es necesario acotarlo, y en este sentido presentamos el constructo en el que se fundamenta esta escala. Consiste en una visión de la Justicia Social tridimensional, compleja y total. El modelo de las tres “R” aportado por Murillo y Hernández-Castilla (2011a). Se denomina así porque se basa en la *Redistribución, la Representación y el Reconocimiento*. La

primera dimensión, la fundamental para el concepto de Justicia Social es la de Redistribución de bienes primarios, en el sentido de Rawls (1971, 2001), más que de capacidades (Nussbaum, 2007; Sen, 2010). Con los principios de equidad, dar más a quien más lo necesita, y de diferenciación, las desigualdades válidas son aquellas que benefician al que menos posee. La segunda dimensión es el Reconocimiento, entendido como valoración, respeto y visibilidad de todos los miembros y culturas de la sociedad (Fraser, 2008; Fraser y Honneth, 2003; Kymlicka, 1996; Taylor, 2003). Y la tercera, la Representación y Participación, entendida como el derecho de todas las personas a participar activamente en todos los aspectos relacionados con su vida, especialmente de aquellos colectivos tradicionalmente marginados (Fraser, 2008; Young, 2011).

### **1.2. Justicia Social en Educación**

Vincular la Justicia Social y la educación suele conllevar una sobresimplificación equiparándolo con el de “equidad educativa”, al considerar la Justicia Social exclusivamente como Redistribución según el primer planteamiento de Rawls (Bolívar, 2012; Connell, 1997, 2012). Sin embargo, como antes hemos justificado, para nosotros Justicia Social no puede quedarse en la mera Redistribución, ha de incorporar también las dimensiones de Reconocimiento y de Participación.

Justicia Social en educación también supone tres ideas clave: Una educación “para” la Justicia Social, transformadora de la sociedad, necesita de una educación “en” Justicia Social, y de una educación “desde” la Justicia Social.

Nos referimos a una educación “en” Justicia Social como aquella que aborda la temática de la Justicia Social en el curriculum. Una educación donde se estudian las injusticias, sus causas y estrategias para combatirlas, mediante procesos lleven a la reflexión y la acción (Adams, Bell y Griffin, 2007); con un planteamiento muy próximo al concepto freiriano, de todos conocido, de “concientización”. Una pedagogía liberadora y transformadora de los estudiantes, los docentes y la sociedad en su conjunto. Una pedagogía problematizadora, alejada de la “educación bancaria” (Freire, 1971).

Pero además es una educación “desde” la Justicia Social; es decir, con instituciones educativas justas (Dubet, 2005). Ello significa escuelas que en su forma de organizarse y de proceder, la comunidad educativa participa de los valores propios de la Justicia Social. Una cultura compartida de una escuela en la que se celebra la diversidad, y se trabaja para compensar las desigualdades de partida de los estudiantes. Este compromiso de toda la comunidad educativa, da un papel especial a sus docentes. Comprometidos, reflexivos, con un pensamiento crítico sobre sus prácticas, la escuela y la sociedad. Estos docentes promueven en sus aulas procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje justos y un desarrollo integral de todos y cada uno de sus estudiantes.

Quizás uno de los elementos que está más asumido por ellos en sus aulas es el *Reconocimiento*, el segundo eje de la Justicia Social. Un docente comprometido con las diferencias o la diversidad de sus estudiantes es compensador de las desventajas, promueve la valoración y la participación de los estudiantes y sus familias haciéndolos visibles, aceptados, reconocidos. La escuela y sus docentes favorecen la implicación y la participación de toda la comunidad escolar.

Cuando una escuela trabaja “para” la Justicia Social genera mecanismos de participación, tanto en el seno escolar como en la sociedad, dotando a los estudiantes de capacidades y conocimientos sobre la estructura y los canales de intervención de su entorno;

convirtiéndoles en ciudadanos reflexivos y proactivos con el convencimiento realista y optimista de poder de cambiar la sociedad del hoy y del mañana (Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2011b; Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2014).

### **1.3. Medición de la Justicia Social**

Desde mediados del siglo XX se han elaborado una serie de interesantes propuestas que buscan medir las actitudes hacia la Justicia Social desde diversas perspectivas. La más antigua, la que podemos considerar como antecedente, se fundamenta en la creencia relacionada con la consideración del orden justo en el mundo, donde el destino de las personas y el mérito están equiparados. Rubin y Peplau (1973, 1975) construyeron esta “Escala del Mundo Justo” (EMJ), de 20 ítems. La EMJ parte de un concepto unidimensional y bipolar (mundo justo-injusto), entendido como los extremos de un continuo. Por ello, consta de dos subescalas: una sobre las creencias de los individuos en un mundo justo, con 9 ítems, y otra de las creencias en un mundo injusto. Estas dos tienen como objetivo medir las diferencias individuales y analizar su relación mutua. La escala incluye tanto afirmaciones generales sobre la sociedad y en el mundo (ejemplo: *Básicamente, el mundo es un lugar justo*) como elementos concretos que los autores consideran que inciden en dichas creencias como la autoridad (ejemplo: *Cuando los padres castigan a sus hijos casi siempre tienen razones de peso para hacerlo*). Para desarrollar la escala, Rubin y Peplau (1975) parten de estudios más alejados de nuestro objetivo, como los realizados sobre el destino de razas consideradas impuras y sobre la justificación del antisemitismo o las atrocidades cometidas en Vietnam (Opton, 1971). Asimismo, recoge la “Escala de Confianza” de Rotter (1967), y la “Escala sobre Ética Protestante” de Mirels y Garret (1971) en la que se refleja el valor del trabajo duro para la consecución del éxito.

Dalbert, Montada y Schmitt (1987), tras revisar la propuesta de Rubin y Peplau (1975), proponen una nueva escala de seis ítems para medir las creencias en un Mundo Justo. Su principal crítica a la escala de Rubin y Peplau (1975) es que mide a la vez la justicia e injusticias del mundo en un mismo continuo. Consideran que esta diferenciación en dos subescalas no es correcta, ya que mostraron ser relativamente independientes, tener propiedades psicométricas pobres y correlaciones cercanas a cero. En su nueva escala, Dalbert, Montada y Schmitt (1987) parten de la hipótesis de que la creencia en un Mundo Justo se relaciona positivamente con la religión, el voto a un partido político, el bienestar personal, así como estados de ánimo positivos (Bulman y Wortman, 1977; Dalbert, 1993; Furnham y Procter, 1989; Lerner y Somers, 1992; Lipkus et al., 1996; Ritter, Benson y Snyder, 1990).

Al comienzo de la década de los 90, Lipkus (1991) propone la “Escala de Creencia Global en un Mundo Justo” de siete ítems. Cuyo propósito es medir la creencia de los sujetos en que el mundo es justo. Es decir, consideran que las personas reciben en la vida lo que se merecen, y que cada individuo es responsable de su fortuna o desgracia. Las características psicométricas de esta escala mejoran a sus antecesoras: las escalas de Rubin y Peplau (1975) y de Dalbert, Montada y Schmitt (1987), también se basadas en la Teoría del Mundo Justo de Lerner (1980) con una fiabilidad superior ( $\alpha = 0,81$ ).

Más centrada en un concepto de Justicia social rawlseliano es la “Escala de Justicia Social” creada por Torres-Harding, Siers y Olson (2012) de 24 ítems. Se fundamenta en diferentes instrumentos tales como: a) la escala de Ritchhart (2002) que mide las creencias de los psicólogos hacia la Justicia Social; b) la “Escala de Justicia Social de los

abogados” propuesta por Dean (2009) en la que se miden la implicación de los abogados en la colaboración social y política, la promoción y empoderamiento del cliente, así como la relación terapéutica con el mismo; y c) el “Cuestionario de Asuntos Sociales” de Miller et al. (2009). Torres-Harding, Siers y Olson (2011) la construyen con el objetivo de comprender cuáles son los procesos socio-cognitivos que hacen que las personas trabajen para promover la Justicia Social.

Sin duda una escala más próxima a la nuestra es la “Escala de creencias: Aprendiendo a Enseñar para la Justicia Social” de Ludlow, Enterline y Cochran-Smith (2008) de 12 ítems. Mide, por un lado, las creencias de los docentes hacia la redistribución de recursos, oportunidades y resultados del aprendizaje; y el reconocimiento de los conocimientos, las tradiciones y las fortalezas de los estudiantes, por el otro. Este instrumento considera que la enseñanza (educación) para la Justicia Social es un resultado medible de la formación de los docentes. Por tanto, evalúa las actitudes de los docentes como agentes de cambio para lograr una sociedad más justa.

La inclusión de la Educación para la Justicia Social está cada día más presente en la formación inicial de los docentes. Con el objetivo de evaluar tales creencias se desarrolló el estudio de Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, y Mitescu (2008) en el que analizaron las respuestas sobre cómo Aprender a Enseñar la Justicia Social, obtenidas mediante la escala LTSJ-B (Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, Ell, O’Leary y Enterline, 2012). Con ella se recogieron datos de 304 profesores australianos en formación. Una mejora de esta escala fue desarrollada por Ginns, Fryer, Amazan, McCormicky y Loughland (2014).

Tabla 1. Escalas de actitudes hacia la Justicia Social

AUTORES Y AÑO	ESCALA
Rotter (1967)	Escala de Confianza
Mirels y Garret (1971)	Escala sobre Ética Protestante
Rubin y Peplau (1975)	Mundo Justo
Bulman y Wortman (1977)	Escala sobre atribuciones personales de la culpa
Dalbert, Montada y Schmitt (1987)	Escala de un Mundo Justo
Lipkus (1991)	Escala de Creencia Global en un Mundo Justo
Lerner y Somers (1992)	Escala de reacciones de los empleados
Dalbert (1993)	Escala de orientación política
Ritchhart (2002)	Escala de creencias de los psicólogos hacia la Justicia Social
Dean (2009)	Escala de Justicia Social de los abogados
Miller et al. (2009)	Cuestionario de Cuestiones Sociales
Ludlow, Enterline y Cochran-Smith. (2008)	Escala de creencias: Aprendiendo a Enseñar para la Justicia Social
Torres-Harding, Siers y Olson (2012)	Escala de Justicia Social
Jacott et al. (2013)	Cuestionario de Evaluación de Justicia Social
Ginns et al. (2014)	Escala del Aprendizaje para Enseñar para la Justicia Social

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Por último, en esta revisión de las escalas vinculadas a la valoración de la Justicia Social mencionamos aquí un instrumento recientemente construido, “Cuestionario de Justicia Social”, elaborado por Jacott et al. (2014) en el que se miden las concepciones de Justicia Social de docentes y estudiantes de educación Primaria y Secundaria. El cuestionario evalúa dichas concepciones a través de dilemas morales con los que presentan problemas relacionados con las dimensiones de Justicia Social (Redistribución, Reconocimiento y Representación) en el contexto educativo y propone tres alternativas de respuesta, de las que hay que elegir aquella con la que uno se siente más identificado.

#### 1.4. Bases de la propuesta

La Escala de Actitudes hacia Justicia Social en Educación (EAJSE) emerge del marco teórico presentado en este artículo, y como resultado de la revisión de otras de las escalas afines ya mencionadas en el apartado anterior.

Así, la EAJSE plantea tres ejes para medir la actitud de los docentes hacia la Educación orientada a la Justicia Social (Figura 1):

- *La actitud hacia la Justicia Social:* valora la actitud de los docentes hacia situaciones de injusticia de la sociedad en su conjunto. Mide la sensibilidad y creencias de los docentes frente a las desigualdades.
- *La actitud hacia la Justicia Social en Educación:* Los ítems que hacen referencia a este eje buscan conocer cuál es el papel de la educación en la consecución de una sociedad más justa.
- *La implicación/compromiso personal del docente con la Justicia Social:* los ítems de este tercer eje miden la implicación docente con una enseñanza socialmente más justa (en cuanto a distribución de recursos, reconocimiento de todos los estudiantes y participación de los mismos en la escuela y en la sociedad).

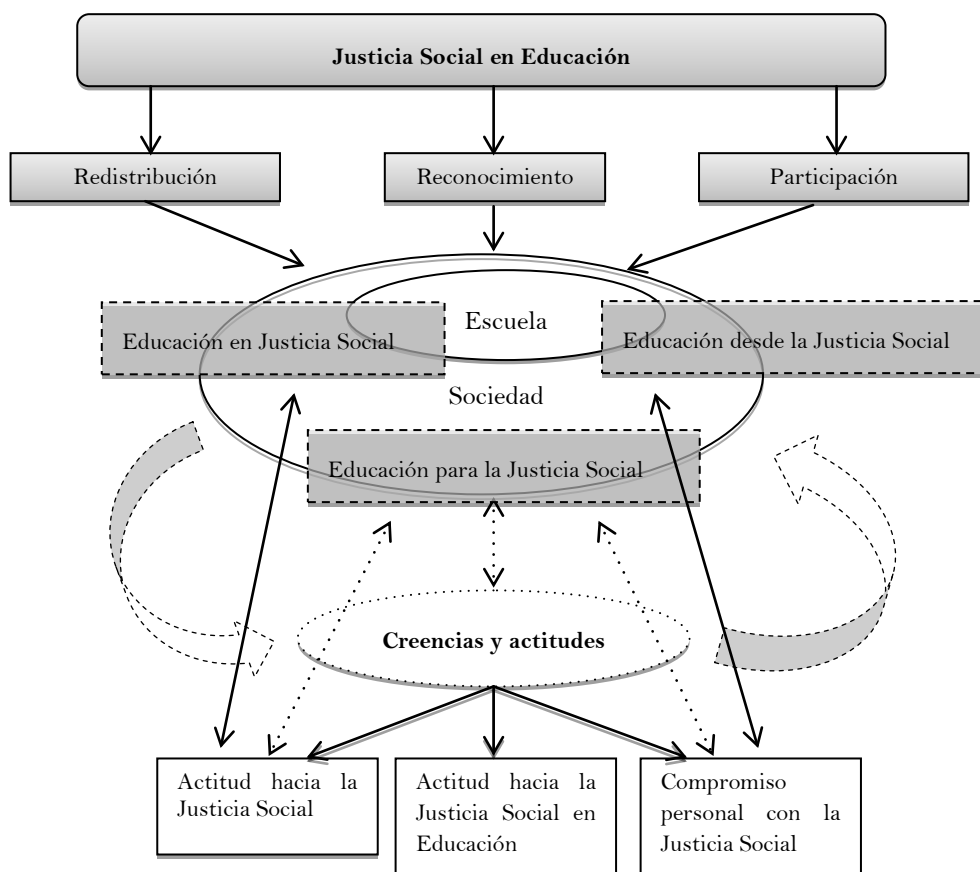


Figura 1. Bases teóricas de la propuesta de la EAJSE

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Estas bases teóricas han servido para la construcción de la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación (EAJSE) que se presenta en el siguiente apartado.

## 2. Metodología

### 2.1. Procedimiento

La validación de la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación (EAJSE) se realizó en dos fases diferenciadas. Por un lado se aplicó, junto con otras tres escalas de Justicia Social con diferentes enfoques, a una muestra de 518 docentes en formación y en activo: 326 estudiantes de los Grados de Magisterio en Educación Infantil y de Magisterio en Educación Primaria, y 192 profesores y profesoras en activo de Educación Secundaria de cuatro Comunidades Autónomas. Para estudiar la validez convergente y divergente, a los estudiantes de Magisterio, junto con la prueba a estudiar, se les aplicaron otras tres escalas que miden diferentes aspectos de la Justicia Social.

### 2.2. Participantes

El estudio de un instrumento requiere que al menos haya cinco sujetos por ítem (Nunnally, 1978) y número máximo suficiente de 10 sujetos por ítem; aunque Kline (1994) estima que es suficiente con dos o tres sujetos por ítem con tal de que la muestra no baje de unos 100 sujetos. En este caso se cuenta con 518 participantes entre estudiantes de Magisterio y docentes en activo; número más que suficiente para un instrumento inicial de 16 ítems.

En primer lugar se obtuvieron datos de 326 estudiantes de diferentes cursos de los grados de Magisterio en Educación Infantil y de Magisterio en Educación Primaria que estudian en la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (tabla 2). Concretamente el 54,6% cursa Magisterio de Educación Primaria y el 45,4% de Educación Infantil. De ellos, el 78,5% son mujeres y el 21,5% restante hombres, proporción análoga a la de estudiantes de esas especialidades.

Tabla 2. Distribución de los participantes en el estudio

GÉNERO	ESTUDIANTES MAGISTERIO				DOCENTES EN ACTIVO	
	EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA		EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL		EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hombre	62	34,8	8	5,4	135	70,3
Mujer	116	65,2	140	94,6	57	29,7
Total	178		148		192	

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Por otra parte, se aplicó la escala a 192 profesores y profesoras de centros públicos de Educación Secundaria de cuatro Comunidades Autónomas de España: Madrid (un 30,2% de ellos), Andalucía (un 19,3%), Castilla y León (un 28,1%) y Extremadura (un 22,4%). 57 son varones (el 29,8%) y 135 mujeres (un 70,3%).

Los departamentos con mayor peso en la muestra son el de Lengua Castellana y Literatura con un 13,7%, el de Ciencias Sociales con un 13,2%, el de Matemáticas con un 17,0% y el de Orientación con un 14,3%. En cuanto a su situación laboral el 65% son titulares con destino definitivo en el centro, un 18,5% son titulares interinos, un 8,5% son titulares con destino provisional en el centro, y un 5,8% son profesores en comisión

de servicios. Si describimos la muestra teniendo en cuenta su titulación son el 6,3% maestros, el 85,4% son licenciados, y un 5,7% doctores.

### **2.3. Instrumentos**

Se utilizaron cuatro escalas, la escala a evaluar y tres más.

#### **✓ Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación (EAJCE)**

La escala original estaba compuesta por 16 ítems y fue elaborada por investigadores del grupo de Investigación “Cambio Educativo para la Justicia Social”. Los ítems fueron elaborados a partir de los tres conceptos que se manejan: Justicia Social en la sociedad, Educación con la Justicia Social y Compromiso con la Justicia Social.

Fue validada por un equipo de varios profesores universitarios expertos en Justicia Social en Educación. Los 16 ítems de la escala se corresponden con la concepción que el grupo de investigación GICE tiene de la Educación para la Justicia Social. Por este motivo, los ítems de la escala responden a (i) Compromiso de los docentes, (ii) Papel de la Educación para la Justicia Social y (iii) Justicia Social.

#### **✓ Escala de Creencia Global en un Mundo Justo de Lipkus (1991)**

La escala de Creencia Global en el Mundo Justo fue propuesta por Lipkus en 1990 a partir de la mejora de escalas anteriores que median el mismo constructo. Es una escala que mide la creencia en un mundo justo, entendido como un proceso atribucional por el cual las personas obtienen lo que se merecen en la vida y que, como norma general, las personas son responsables de las cosas positivas y negativas que les acontecen. Está compuesta por conformada por 7 ítems de tipo Likert con 5 alternativas de respuesta. La fiabilidad de la prueba original es de 0,83, lo que aparece razonablemente alta. También mostro alta validez convergente y de constructo.

Para este estudio se tradujo y validó la prueba dando análogos resultados: mostro validez de constructo al reflejar el análisis factorial un único factor y un alpha de Cronbach de 0,81.

#### **✓ Escala de Justicia Social (SJS) de Torres-Harding, Siers y Olson (2012)**

La escala de Justicia Social, elaborada por Torres-Harding, Siers y Olson en 2012, se sustenta en el modelo cognitivo social elaborado por Ajzen (1991) denominado Modelo de Comportamiento Planificado (Ajzen 1991:182) para medir las variables que predicen acciones que persiguen una sociedad más justa. La escala está compuesta por 29 ítems, tipo Likert con 7 alternativas de respuesta. Los análisis factoriales confirman que los ítems están agrupados en cuatro subescalas: Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social; Control de comportamiento percibido; Intenciones de comportamiento, y Normas subjetivas. La fiabilidad la escala global es de 0,91 y el alpha de Cronbach de cada subescala indica una fuerte consistencia interna entre los cuatro factores (las actitudes  $\alpha=0,95$ ; las normas subjetivas  $\alpha=0,82$ , el control del comportamiento percibido  $\alpha=0,84$ , y las intenciones  $\alpha=0,88$ ).

Para este estudio se llevó a cabo la traducción y validación de la escala con resultados idénticos a los de la escala original: el análisis factorial confirma la existencia de cuatro subescalas conformadas por los mismos ítems que la original y la fiabilidad de la escala obtenida es de 0,904.

- ✓ *Escala de creencias – Aprender a enseñar para la Justicia Social de Ludlow, Enterline y Cochran-Smith (2012)*

La escala de creencias – Aprender a enseñar para la Justicia Social de Ludlow, Enterline y Cochran-Smith (2012) mide las creencias de los maestros hacia la redistribución de recursos y oportunidades y resultados de aprendizaje por un lado, y el reconocimiento de los conocimientos tradiciones y fortalezas de los estudiantes por el otro. La escala está compuesta por 12 ítems con cinco alternativas de respuesta. De entre los 12 ítems, cuatro están formulados en positivo y el resto en negativo de manera deliberada de manera que tanto los profesores experimentados como los más novatos los contestaran adecuadamente (p. 198).

La fiabilidad de la escala es de 0,77. Los análisis factoriales señalan la existencia de dos subescalas que logran explicar el 34,1% de la varianza. El factor 1 (conformado por las preguntas formuladas en positivo) explica el 17,7% de la varianza, y el factor 2 (con las preguntas formuladas en negativo) explica el 16,4% de la varianza total. La correlación entre ambos factores es 0,36.

### 3. Resultados

#### 3.1. Estudio de la escala original

Los 16 ítems originales de la escala fueron analizados de acuerdo a los siguientes criterios: consistencia interna, validez de constructo, y validez convergente y discriminante.

##### a) *Consistencia interna: Fiabilidad*

La fiabilidad de la de Escala original de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación (EAJCE), con 16 ítems, es bastante alta, concretamente  $\alpha=0,80$  ( $n=518$ ).

El análisis de la discriminación de los ítems, con indicación de la fiabilidad si se elimina el ítem (tabla 3), muestra interesantes resultados que aportan pautas para la mejora de la escala.

Tabla 3. Discriminación de cada ítem y fiabilidad de la escala si se elimina el ítem

	CORRELACIÓN ELEMENTO-TOTAL CORREGIDA	ALFA DE CRONBACH SI SE ELIMINA EL ELEMENTO
1. Vivimos en una sociedad profundamente injusta	,320	,797
2. Las injusticias sociales se incrementan día a día	,397	,789
3. La educación juega un papel determinante en la construcción de una sociedad más justa	,384	,790
4. En educación, es necesario dar más a quien más lo necesita	,197	,807
5. En educación, la igualdad de trato genera igualdad en los resultados	,264	,808
6. La educación debe denunciar las situaciones injustas que se dan en la sociedad	,452	,785
7. La escuela reproduce las desigualdades de la sociedad	,179	,813
8. Con mi trabajo como docente, contribuyo a disminuir las injusticias sociales	,445	,786
9. Una de mis prioridades como docente es mejorar la autoestima de los/as estudiantes	,590	,778
10. Una de mis prioridades como docente es que	,639	,777



los/as estudiantes valoren y respeten las diferentes culturas		
11. Una de mis prioridades como docente es fomentar la participación de los/as estudiantes	,578	,781
12. La formación en valores es tan importante como la formación en los contenidos de la materia	,515	,781
13 La cultura, la lengua y la experiencia vital previa de los/as estudiantes son bienes que hay valorar y respetar	,555	,781
14. Estoy personalmente comprometido con lograr una sociedad más justa	,489	,784
15. Me esfuerzo por mostrar afecto y cariño a todos mis estudiantes	,515	,783
16. Estoy comprometido con crear un entorno de justicia en mi aula	,571	,781

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Los resultados apuntan a que tres ítems que se comportan de forma inadecuada por su baja discriminación, el 7, el 4 y el 5, y en ese orden. Los tres tienen discriminaciones inferiores a 0,3. Serían tres ítems candidatos a ser eliminados. De forma coherente se observa que el alpha de Cronbach se incrementaría hasta 0,813 puntos si se eliminara el ítem 7.

*b) Validez de constructo: Análisis Factorial*

Para hacer un estudio de la validez de constructo de la escala original, se calcula un Análisis Factorial con los 16 ítems (tabla 4). Los resultados apuntan a la existencia de 4 factores diferentes:

- Factor 1. compuesto por los ítems 8 al 11.
- Factor 2. compuesto por los ítems 1 y 2 de la escala (del 14 al 16).
- Factor 3. compuesto por los ítems 3, 4 y 6.
- Factor 4. compuesto por los ítems 5 y 7.

Tabla 4. Análisis de validez de constructo de la escala original. Matriz de componentes rotados

	1	2	3	4
1. Vivimos en una sociedad profundamente injusta	,052	<b>,886</b>	,101	,145
2. Las injusticias sociales se incrementan día a día	,149	<b>,889</b>	,117	,106
3. La educación juega un papel determinante en la construcción de una sociedad más justa	,292	,091	<b>,670</b>	-,100
4. En educación, es necesario dar más a quien más lo necesita	-,078	,168	<b>,776</b>	,028
5. En educación, la igualdad de trato genera igualdad en los resultados	,147	,177	,039	<b>,519</b>
6. La educación debe denunciar las situaciones injustas que se dan en la sociedad	,194	-,031	<b>,651</b>	,263
7. La escuela reproduce las desigualdades de la sociedad	,013	,075	-,047	<b>,784</b>
8. Con mi trabajo como docente, contribuyo a disminuir las injusticias sociales	<b>,455</b>	-,138	,313	,371
9. Una de mis prioridades como docente es mejorar la autoestima de los/as estudiantes	<b>,707</b>	,059	,144	,170
10. Una de mis prioridades como docente es que los/as	<b>,790</b>	,102	,161	,045

estudiantes valoren y respeten las diferentes culturas				
11. Una de mis prioridades como docente es fomentar la participación de los/as estudiantes	<b>,827</b>	,124	,055	-,108
12. La formación en valores es tan importante como la formación en los contenidos de la materia	<b>,619</b>	,134	,069	,121
13. La cultura, la lengua y la experiencia vital previa de los/as estudiantes son bienes que hay valorar y respetar	<b>,732</b>	,066	,076	,051
14. Estoy personalmente comprometido con lograr una sociedad más justa	<b>,572</b>	-,125	,246	,262
15. Me esfuerzo por mostrar afecto y cariño a todos mis estudiantes	<b>,735</b>	-,002	-,017	,104
16. Estoy comprometido con crear un entorno de justicia en mi aula	<b>,743</b>	,046	,098	,078

Nota: Método de extracción: Análisis de componentes principales. Método de rotación: Normalización Varimax con Kaiser. La rotación ha convergido en 6 iteraciones.

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Estos factores no se ajustan al modelo teórico de partida. Así, aparece un factor 4 compuesto por los ítems 5 y 7 y que deberían estar en factor 3.

### c) Análisis de contenido de los ítems conflictivos

Como hemos visto, son dos los ítems que se comportan de forma extraña tanto en el estudio de discriminación como en el de validez de constructo. El 5 y el 7. Analicémoslos con detalle.

- El ítem 7, “La escuela reproduce las desigualdades de la sociedad”, puede tener una interpretación ambigua. De un lado, docentes más sensibles puede ser más conscientes de la veracidad de este hecho, pero también pueden estar más comprometidos en cambiarlo y por tanto no estar de acuerdo con la frase. Son como dos caras de la misma moneda.
- El ítem 5, “En educación, la igualdad de trato genera igualdad en los resultados”, también es un ítem especial, porque enfrenta igualdad y equidad. Los resultados tanto de la fiabilidad como de la validación de constructo muestran que su interpretación es más compleja.

Por ello se propone eliminar de la escala final. El ítem 4, sin embargo, dado que aunque muestra una baja discriminación, la fiabilidad se incrementa poco si se elimina y parece conformar el factor 3 sin problemas se decide dejarlo.

### 3.2. Escala revisada

Con el análisis anterior, la escala original de 16 ítems se queda en 14, dado que se elimina el ítem 5 y el 7. Volvemos a calcular las características psicométricas de esta escala revisada.

#### a) Consistencia Interna: Fiabilidad

El alpha de Cronbach de la prueba completa de 14 ítems es de 0,83, lo que puede considerarse razonablemente alta.

En todo caso, es más interesante la fiabilidad de cada una de las subescalas:

- Subescala 1: Actitud hacia la Justicia Social: alcanza una fiabilidad de: 0,83.
- Subescala 2: Actitud hacia la Justicia Social en Educación: 0,75.

- Subescala 3. Compromiso personal con la Justicia Social: 0,87.

Por lo que en los tres casos es adecuada.

*b) Validez de constructo: Análisis Factorial*

El análisis factorial con los 14 ítems de la escala revisada confirma la existencia de tres factores que se corresponden con nuestro marco teórico (tabla 5). Estos son:

- Factor 1. Compromiso de los docentes, compuesto por los ítems 9 al 16.
- Factor 2. Papel de la Educación para la Justicia Social, compuesto por los ítems 3, 4, 6 y 8.
- Factor 3. Justicia Social, compuesto por los ítems 1 y 2.

Tabla 5. Análisis de validez de constructo de la escala revisada. Matriz de componentes rotados

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Vivimos en una sociedad profundamente injusta	,056	<b>,911</b>	,098
2. Las injusticias sociales se incrementan día a día	,145	<b>,901</b>	,108
3. La educación juega un papel determinante en la construcción de una sociedad más justa	,248	,077	<b>,650</b>
4. En educación, es necesario dar más a quien más lo necesita	-,105	,177	<b>,767</b>
6. La educación debe denunciar las situaciones injustas que se dan en la sociedad	,209	,013	<b>,693</b>
8. Con mi trabajo como docente, contribuyo a disminuir las injusticias sociales	<b>,491</b>	-,078	,375
9. Una de mis prioridades como docente es mejorar la autoestima de los/as estudiantes	<b>,716</b>	,079	,179
10. Una de mis prioridades como docente es que los/as estudiantes valoren y respeten las diferentes culturas	<b>,781</b>	,107	,178
11. Una de mis prioridades como docente es fomentar la participación de los/as estudiantes	<b>,800</b>	,108	,050
12. La formación en valores es tan importante como la formación en los contenidos de la materia	<b>,622</b>	,135	,094
13. La cultura, la lengua y la experiencia vital previa de los/as estudiantes son bienes que hay valorar y respetar	<b>,729</b>	,075	,095
14. Estoy personalmente comprometido con lograr una sociedad más justa	<b>,595</b>	-,079	,296
15. Me esfuerzo por mostrar afecto y cariño a todos mis estudiantes	<b>,742</b>	,011	,012
16. Estoy comprometido con crear un entorno de justicia en mi aula	<b>,742</b>	,061	,120

Nota: Método de extracción: Análisis de componentes principales. Método de rotación: Normalización Varimax con Kaiser. La rotación ha convergido en 6 iteraciones.

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

*c) Validez Convergente y Discriminante*

El último paso es evaluar la validez convergente y discriminante (o divergente) de la escala final. Para ello aplicamos tres escalas relacionadas a la muestra de estudiantes de magisterio. Concretamente la Escala de Creencia Global en un Mundo Justo (Lipkus, 1991), la Escala de Justicia Social (Torres-Harding, Siers y Olson, 2012), y la Escala de creencias – Aprender a enseñar para la Justicia Social (Ludlow, Enterline y Cochran-Smith, 2012). Para hacer el análisis de validez convergente y discriminantes se estimó la

correlación entre los resultados obtenidos en cada una de las tres subescalas de la EAJSE y las tres escalas. Los resultados se muestran en la tabla 6.

Tabla 6. Validez convergente y divergente de la escala revisada

	CREENCIA GLOBAL EN UN MUNDO JUSTO	ESCALA DE JUSTICIA SOCIAL	APRENDIENDO A ENSEÑAR PARA LA JUSTICIA SOCIAL
Justicia Social	-0,197*	-0,015	0,083
Papel de la Educación para la Justicia Social	-0,049	0,301*	0,214*
Compromiso personal	-0,053	0,498*	0,420*

Nota: (\*) La correlación es significativa a nivel 0,05 (bilateral).

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Los resultados apuntan algunos datos interesantes. Veámoslos para cada escala:

1. *Creencia Global en un Mundo Justo*: Solo la subescala de la EAJSE relacionada con las actitudes hacia la Justicia Social muestra una correlación estadísticamente significativa con la escala de Lipkus (1991), y esta es pequeña y negativa. Tiene sentido que sea negativa dado que la teoría de la Creencia en un Mundo Justo, como vimos, afirma que para algunas personas existe una especie de equilibrio por el cual cada uno tiene lo que se merece. Las personas que así lo defienden no creen que haya una injusticia en la sociedad. También es lógico la independencia respecto a las actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en educación y hacia el compromiso personal.
2. *Escala de Justicia Social*. En este caso correlacionan con las subescalas 2 y 3 de la EAJSE, y en ambos casos de forma positiva y razonablemente alta. Especialmente elevada (0,5) es la correlación con la subescala de Compromiso personal. Esto se produce porque la escala de Torres-Harding, Siers y Olson (2012) muestra actitudes hacia la acción. La diferencia se debe a que en el caso de la EAJSE está más centrado en su compromiso hacia la acción como docente.
3. *Escala de creencias – Aprendiendo a Enseñar para la Justicia Social*. El comportamiento de la relación entre esta escala y la EAJSE es muy parecido al comportamiento con la Escala de Justicia Social, correlaciona con las mismas subescalas y con una intensidad análoga, aunque algo más bajas. Este hecho es interesante dado que la correlación entre estas escalas es alta (0,48), pero no coinciden.

Con todo ello, es posible afirmar que la EAJSE mide actitudes diferentes a las de la Escala de Creencia en el Mundo Justo, dado que parte de planeamientos diferentes, y tiene sus puntos en común con las otras dos escalas, pero le aporta elementos diferenciadores. Con ello demostramos la validez convergente y discriminante.

### 3.3. Algunos resultados de la aplicación de la prueba

Una vez validada la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación (EAJSE) presentamos a continuación análisis de cómo se comporta ante dos variables relevantes: si los implicados son estudiantes de magisterio o docentes en activo, y su género.

El estudio en función de si son estudiantes o docentes en activo muestran que hay diferencia en dos subescalas (tabla 7): de un lado, los estudiantes parecen ser más sensibles a la existencia de injusticias en la sociedad que los docentes en activo; sin

embargo, el compromiso personal con la justicia social como docentes es mayor entre los docentes en activo.

Tabla 7. Resultados de la aplicación de la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social (EAJSE). Diferencias entre estudiantes de magisterio y docentes en activo

	ESTUDIANTES	DOCENTES	T	SIG
Justicia Social	,27883	-,62689	8,52*	0,000
Papel de la Educación para la Justicia Social	-,00646	,01453	-0,21	0,834
Compromiso personal	-,13323	,29954	-4,42	0,000

Nota: (\*) Con la corrección por no asumir varianzas iguales, prueba de Levene sig=,00.

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

El análisis de los resultados en función del género (tabla 8) muestra que no existen diferencias significativas ni en actitudes hacia el papel de la educación ni en compromiso personal. Pero sí hay diferencia en las actitudes hacia la Justicia Social, las mujeres en este aspecto parecen más sensibles (o más críticas con la situación actual) que los hombres. Es interesante ver que estas diferencias, y no diferencias, se dan exactamente igual entre los estudiantes y entre los docentes, por lo que el resultado es bastante robusto.

Tabla 8. Resultados de la aplicación de la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social (EAJSE). Diferencias en función del género

	HOMBRE	MUJER	T	SIG
Justicia Social	-,407	,178	-5,05*	0,000
Papel de la educación para la Justicia Social	,031	-,003	,34	0,734
Compromiso personal	-,006	,002	-0,40	0,968

Nota: (\*) Con la corrección por no asumir varianzas iguales, prueba de Levene sig=,00.

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

## 4. Conclusiones

En este artículo se ha descrito el proceso de elaboración y la evaluación de las propiedades psicométricas de la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación (EAJSE), elaborada por el grupo de investigación “Cambio Educativo para la Justicia Social” en 2014.

La escala final, que se presenta en el Anexo, está compuesta por 14 ítems organizados en tres subescalas: Actitudes hacia la Justicia Social, Actitudes hacia el papel de la Educación en la Justicia Social, y Compromiso personal. Los análisis realizados han demostrado tener unas propiedades psicométricas adecuadas, así:

- Fiabilidad, medida a través del alpha de Cronbach, es de 0,83 para el conjunto de la prueba y de 0,83; 0,75 y 0,87.
- Tiene validez de constructo, verificado mediante el análisis factorial.
- Posee una adecuada validez convergente y divergente, a partir de su estudio con otras pruebas cercanas que se han elaborado en estos últimos años. De tal forma que aporta elementos novedosos no trabajados hasta ahora.

Con todo ello, se ofrece a la comunidad investigadora un instrumento que puede ser útil para tener un mejor conocimiento de las actitudes hacia la Justicia Social en Educación.

El análisis de los resultados muestra diferencias entre estudiantes y docentes en activo en dos elementos. En primer lugar, los estudiantes muestran un sentido crítico hacia la situación actual más acusado que el de los docentes en activo: en mayor medida creen que vivimos en una sociedad injusta, y que esa situación está empeorando; pero, a cambio, su compromiso personal por cambiar la situación es menor entre los estudiantes que entre los docentes. Las diferencias en función del género son mínimas y sólo afectan a la visión de las injusticias en la sociedad, siendo las mujeres más críticas con la situación actual.

El desarrollo de un instrumento es un punto de partida para la investigación, nunca una finalidad. Con esta escala se abre un interesante camino para profundizar en el conocimiento de las actitudes de los y las docentes en formación y en activo respecto a la Justicia Social y su papel en la misma. Así, puede ser útil para explicar los factores personales y sociales que indican en esas actitudes, por ejemplo formación, valores, experiencias..., o para evaluar un programa de sensibilización sobre esta temática. Incluso puede servir de punto de partida para elaborar una escala más completa y compleja que la presentada.

La educación puede jugar un papel de reproductora de las desigualdades, puede ser la legitimadora social de las injusticias, o puede ser un factor de transformación para la consecución de una sociedad más justa. Para ello, lo más importante es la cultura del centro (Murillo y Hernández-Castilla, 2014). Los centros educativos que poseen una serie de valores, creencias y expectativas compartidos por toda la comunidad escolar centrados en la consecución de una sociedad más justa, son aquellos que más aportan en esa transformación social. De esta forma, un camino es favorecer el desarrollo de actitudes críticas y de compromiso personal en los docentes y futuros docentes hacia la consecución de una sociedad más justa. Esta escala tiene como finalidad última conocer para transformar.

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## Anexo

### ESCALA DE ACTITUDES HACIA LA JUSTICIA SOCIAL EN EDUCACIÓN (EAJSE)



Grupo de investigación “Cambio Educativo para la Justicia Social” (GICE): 2014

Indique su grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones.

(1: totalmente en desacuerdo; 2: bastante en desacuerdo; 3: ni acuerdo ni desacuerdo; 4: bastante de acuerdo; y 5: totalmente de acuerdo)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Vivimos en una sociedad profundamente injusta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Las injusticias sociales se incrementan día a día	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. La educación juega un papel determinante en la construcción de una sociedad más justa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. En educación, es necesario dar más a quien más lo necesita	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. La educación debe denunciar las situaciones injustas que se dan en la sociedad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Con mi trabajo como docente, contribuyo a disminuir las injusticias sociales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Una de mis prioridades como docente es mejorar la autoestima de los/as estudiantes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Una de mis prioridades como docente es que los/as estudiantes valoren y respeten las diferentes culturas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Una de mis prioridades como docente es fomentar la participación de los/as estudiantes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. La formación en valores es tan importante como la formación en los contenidos de la materia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. La cultura, la lengua y la experiencia vital previa de los/as estudiantes son “bienes” que hay valorar y respetar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Estoy personalmente comprometido con lograr una sociedad más justa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Me esfuerzo por mostrar afecto y cariño a todos mis estudiantes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Estoy comprometido con crear un entorno de justicia en mi aula	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¡Gracias!



**REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN  
PARA LA JUSTICIA SOCIAL  
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## O Mérito e a Mito da Democracia Racial: Tópicos de uma Discussão

### The Merit and the Myth of Racial Democracy: Topics of a Discussion

### El Mérito y el Mito de la Democracia Racial: Temas de Discusión

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Dedicamo-nos a refletir em que medida a educação incorpora as ideologias provenientes da suposta democracia racial brasileira em suas práticas e discursos. O modo como tais ideologias repercutem nas escolas é examinado com referencial situado em Freire e Russell. Nossa discussão situa-se na abordagem, em um primeiro momento, histórica, das realidades sociais que produziram as condições perniciosas de vida do negro e do mulato no Brasil. Evidenciamos o modo como tais ideologias orientam o discurso e a prática educacionais como tentativa de apresentar as mistificações às quais os educadores devem manter-se atentos. Concentramo-nos na conjugação da ideologia do mérito com o mito da democracia racial e também nos resultados perniciosos que tal articulação promove dentro das escolas e fora delas. Deslindamos o artigo com a conclamação dos educadores críticos comprometidos com a justiça social à crítica das pretensas verdades encerradas pelo capitalismo por meio do enfrentamento das mistificações que impregnam o cotidiano das escolas.

**Palavras-chave:** Democracia racial, Mérito, Negro, Educação, Regime de classes no Brasil.

We dedicate ourselves to reflect the extent to which education incorporates ideologies from alleged Brazilian racial democracy in their practices and discourses. The way such ideologies reverberate in schools is examined from theoretical located in Freire and Russell. Our discussion lies in the approach, at first historical, the social realities that produced the pernicious living conditions of the black and mulatto in Brazil. Then we show how such ideologies guiding speech and educational practices as an attempt to present mystification which educators must remain vigilant. We focus on the combination of the ideology of merit to the myth of racial democracy and also the harmful results that such articulation promotes within and outside schools. We conclude the article with a call for critical educators committed to social justice to the critics of alleged truths of capitalism through the confrontation of mystification that today pervade the lives of schools.

**Keywords:** Racial democracy, Merit, Black people, Education, Class organization in Brazil.

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Reflejamos el grado en que la educación brasileña incorpora ideologías de supuesta democracia racial en sus prácticas y discursos. La forma en que éstas ideologías reverberan en las escuelas se examina desde la perspectiva teórica de Freire y Russell. Nuestra discusión parte de las realidades sociales históricas que han contribuido a generar las condiciones de vida perniciosas que hoy viven el negro y el mulato en Brasil. Mostramos cómo estas ideologías marcan un discurso y unas prácticas educativas que invitan a los profesores a mantenerse vigilantes. A continuación nos centramos en la combinación de la ideología del mérito con el mito de la democracia racial y también con los resultados nocivos que esta articulación promueve dentro y fuera de las escuelas. Se concluye el artículo con una llamada a los educadores comprometidos con la justicia social para que sean críticos con las supuestas verdades del capitalismo confrontándose con la mistificación que hoy impregna la vida de las escuelas.

**Palabras clave:** Democracia racial, Mérito, Negros, Educación, Organización de clase en Brasil.

## Introdução

Não apenas a educação, mas também muitas outras atividades relevantes para a humanidade como o comércio e a política, padecem, desafortunadamente, da impregnação dos princípios sobre os quais se sustentam as dimensões multifacetadas de uma mesma racionalidade capitalista. Com efeito, o modo como orientamos nossa vida cotidiana muito revela a respeito de tal impregnação. Afinal, mesmo as relações mais essenciais para o ser humano encontram-se contaminadas pelas maneiras de pensar, sentir e agir pertinentes ao capitalismo. O individualismo e a concorrência evidenciam-se, nesse sentido, como as implicações mais execráveis que decorrem de toda influência que recebemos constantemente sob a égide das mesmas leis que operam a lógica de mercado.

Há de se convir, não obstante, que algumas atividades devem ser, com maior cuidado e esforço, preservadas imediatamente da referida impregnação por um ou outro motivo mais específico. Trata-se precisamente do caso da educação. Afinal, à educação, que padece, reconhecidamente, da influência da racionalidade capitalista, associa-se a missão de transformar a realidade. Depreende-se, daí, a necessidade imprescindível de desmistificar as ideologias que governam a realidade que se pretende transformar (Freire, 1982). Logo, a educação que se apresenta como transformadora, emancipadora, não pode padecer, em sua essência, da mesma moléstia que pretende confrontar. Por isso, propomo-nos ao exame de algumas maneiras como os discursos e práticas corroborados pelo capitalismo adquirem forma e são incorporados à educação, governando, silenciosamente, nossas práticas.

Mais especificamente, pretendemos, no decorrer do presente artigo evidenciar a mistificação do processo no qual, ao obscurecer os problemas raciais brasileiros por meio da ideologia do amalgamento de raças, esconderam-se os dilemas do escravo e de seus descendentes. No mesmo sentido, pretendemos também examinar em que medida e com que profundidade a educação mantém-se impregnada do legado da escravidão, sobretudo no que se refere às consequências ao jovem negro e mulato. Evidentemente, o ponto de partida de nossa discussão consiste nas condições sociais e históricas que permitiram tanto o surgimento como o agravamento de nossa problemática no Brasil. Não obstante, a discussão que depreendemos de tais aspectos não é relevante apenas àqueles que educam no país, justamente porque, conforme observaremos adiante, a problemática

enunciada decorre de condições que emergem no seio de quaisquer sociedades regidas pelo capitalismo.

Precisamente por esse motivo, independentemente das condições em que nossos leitores educam ou das circunstâncias em que se relacionam com a educação, consideramos importante que se dedique a devida atenção à problemática mencionada, que, a despeito dos delineamentos do caso brasileiro, circunscrevem-no de forma mais ampla e superam-no. Entendemos, ademais, que sua compreensão permite-nos desobscurecer e enfrentar dimensões multifacetadas do capitalismo que nos acometem cotidianamente. Todo educador comprometido com a transformação da realidade deve, portanto, dedicar-se ao estudo que segue a fim de desmistificar ideologias que orientem sua prática educativa. Na verdade, afirma-se o mesmo para todo indivíduo comprometido com a educação, de maneira que a discussão que empreendemos interessa aos educadores, aos políticos e demais lideranças que se dedicam a repensar e transformar suas práticas.

## **1. O mito da democracia racial**

Ao Brasil sempre foi reputada, um tanto ingenuamente, a capacidade de ter amenizado as consequências perniciosas de seu passado escravocrata. Por jamais ter ensejado efetivamente um embate entre grupos étnicos distintos, perpetrou-se a concepção de que o país construía uma nação mestiça, irmanada e democrática, no que tange às relações raciais. Viajantes europeus e norte-americanos do século XIX, por exemplo, reproduziam máximas como “o preconceito de cor no Brasil não existe”. Alguns deles, como Louis Couty (1881), asseguravam, também, que “os escravos desfrutavam de condições mais suaves que nossos assalariados na Europa” (p.9). O processo lento de desagregação do regime escravocrata brasileiro e a constituição de um contingente considerável de negros livres, ademais, contribuía para reiterar a suposição do convívio pacífico entre as raças. Assim construiu-se uma concepção de que as dinâmicas sociais da escravidão no Brasil haviam sido amistosas e suas consequências socialmente positivas.

É importante considerar, no entanto, que a concepção de uma democracia racial brasileira foi forjada muito recentemente. Segundo Lilia Schwarcz (2011), no século XIX, o pensamento científico e político sinalizavam, na verdade, um agudo processo de racialização e segregação na sociedade brasileira, pautados sobretudo nos moldes higienistas e deterministas, segundo os quais concebia-se o caráter danoso da miscigenação racial. Silvio Romero e Nina Rodrigues, a guisa de exemplo, são pensadores que defendiam práticas de exclusão social, “em nome da ciência da época” (p:439). Todavia, Schwarcz observou que, se, em meados da década de 1920 ainda prevaleciam os modelos higienistas, na década de 30, ao Brasil já se atribuía a rubrica de democracia racial. Uma geração de pensadores, contemporânea ao pensamento modernista brasileiro (como Mário de Andrade, Artur Ramos e Gilberto Freyre), inseriu a cultura negra no centro das preocupações que diziam respeito a formação de uma cultura nacional. Tanto que o caráter mistificador da ideologia da mestiçagem como modelo de democracia racial tomara vulto nas décadas de 1940 e 1950. Naquele período pressupunha-se que, tanto no Brasil como na América Latina em geral, as relações raciais e culturais, erigidas sobre as bases da fé católica, tendiam a produzir sociedades miscigenadas, nas quais os conflitos e antagonismos oriundos da colonização eram superados nos campos étnico e cultural. No mesmo período, a ideia de uma superação pacífica de conflitos étnicos surgia, assim, como um alento às nações onde a segregação

continuava a ser realidade: os Estados Unidos, com a Lei de Jim Crow; a África do Sul, rumo à institucionalização do *apartheid*; e os continentes africano e asiático, em processo de descolonização.

A crença ingênua de que o Brasil constituía um idílio racial adquiria tal monta que, na década de 50, a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) inicia um conjunto de pesquisas sobre o padrão brasileiro de relações interétnicas. O projeto tinha por perspectiva a análise do processo brasileiro de assimilação e miscigenação a fim de que pudesse fomentar medidas para universalizá-lo. O “Projeto UNESCO”, como era chamado, acompanhava uma série de ações com o propósito de compreender as motivações do racismo e de encontrar medidas possíveis para a sua superação.

Muito embora as expectativas fossem promissoras, as teses levantadas pelos pesquisadores se mostravam avessas ao discurso dominante e revelavam as facetas contraditórias da referida ideologia da democracia racial (para melhor compreensão do debate acerca do projeto UNESCO de estudo das relações raciais no Brasil, ver Maio (1999)). Isso porque, como constataremos adiante, a estratificação racial brasileira esteve o tempo todo obliterada pela estratificação social do regime de classes.

Para compreender as dinâmicas sociais do Brasil contemporâneo, portanto, é preciso retomar o processo histórico de esboroamento da sociedade escravocrata, porque nele estão contidas as condições que ensejaram o processo de transição para a economia capitalista e de inserção dos ex-escravos no sistema de classes, com suas respectivas dificuldades e desafios. Como observaremos, o negro e o mulato foram excluídos do processo de expansão do regime capitalista no Brasil, onde os únicos beneficiados foram os círculos sociais das camadas dominantes e os imigrantes recém-egressos da Europa. A partir da compreensão das relações entre o passado e o presente, é possível compreender como as diferenças de cor associaram-se com privilégios de classe.

## **2. Uma mistificação histórica**

O processo de abolição da escravidão no Brasil ocorreu lenta e progressivamente. Florestan Fernandes (2007:66), sociólogo brasileiro que dedicou longos anos de estudo ao padrão brasileiro de acomodação racial, constatou que a emancipação do negro no Brasil foi, acima de tudo, uma “revolução social feita pelo branco e para o branco”. Evidentemente, as demandas da abolição correspondiam, em certa medida, aos clamores do negro e aos desejos humanitários da comunidade abolicionista. Não obstante, como Fernandes (1978) constata, tratava-se, acima de tudo, de uma condenação do antigo regime, oriunda dos interesses econômicos, valores sociais e ideais políticos da “raça dominante”.

Após o processo da abolição, não se manifestou da parte das classes dirigentes nenhuma tentativa sequer de socialização dos escravos. Os grandes latifundiários, interessados na rápida recuperação do contingente de mão-de-obra necessário ao restabelecimento da economia, empregaram seu poder político para exigir a implementação de medidas de amparo à crise da lavoura. Tornou-se patente, portanto, que o negro, nas palavras de Fernandes, não passava de um “aríete”, por meio do qual se insuflou a necessidade do processo de abolição para atender precisamente ao desejo dos latifundiários de combater um regime que demonstrava ter se tornado improdutivo e dispendioso.

Como Fernandes (1978) observou, os intelectuais abolicionistas, por excelência, “não precisavam lutar nem pela liberdade, nem pela segurança, nem pela dignidade da pessoa, pois tudo isso possuíam na escala desproporcional dos privilegiados em uma sociedade estamental e de castas” (pp:40-41). Isto é, ao branco estava garantida *a priori* a posição de homem livre em uma sociedade de estamentos, ao passo que, ao negro se impunha uma condição de casta subalterna. Assim, os núcleos intelectuais dos centros urbanos afligiam-se com os males de uma ordem econômica, jurídica e social que travava o desenvolvimento econômico, social e cultural do país. Tomando as rédeas do clamor da opinião pública e, acima de tudo, extraindo delas apenas a força para mover seus interesses de classe, a camada dominante, como apontou Fernandes, domesticou as impulsões revolucionárias e valeu-se delas para realizar seus intentos de desenvolvimento econômico.

A abolição, portanto, deixava de ser uma convulsão nacional para tornar-se, acima de tudo, uma medida para solucionar a crise econômica da grande lavoura. Uma vez constatado que o contingente de escravos era insuficiente para garantir o crescimento econômico nacional, orientado pela lavoura do café, deu-se subitamente a sucessão do trabalho cativo pela instituição da ordem contratual. Todavia, como Fernandes constata, “deixou-se ao curso natural das relações humanas a determinação do que isso poderia significar, em situações concretas, como democratização efetiva dos direitos e deveres fundamentais dos indivíduos, garantidos juridicamente” (Fernandes, 1978:43).

O negro, mão-de-obra motriz da economia brasileira, percebeu-se subitamente entregue à própria sorte. Uma vez liberto, os senhores eximiam-se da responsabilidade pelo futuro do antigo escravo, sem que se estabelecesse sequer alguma espécie de indenização ou política pública de incentivo e de inserção na nova organização social e econômica. Constituiu assim, segundo Fernandes (1978), um cenário no qual o liberto tornava-se, abruptamente e sem segurança, responsável pelo seu destino, embora não possuísse bases materiais e morais para inserir-se de maneira construtiva na ordem social competitiva.

Tudo conduziu para que o escravo fosse rapidamente substituído pela mão-de-obra livre, sobretudo imigrante. Octavio Ianni (1998), sociólogo marxista dedicado à questão racial brasileira, constatou que, ao proprietário dos meios de produção, o trabalhador livre, ao contrário do escravo, poderia ser submetido a um sistema diferente de incentivo e controle, sendo assim capaz de gerar maiores rendimentos. O incremento de mão-de-obra estrangeira, portanto, tinha duplo sentido: rápida recuperação do contingente de mão-de-obra e adaptação imediata às necessidades da ordem social competitiva.

Neste contexto, a abolição implicou, necessariamente, na desorganização da vida do negro liberto, que se viu mais uma vez espoliado, e, aos poucos, tomaria consciência de que a liberdade adquirida pouco alterava sua situação heteronômica. Onde a produção mantivesse níveis baixos, os ex-escravos conservavam situação semelhante à da escravidão: seriam reabsorvidos pelo sistema de produção na condição de trabalhadores livres, mas em condições análogas, ou incorporavam-se à economia de subsistência das regiões economicamente estagnadas. Onde a economia florescesse, esses libertos tinham de concorrer *pari passu* com os brancos nacionais e com os imigrantes que, segundo Fernandes (1978:18), “se constituíam em grande maioria de trabalhadores habituados ao regime de trabalho assalariado e suas implicações econômicas e sociais”. Era irremediável, portanto, que o negro fosse preterido enquanto desfrutasse de uma disparidade ao ser comparado aos brancos, nacionais e estrangeiros.

Nessa circunstância, os negros e os mulatos libertos estavam definitivamente despreparados para uma concorrência direta com os brancos e para a ordem econômica emergente. Assim, as ocupações que desfrutavam antes da chegada do concorrente branco –a saber, a manufatura, o artesanato urbano e o comércio de miudezas e serviços–, foram entregues a estes, de modo que àqueles somente restaram os serviços brutos e mal pagos, impelindo-os por vezes a disputar entre si pelas oportunidades mais degradantes com os “componentes residuais do sistema: com os que não serviam para outra coisa ou com os que estavam começando bem por baixo” (Fernandes, 1978:26).

Todavia, como o autor (1978) constata, o modo como se operaram as mudanças sociais no referido período foi, acima de tudo, maliciosamente desigual: quando se referia à preservação do poder nas mãos das classes dominantes, as transformações se apresentam mínimas; nas zonas essenciais para a expansão da economia urbana, ao contrário, estas apareciam de maneiras mais agudas. Assim, no que tange à alteração da condição social do trabalho produtivo, as mudanças foram tão repentinas, que favoreceram apenas aqueles já adaptados ao trabalho assalariado. O que ocorreu, portanto, foi a associação do imigrante como agente natural do trabalho livre, eliminando qualquer competição com os negros ou mulatos. Não obstante, como bem observa Fernandes (1987:17), “aquela dada situação correspondia aos interesses da lavoura e aos mecanismos normais da ordem vigente, e justamente por isso tal associação tornava-se indispensável”.

O processo de marginalização do contingente negro no regime de classes em formação está, portanto, em profunda consonância com o desenvolvimento do regime capitalista no Brasil. A possibilidade de rápida substituição do cativo pelo assalariado propiciou um quadro no qual o negro era compelido a adaptar-se, com seus próprios meios, a um regime com o qual jamais –ou, no caso dos contingentes de escravos libertos, muito pouco– tivera familiaridade. Por isso, quando lograva a inserção no regime de trabalho assalariado, o negro tendia a aplicar a este os princípios do trabalho cativo, sobretudo quando associava o contrato de trabalho ao direto do patrão sobre a sua pessoa. Era inevitável, por conseguinte, que o negro visse no trabalho assalariado o prolongamento do regime servil, posto que as condições nas quais se inseria no mercado de trabalho pouco diferiam da anterior. Doutro lado, o imigrante, que via no trabalho apenas uma maneira de formar pecúlio e ascender socialmente, cumpria as obrigações do contrato e atendia aos mandos de seus patrões. Enquanto houvesse a possibilidade de substituir o negro por mão-de-obra especializada, não havia motivos que ensejassem um processo de aclimatação do negro ao trabalho assalariado.

Nessa conjuntura, há de se mencionar, também, que os brancos nacionais, assim como os imigrantes, contavam com suportes sociais para suas atividades econômicas que contribuía para a sua inserção construtiva no regime de classes. É preciso considerar que os brancos nacionais, sobretudo aqueles que pertenciam às classes dominantes, contavam com o apoio familiar para empreender atividades lucrativas e que forneciam algum risco econômico. O imigrante, por sua vez, contava com o apoio institucional dos consulados e do próprio governo, sobretudo quando pretendia obter melhores salários. O negro, todavia, tinha de forjar simultaneamente, como observou Fernandes (1978), sua situação econômica e a organização de sua vida social.

No entanto, a condição heteronômica do negro e do mulato no regime de classes constituía, mesmo para si, situação indesejada e ao mesmo tempo inevitável. Indesejada, porque os desejos do negro e do mulato estavam mais inclinados à assimilação dos valores das classes dominantes do que contra elas. A liberdade ao cativo sempre



representou, em última instância, a autonomia sobre si e a independência econômica. Como Fernandes apontou (1978), o ex-escravo estava vinculado axiologicamente aos homens livres e poderosos. De outro lado, inevitável, pois a desorganização do negro tivera origem na impossibilidade deste de abandonar subitamente o legado cultural da escravidão e de absorver, no mesmo instante, os valores culturais da ordem capitalista.

Há de se considerar que nem sempre o imigrante ou o trabalhador branco nacional desfrutaram de melhores condições para o trabalho livre quando concorriam com o negro e o mulato liberto. Ao proceder a uma análise da história dos negros alforriados durante o regime escravista, constatar-se-á que, diversas vezes, a eles couberam ofícios razoavelmente prestigiosos e lucrativos. Isso porque, dentro da sociedade escravocrata brasileira, o trabalho adquirira uma conotação pejorativa e indesejável, inclinando os senhores de escravos a libertarem alguns de seus mancipios para exercer profissões que, se de um lado rejeitavam-nas os brancos, de outro, eram incompatíveis com a alienação da pessoa do escravo. Dessa maneira, o contingente de escravos livres, habituados à liberdade e ao regime assalariado, representava uma parcela não desprezível, e que dispunha de meios de concorrer a cargos elevados com o trabalhador branco. Não obstante, como veremos, este diminuto contingente padecia, igualmente, dos males da concorrência direta com o trabalhador branco. Vejamos o por quê.

Como apontou Fernandes (2007), durante o período no qual se deu a ordem social escravocrata, tanto o “escravo” quanto o “negro” eram duas entidades paralelas e simultâneas: uma dependia da outra. Com o processo de desagregação do regime mencionado, ao eliminar-se o “escravo”, o “negro” converte-se ao mesmo tempo em resíduo racial. Em consonância com Fernandes, Ianni (1998) observa que o regime escravista foi responsável por criar uma correspondência fenotípica, econômica e jurídica do negro e do mulato com o mancipio. Em seu contexto de origem, a correspondência dos papéis mencionados exercia função fundamental, posto que era responsável por direcionar o comportamento e a identificação dos negros à casta inferior, do mesmo modo que condicionava os brancos a um distanciamento daqueles.

Assim, mesmo o negro livre, identificado economicamente ao branco, tomava consciência de sua suposta inferioridade. E o escravo, por sua vez, era mais eficazmente reprimido e, portanto, correspondia melhor aos seus papéis sociais determinados. A consolidação de correlações fenotípicas entre negro e escravo, somadas a medidas repressivas contra negros e mulatos exercia função fundamental no regime escravocrata: ao delimitar o campo de atuação do negro cativo e do liberto, impondo deveres e peculiares e reduzindo a nulos os seus direitos, docilizavam seu comportamento e lhes destituíam de qualquer impulsão revolucionária. Assim, a desorganização do negro assegurava a perpetuação das relações econômicas e de poder. No entanto, mesmo após o processo de abolição, veremos que certas estruturas do preconceito de raça permanecerão ativas no regime capitalista, oriundas da persistência dos padrões assimétricos de raça no Brasil.

### **3. O dilema racial brasileiro**

Como vimos, o escravo é uma categoria social determinada por um complexo de atributos psicossociais e culturais que assumiu funções determinadas no interior da sociedade escravocrata. O ex-escravo, por consequência, é um prolongamento daquele, e por isso carrega consigo esses mesmos papéis. Por isso, uma vez constatada a celeridade com que se operaram as mudanças sociais no contexto brasileiro –sobretudo nas regiões

em que ocorreu um rápido e tardio processo de urbanização, como São Paulo–, depreende-se que o antigo agente de trabalho foi incapaz de assumir plenamente o papel de homem livre, porquanto a este estivesse associado o homem branco. Assim, como Ianni (1998:153) aponta, “a cor, como marca racial decisiva, ele a transportará consigo do interior da escravidão, como símbolo desta”. O negro, portanto, convertia-se em pária do processo de modernização.

Como constatamos, é patente que o complexo de comportamentos, valores e atitudes da esfera das relações raciais próprios ao regime escravocrata foram tanto mantidos quanto transferidos para a ordem social competitiva, mesmo que suas premissas fossem incompatíveis com os fundamentos da ordem social vigente. Este processo significou, portanto, que as transformações ocorridas no meio social não foram capazes de reestruturar a posição do negro, muito menos os padrões de relação racial. Segundo Florestan Fernandes (2007:146), dado que a transformação do *status* do cativo para cidadão não encontrou suportes econômicos, sociais e políticos para se concretizar, a conversão de “escravo” em “cidadão” não passou de uma “operação semântica” que, por sua vez “consolidou, nas regiões de crescimento econômico intenso, a última espoliação sofrida pelo escravo, pelo ingênuo e pelo liberto”. Era certo, portanto, que o negro continuaria em situação semelhante, senão pior, do que aquela na qual se encontrava antes da abolição.

No mesmo sentido, Ianni (1998:208) constatou que, no processo de modernização do Brasil, as modificações da estrutura econômica se operaram mais rapidamente do que as modificações da estrutura social. Justamente por isso, foram transportadas à ordem social competitiva “os ideais de mobilidade, as avaliações de posições e *status*, as técnicas de socialização etc.”, do mesmo modo que “transferiu-se e preservou também a identificação do negro como membro da camada inferior com o que foi escravo ou é seu descendente”. Os negros e mulatos, ademais, também levaram consigo “os componentes fundamentais do subsistema cultural em que se achavam imersos quando cativos”.

Para compreender as motivações da persistência destes, é preciso considerar que, uma vez lado a lado, o ex-escravo e o cidadão branco –não mais distanciados juridicamente como polos assimétricos, mas igualados na condição de homem livre na pátria livre–, dispõem, como único padrão de avaliação recíproca, daquele elaborado no antigo regime. Entretanto, o branco foi o maior responsável pela reorganização dos dispositivos de distanciamento provindos do regime escravista para a sociedade de classes, sobretudo porque ansiava assegurar o distanciamento de seu universo daquele do ex-cativo. Assim, a distinção racial, não mais fundamentada em bases jurídicas, perpetrou-se por meio da continuidade das desigualdades econômicas, de poder e prestígio, como também por meio das distinções de oriundas de um complexo de ideologias racistas.

Assim, os dispositivos de discriminação e de preconceito de cor operaram de maneira conjunta com a desorganização do negro no âmbito econômico. Do mesmo modo que se processou a monopolização da renda, do poder e do prestígio nas mãos do branco, operavam-se mecanismos de distanciamento e de rejeição ao negro e ao mulato na ordem social competitiva. A tão propalada democracia racial, no âmbito econômico, esteve entregue a processos sociais espontâneos, como se a própria expansão do regime de classes e o crescimento urbano fosse capaz de reparar as desigualdades estruturais. A equiparação do negro ao branco, desse modo, só se tornava possível com um nivelamento por baixo, isto é, quando aquele desfrutasse de condições socioeconômicas semelhantes à do “populacho” branco. Ou, como Munanga (1983) aponta, por meio da

luta individual de negros pela subsistência e pela ascensão, que resultou na elevação social de um contingente exíguo da população negra comprometida com a ordem social vigente e conformada a ela.

O preconceito racial, portanto, adquire significação específica no seio da ordem social competitiva. Dado que a população negra manteve as mesmas condições heteronômicas do passado servil, o preconceito servia como um dispositivo de justificação para uma “situação de casta disfarçada” da qual se tornou vítima. É indiscutível que o padrão assimétrico de relação racial se mantivera, em sua maioria, intacto, posto que o contingente negro mantinha-se distanciado da população assalariada em desenvolvimento. O que ocorre, como evidenciamos, é uma transfiguração do padrão assimétrico de relação racial ao se adentrar a ordem social competitiva. Isso porque esta nega a estratificação no plano axiológico, partindo da premissa da igualdade entre os homens. No entanto, no seu âmbito econômico a estratificação adquire pleno significado, uma vez que também dispõe hierarquicamente os indivíduos. Segundo observação pertinente de Ianni (1998:208):

*Aqueles que detêm o domínio da sociedade, pois, será mais fácil distribuir os homens segundo a cor, conforme a religião, pela origem nacional ou outro atributo accidental qualquer, antes que dividi-los segundo a posição na estrutura social. Por isso haverá negros, mulatos, italianos, poloneses, judeus, alemães, identificados socialmente como distintos uns dos outros, mesmo quando convivem no mesmo grupo social, em condições de igualdade. (p. 208).*

O que ocorreu no caso brasileiro, portanto, foi a continuação do padrão assimétrico de relação racial, que adveio da disposição assimétrica de negros e brancos na sociedade escravocrata, e que estabeleceu as bases para uma redefinição do mesmo no novo sistema econômico-social, agora estratificado em classes sociais. É justamente neste ponto nevrálgico que constatamos a persistência do passado.

Sob essa perspectiva, se descortinam as funções ideológicas da ideia de democracia racial: como Fernandes (2007) constatou, tratava-se de um artifício tanto para não proceder a um enfrentamento dos problemas oriundos do processo abolicionista brasileiro, como também de uma acomodação às desigualdades que se impunham na ordem social competitiva. O pensamento predominante brasileiro era –e, em certa medida, continua sendo– guiado por mistificações tais como “o ‘negro teve a oportunidade de ser livre; se não conseguiu igualar-se ao ‘branco’, o problema era dele não do branco” (Fernandes, 2007:45-46). Isso implicava, destarte, em justificar e mascarar a falta de solidariedade daqueles que desfrutaram de posições privilegiadas na ordem social competitiva.

Portanto, é na inserção do negro na sociedade de classes e no modo como a modernização das relações raciais se operou, como um “fenômeno heterogêneo, descontínuo e unilateral” (Fernandes, 1978:10), que podemos compreender o padrão de democracia racial brasileiro em toda sua complexidade. Segundo o autor (2007:65), a investigação do padrão de acomodação racial brasileiro revela que “existe um abismo entre as ideologias e utopias raciais dominantes no Brasil, construídas no passado por elites brancas e escravistas, e a realidade racial.” Isso porque, como constatamos, o convívio entre negros e brancos na sociedade brasileira não é fruto de um processo de democratização econômica, de prestígio e de poder, mas, acima de tudo, de uma “tolerância convencionalizada” (Fernandes, 2007:192). A democracia racial, portanto, assegura a manutenção do bom-tom entre as relações raciais, mesmo quando, maliciosamente, serve unicamente ao propósito de apaziguar as tensões raciais.

O propósito dessa exposição, portanto, consistiu em um breve levantamento da questão racial no Brasil para compreender de que maneira a própria ideologia da democracia racial surgiu como um dispositivo que garantia a perpetuação do *status-quo* racial. Como Fernandes observou (2007:118), apesar de estar entrelaçado por influências etnocêntricas, o fator determinante era a própria correspondência entre estratificação racial e ordem capitalista. Em outros termos, é a persistência de um padrão de relações raciais de uma sociedade de castas no interior de uma sociedade de classes.

Como observamos, a ordem capitalista no Brasil absorveu, num processo contínuo e vagaroso, a estrutura social vigente no mundo escravocrata. Isto implicou uma situação na qual o regime de classes preserva as camadas dominantes e as camadas desfavorecidas em posições semelhantes, apenas operando, como apontamos, “operações semânticas”, incapazes de modificarem o quadro geral. A metamorfose do “escravo” em “negro” pouco engendrou alterações estruturais na vida do antigo mancípio. A transfiguração deste apenas significou, de fato, que a situação miserável na qual se encontrava seria, doravante, reputada como produto de sua “falta de aptidão para exercer melhores profissões”, “preguiça”, “falta de caráter”, e não como resultado de um longo processo histórico no qual o negro seria duplamente espoliado: uma vez pela escravidão e outra pela inserção na ordem social competitiva.

Na presente discussão, pretendemos, portanto, evidenciar a incongruência do ideário da democracia racial brasileira ao apontar as contradições inerentes ao nosso modelo de acomodação racial, que constituem, nas palavras de Fernandes, o “dilema racial brasileiro” depreendendo-se da continuidade de estruturas sociais de cunho escravista e colonial, mesmo depois da emancipação nacional. Isso porque, segundo o autor (2007: 291), “a desagregação do sistema colonial apenas se consoma ao nível jurídico político”, ao passo que “a estrutura colonial da economia e da sociedade não se alterou senão superficialmente”, sobretudo para que se garantisse a preservação do poder nas mãos das camadas senhoriais, como também para assegurar a dominação econômica e cultural, de feições coloniais, pela hegemonia estadunidense e europeia. Assim, o liberalismo no Brasil não significou nada além de um dispositivo por meio do qual as classes dirigentes garantiram a dominação das demais classes sociais, que, por sua vez, não dispunham de poder suficiente para alterar estruturalmente o cenário.

A democracia racial na condição de ideologia oficial pouco contribui para a compreensão da realidade concreta brasileira. O referido padrão apenas exerce a função de mascarar formas cruéis de injustiça social em que o privilégio é visto, acima de tudo, como algo natural e democrático. Assim, o que define a democracia racial brasileira seria, na verdade, um “modelo sincrético, não democrático, construído pela pressão política e psicológica exercida pela classe dirigente” e de cunho assimilacionista (Munanga, 2010:446). Além disso, a ideologia oficial, como Fernandes observou, quando obstinadamente reiterada, associada por produzir distorções na percepção da realidade: Ou seja, “o que é mal conhecido e entendido acaba por ajustar-se à representação; em consequência, mesmo as vítimas das representações tendem a admitir que elas contêm ‘algum grau de verdade’, compartilhando da confusão e desorientando-se” (Fernandes, 2007:94).

#### **4. O mito da democracia racial na educação: apologia ao mérito**

É possível constatar ressonâncias do referido mito da democracia racial em muitos âmbitos na contemporaneidade. Com efeito, nossas instituições e nossos modos de pensar desvelam-se como genuínos reprodutores dos discursos e ideologias que impregnaram historicamente nossa realidade – como o mito apresentado. A escola e a educação, de modo mais abrangente, não poderiam se manter imunes às influências que receberam e, precisamente por isso, padecem das mistificações perniciosas de uma miríade de ideologias e mitos que, como no caso da democracia racial, obscurecem todo exame sério dos problemas que enfrentamos.

Logo, torna-se imprescindível, como educadores e indivíduos comprometidos com a justiça social, identificar tais ideologias, desconstruir tais mitos, enfrentá-los. Nos termos de Freire (1982), é preciso desmistificar aquilo que nossa realidade nos apresenta. Afinal, se, por um lado, muitas ações educativas parecem impregnadas daquilo que Freire denominou ideologizações, por outro lado, consideramos, também com o educador supracitado, que a educação enseja a oportunidade de que precisamos para a transformação social.

Nesse sentido, muito do que Freire concebeu sobre a militância política do educador crítico permanece relevante. De fato, sua crítica à distância entre o discurso e a prática dos educadores caracteriza-se como ponto de partida fundamental para repensar toda prática que não corresponda ao discurso revolucionário que sustentamos. É necessário compreender que o que ocorre para Freire é, também, a impregnação mistificadora de ideologias lesivas àquela prática que se pretende revolucionária, tornando-a contraditória ao discurso: por esse motivo, Freire (1982:141) declara que nossos “erros metodológicos são, no fundo, de procedência ideológica”.

Há de se convir, é claro, que todo educador crítico encontra-se sujeito a tais erros, mas também, que de sua indiscutível responsabilidade diante dos educandos depreende-se uma necessidade impreterível de desobscurecer a realidade, desmistificá-la. Sob essa perspectiva, a educação, como os seminários de formação política de Paulo Freire (1982:141), “se converte numa oportunidade na qual, ao serem os seus participantes desafiados a superar sua visão ingênua da realidade por outra, crítica e totalizante, vão igualmente clarificando-se ideologicamente”. Assim, do reconhecimento de que os obstáculos à ação político-revolucionária “se encontram na contradição entre a opção revolucionária e o emprego de procedimentos que correspondam à prática da dominação”, depreende-se o comprometimento freireano com a desmitificação da realidade.

Não há dúvidas de que identificar tais ideologias e contribuir para sua desmistificação consiste em um árduo empreendimento de discussão e reflexão que demanda inclusive o exame detido de nossos modos de pensar e sentir. Todavia, quando todo educador ou indivíduo autenticamente comprometido com a justiça social dedica-se à tarefa enunciada por Freire, as possibilidades de transformação avolumam-se. Não se trata, portanto, de embates solitários, mas solidários. Dispomo-nos, com grandes mulheres e grandes homens, nas linhas de frente contra o progresso da racionalidade capitalista que, aplicada

às variadas instâncias da vida pública e privada, conduz a humanidade aos mais terríveis desvarios.

Como Bertrand Russell (1957), matemático e filósofo do século XX, tornamo-nos socialistas precisamente porque não desejamos o colapso da civilização que o capitalismo torna mais e mais iminente. Portanto, a despeito de todos os obstáculos que se impõem diante dos educadores e indivíduos críticos, devemos compreender a verdadeira natureza das problemáticas que enfrentamos e desconstruir, assim, suas pretensas naturalidades. Trata-se, com efeito, de tarefa difícil. Afinal, como declarou Russell (1956) certa feita, “o conservadorismo não exige nenhum de tais altos processos mentais. O partidário da mudança radical, ao contrário, deve ter certo grau de imaginação a fim de poder conceber algo diferente do que existe” (p.11).

Doravante, após a assunção de tais princípios, torna-se possível refletir sobre as repercussões do cenário descrito anteriormente na educação. Em outros termos, nosso propósito consiste em refletir sobre como a educação, impregnada pelo referido mito da democracia racial, incorpora-o às ideologias que orientam o cotidiano escolar e corporifica-o nas práticas e nos discursos educacionais. Afinal, se, por um lado, a democracia racial brasileira, como em muitos outros países, é um mito; por outro, não é menos verdade que a educação, de maneira abrangente, pouco ou nada tem feito para transformar tal realidade. Depreende-se desta observação que a educação dispõe de algum instrumento que corrobore a existência do mito ou, pelo menos, obscureça-o.

Trata-se, com efeito, da ideologia do mérito que figura com naturalidade nos discursos e práticas de alunos e professores de diferentes países e escolas. Porém, para que seja possível compreender de que modo articulam-se a ideologia do mérito e o mito da democracia racial, é necessário dedicarmo-nos mais detidamente ao exame de como a educação e, de certa maneira, a própria sociedade, incorporou o conceito de mérito. Consideramos, nesse sentido, relevante compreender as concepções de Freire e Russell acerca da referida incorporação. Afinal, ambos representam educadores críticos que se comprometeram com a transformação social.

Existem, evidentemente, nos discursos apresentados por ambos, consonâncias bastante elucidativas. Destacamos, dentre tais consonâncias, a associação que Russell (1951) constrói entre o surgimento do conceito de mérito e o industrialismo, enquanto Freire (1982) o associa diretamente às origens do capitalismo. Para Russell, não restava dúvida alguma de que o advento do industrialismo alterou a forma da luta pela existência, mas preservou incólume a substância da existência e a da moralidade da época. Dessa maneira, a despeito da constatação de que o bem-estar derivou menos das terras e tornou-se menos hereditário, as lutas se intensificaram: “o industrialismo, enquanto aumentou enormemente o bem-estar dos ricos, tornou mais pobres aqueles que já o eram” (p.156).

Logo, devido à aparente instabilidade das lutas econômicas e de classe, havia necessidade de “justificar” a legitimidade do novo sistema de produção, sobretudo em países fundamentalmente aristocratas e, por esse motivo, inventou-se “uma admiração supersticiosa”, que erigiu a competição “como um tipo de Deus”. Desde então, àqueles que atingiam o sucesso nas competições ulteriores, associou-se outra versão do conceito de mérito aparentemente distinto daquele que caracterizava os membros da aristocracia.

A origem do conceito de mérito para Freire apresenta indiscutível consonância com o que defendia Russell. O educador brasileiro, no entanto, associa a origem do conceito de

mérito, que denominava “aptidão”, à transição das esferas do poder econômico da aristocracia à burguesia. Trata-se, afinal, do momento em que “a noção de nascimento nobre, como sinal de realização, foi substituída pela ideologia de que cada um constrói o próprio destino, sem considerar o nascimento” (Freire e Shor, 1986:214). Momento em que a burguesia procurava maneiras de explicar, ainda que muito falaciosamente, aos trabalhadores por que não progrediam sob o capitalismo. Como declara Freire, “inventou-se a ideia de aptidão”. Ambas as teorias complementam-se, portanto, no que se refere à associação que deslindam entre a racionalidade capitalista e a apologia ao mérito.

Freire, na sequência do excerto supracitado, denuncia a ciência, nomeadamente as ciências da cognição, neste caso, pela invenção dos testes que demonstrariam a “aptidão” e observa que “as crianças da classe trabalhadora parecem não demonstrar aptidão”. A aptidão e o mérito, vistos dessa maneira, evidenciam-se como instrumentos empregados pela racionalidade capitalista para justificar seus despautérios. Por isso, Freire e Shor (1986) não hesitam em declarar que, para ambos, tanto a aptidão e o mérito como os testes, avaliações e demais instrumentos em que se sustentam devem ser colocados em suspeição.

Russell também conferiu, à abordagem de nossa problemática, contornos muito importantes ao afirmar que não é possível tecer quaisquer considerações sistemáticas sobre o conceito de mérito. Afinal, a própria apologia ao mérito designara, em séculos anteriores, facetas distintas daquelas em que se sustenta atualmente. Reconhecemos, portanto, a transitoriedade histórica do termo. Ainda assim, Russell (1951) denuncia que o modo como compreendemos a justiça social apresenta-se impregnado da apologia ao mérito: àqueles que mais se dedicam a perseguir seus objetivos, é justo dar mais. É claro que, no substrato de afirmações como essa, desvelam-se as corrupções e distorções que a ideologia do mérito provoca, de maneira que Russell (1951:85) afirma resolutivo que “a desigualdade deve ser justificada por seus efeitos úteis, e não apenas por algum conceito abstrato de mérito”. Evidentemente, como o filósofo certamente concordaria, não existem tais “efeitos úteis” fora da lógica de mercado que o capitalismo impõe e, precisamente por isso, o mérito se configura como uma enorme mistificação capitalista.

Toda apologia ao mérito opera, então, no sentido de obscurecer a realidade da competição estimulada pelo capitalismo: à medida que a competição é eleita como um processo justo, uma divindade, para Russell, seus contendores defrontam-se à mistificação latente. Àqueles sujeitos sobrepujados, vencidos, resta somente a resignação com os resultados atingidos: como se concorressem a partir das mesmas condições, o resultado de uma competição revela aquele indivíduo cujo desempenho destacou-se por seu próprio mérito, apenas.

Com efeito, nenhuma competição entre brancos e negros pode, no Brasil e em muitos outros países, fundamentar-se apenas no mérito dos sujeitos contendores. Aliás, ao referirmo-nos ao obscurecimento da realidade engendrado pelas mistificações do capitalismo, a questão é precisamente reconhecer que existem anos de história, como aqueles cuja descrição introduz este artigo, obscurecidos pela ideologia do mérito. É necessário reconhecer e enfrentar, portanto, a diferença história projetada no destino dos escravos e de seus descendentes pelo homem branco. Afinal, se hoje não existem condições equânimes para a competição entre negros e brancos, é precisamente porque, no passado, tais condições não foram semeadas e não podemos ignorar isso em face do mito da democracia racial ou da apologia ao mérito. Não nos referimos, portanto, a um

obscurecimento abstruso ou abstrato, mas a um obscurecimento considerável daquilo que, no passado, produziu determinadas condições em que vivemos no presente.

Todo educador crítico conhece, em contrapartida, que a apologia ao mérito enseja, portanto, a perpetração das desigualdades que acometem a humanidade, precisamente porque seu emprego se fundamenta em condições inexistentes de equidade. Assim, as mistificações engendradas pela ideologia do mérito permitem o continuísmo e a reprodução das condições amplamente desiguais com que vivemos. É possível sintetizar uma crítica da seguinte maneira: ao tratar da apologia ao mérito a partir de condições desiguais, é impossível descrever em termos apenas de dedicação e esforço próprios os resultados atingidos. Na verdade, não há como distinguir o que é mérito do que é herança.

Posto isso, torna-se evidente a maneira como o mérito é empregado na educação a fim de reproduzir as condições desiguais da própria sociedade. Mais especificamente, ao tratar do mito da democracia racial, a apologia ao mérito nas escolas consiste, portanto, na corporificação educacional de uma mistificação capitalista. Tal mistificação, incorporada às ideologias que orientam a ação educativa, distorce e corrompe as práticas e os discursos promovidos pela educação, corroborando o sistema de exclusão e marginalização que apresentamos anteriormente.

Para os negros e para os mulatos, desfavorecidos em potencial deste sistema mistificado, a apologia ao mérito serve apenas ao propósito de justificar e, com isso, legitimar perversamente, as condições em que vivem. As avaliações e os demais testes de aptidão, nesse sentido, demonstram apenas aquilo que foram forjados para demonstrar: a incompetência destes indivíduos no que se refere às tentativas de ascensão social que o sistema “oferece”. Precisamente, por isso, Freire (1982:58) recomenda que todos aqueles, que concebem tais grupos como “naturalmente inferiores e incapazes” ou atribuem à inferioridade patente todas as deficiências materiais que caracterizam a vida em uma favela ou periferia, convivam com tais indivíduos. Apenas assim, para o educador brasileiro, tornar-se-ia possível compreender que “se há algo intrinsecamente mau, que deve ser radicalmente transformado e não simplesmente reformado, é o sistema capitalista, incapaz, ele sim, de resolver o problema com seus intentos modernizantes”.

Não há como desvincular, portanto, este trabalho das reconhecidas tentativas do movimento negro de combater as mistificações que apenas contribuem para a manutenção de seu encarceramento para além dos limites daquilo que se considera cultura. É importante observar, inclusive, que, sob a perspectiva do que propõem Petronilha Silva e Luiz Gonçalves (2000:156), ambos intelectuais brasileiros de reconhecida expressividade para o movimento negro, este trabalho se desvela como aquilo que descreveram como a necessária participação “de corpo e alma nesses eventos tão palpitantes de nossos tempos”. Em consonância aos autores supracitados, acreditamos que não nos cabe a omissão ou a neutralidade, mas a assunção declarada de nossa posição frente às pautas reacionárias e conservadoras que todos enfrentamos.

Logo, se retomarmos nosso propósito ao iniciar este tópico, constataremos que a apologia ao mérito é uma ferramenta capitalista, talvez, a mais eficaz, que, dentro das escolas, promove o obscurecimento da realidade latente. Por conseguinte, se existem tão poucas iniciativas no sentido de reconhecer, assumir e enfrentar o mito da democracia racial, sobretudo nas escolas, deve-se compreender que o mérito e a aptidão, nesse caso, mascaram e obstruem tais oportunidades. Precisamente por isso, tornamo-nos incapazes



de reconhecer, nos dados expressivos –não apenas da realidade brasileira como, mas de certa maneira em todo o mundo–, a perpetuação da dominação racial do branco sobre o negro.

É fundamental reconhecer, portanto, que essa dominação, que tem início nas escolas a partir dos testes de aptidão e avaliações, estende-se para muitas situações em que concorrem negros e brancos: a procura por empregos, a busca de melhores condições sociais, a aprovação em concursos... O que há de comum em todas essas situações é a conjugação do mito da democracia racial, o estímulo à concorrência e a apologia ao mérito e, por isso, é imprescindível denunciar a desfaçatez com que tais ideologias se articulam na produção de sujeitos marginalizados. Todo educador crítico comprometido com a justiça social deve, por isso, posicionar-se contra todo este sistema de ideologias que governam nossa realidade a partir de mistificações.

Há de se notar, ademais, que não é fácil manter estável uma situação de desigualdade declarada em que poucos concentram muito poder (propriedade, capital e acesso aos meios de produção), enquanto muitos possuem pouco ou nada disso. À educação, Russell (1957:125) atribui uma enorme parcela de responsabilidade pela manutenção de tal estabilidade, reconhecendo que existem “inúmeras maneiras por que a educação, em vez de propiciar conhecimento verdadeiro, é engendradora para tornar o povo dócil à vontade dos seus amos”. Mais gravemente, complementa sua denúncia com a constatação de que “sem um complicado sistema de fraude nas escolas primárias seria impossível conservar a camuflagem de democracia”: trata-se de um modo de pensar bastante semelhante àquele que orientou a concepção de ideologização, descrita em Freire e Shor (1986). Sob essa perspectiva, é fundamental, para Russell (1956:169), desvelar que “tem sido o costume da educação favorecer o próprio Estado, a própria religião, o sexo masculino e os ricos”, aos quais acrescentaríamos, sem dúvidas, “os brancos”.

## **5. Considerações finais**

Não vislumbramos modo melhor de iniciar as considerações finais deste artigo do que recorrer à seguinte citação russelliana: “o ditado que a natureza humana não pode ser mudada é uma daquelas banalidades cansativas que ocultam dos ignorantes a profundidade de sua própria ignorância” (Russell, 1951:161). Isso porque, dado que a humanidade encontra-se, como um todo, imersa nas mistificações e ideologias oriundas do capitalismo, torna-se tentador admitir que não exista caminho para a autêntica transformação.

Há de se convir, entretanto, que, como Russell procurou demonstrar em muitas obras, a humanidade recuperou-se historicamente de terríveis despautérios e não há indícios de que a mudança seja, de fato, impossível nos dias que vivemos, senão nos argumentos daqueles que, por inércia, desejam seguir o caminho perverso em que caminhamos desolados. Os caminhos existem: devemos encontrá-los.

Toda transformação que pretenda ensinar o novo, efetivamente, revela-se árdua, mas não devemos hesitar ou desistir devido à aspereza do caminho em que perseguimos nossas convicções. Como educadores e indivíduos comprometidos com a justiça social, é preciso desnaturalizar as pretensas verdades do capitalismo. É preciso, como procurou Freire, evidenciar o desamor deste sistema pela humanidade e isto, como também nos ensinou o educador, só pode ser feito aos poucos, com muita paciência.

Nosso propósito, neste texto, consistiu na evidenciação do desamor do capitalismo em suas ideologias e mistificações. Afinal, a todo educador crítico delega-se a indelével tarefa de desmistificar a realidade. Em nosso caso, tal objetivo se concretizou nas tentativas de demonstrar de que maneira a educação se subordina ao mito da democracia racial e também corrobora sua existência ao justificar, por meio da apologia ao mérito, seus enunciados. A educação e as escolas tornam-se, nestes termos, responsáveis pela existência das condições desiguais que não ajudam a criticar quando sustentam discursos e práticas impregnados da ideologia do mérito.

Qualquer educador comprometido com a justiça social deve prevenir-se de tais mistificações: seu discurso e suas práticas devem permanecer incólumes às inúmeras distorções engendradas pelas ideologias promovidas pela racionalidade capitalista. Afinal, apenas um educador, nestas condições, pode, de fato, desobscurecer a realidade de seus educandos.

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## Elementos para el análisis de la discapacidad desde la perspectiva de la vulnerabilidad social

### Fundamentals for the analysis of disability from the social vulnerability perspective

### Elementos para a análise de deficiência a partir da perspectiva de vulnerabilidade social

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En este artículo se expone el proceso de construcción de una propuesta para analizar la discapacidad desde la perspectiva de la vulnerabilidad social y se deriva de un proyecto cuyo propósito es estudiar los saberes extraescolares que las personas con discapacidad adquieren a través de los diferentes agentes y procesos de socialización, en especial, las instituciones educativas. Se parte de tres pilares fundamentales: la Clasificación Internacional del Funcionamiento, la Discapacidad y la Salud (CIF) de la OMS, las dimensiones que intervienen en la interacción humana y la vida social, y la relación entre vulnerabilidad, pobreza e inclusión-exclusión. El propósito es situar nuestra propuesta en el marco de otros modelos que, al igual que en nuestro caso, entienden a la discapacidad como un problema socialmente construido así como valorar las posibilidades que nos ofrecen para acercarnos a las diferentes experiencias de la discapacidad.

**Descriptor:** Vulnerabilidad social, Discapacidad, Inclusión, Contextos de vulnerabilidad.

In this paper, we describe the development of a proposal to analyze disability from the social vulnerability perspective. It is part of a bigger project whose objective is to study everyday and extracurricular knowledge that disabled people learn through different agents and processes of socialization, especially educational institutions. We take three models as a base: the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), the different dimensions involved in human interaction and in social life, and the relationship between vulnerability, poverty and inclusion-exclusion. The purpose of this article is to place our proposal in the context of other models that understand disability as a socially developed problem and to assess the possibilities they offer us to analyze the different experiences of disability.

**Keywords:** Social vulnerability, Disability, Inclusion, Contexts of vulnerability.

Este artigo descreve o processo de construção de uma proposta para analisar a deficiência a partir da perspectiva de vulnerabilidade social. O texto deriva de um projeto cujo objetivo é estudar o conhecimento curricular das pessoas com deficiência adquirida através de diferentes agentes e processos socialização,

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especialmente instituições educacionais. Ele é baseado em três pilares: a Classificação Internacional de Funcionalidade, Incapacidade e Saúde (CIF) da OMS, as dimensões envolvidas na interação humana e da vida social, e da relação entre vulnerabilidade, pobreza e inclusão-exclusão. O objetivo é colocar a nossa proposta no contexto de outros modelos, como no nosso caso, compreender a deficiência como um problema socialmente construído e avaliar as possibilidades oferecidas para abordar as diferentes experiências de deficiência.

**Palavras-chave:** Vulnerabilidade social, Deficiência, Inclusão, Contextos de vulnerabilidade.

## Introducción

La discapacidad es una condición que ha acompañado el devenir de los individuos y las sociedades, sin embargo, su análisis como problemática social es relativamente reciente. Esto, principalmente, por las ideas y representaciones que desde la antigüedad se han construido en torno a ella y que se concretan en una multiplicidad de prácticas y expresiones que van desde el rechazo, la negación, la marginación y la exclusión, hasta la atipicidad, la minusvalía y la conmisericordia, entre otras (Vásquez, 2008).

Durante muchos siglos y hasta la primera mitad del siglo XX, la discapacidad fue asociada con castigos divinos y malos hábitos personales. En las sociedades antiguas, incluyendo las primeras comunidades nómadas, predominaron los enfoques de exterminio y de sacralización-mágica (Brognia, 2009). Después, con la expansión del cristianismo, esta visión cambia significativamente y la discapacidad se convierte en un medio para demostrar la caridad y la piedad religiosa, sin abandonar la idea del castigo divino por actos indignos e impuros atribuidos directamente a quienes la sufrían o a sus predecesores.

En los siguientes siglos, la mirada y el tratamiento de la discapacidad se van transformando paulatinamente, siempre con avances y retrocesos. Hasta finales del siglo XIX, con el fortalecimiento de los estados nacionales y la expansión de los servicios públicos, se institucionalizan las clínicas y centros de ayuda a los impedidos o inválidos, aunque, como ocurrió en otros momentos, prevaleció la tendencia a su reclusión y a la negación de sus posibilidades de desarrollo e integración social.

Las dos Guerras Mundiales ocurridas en la primera mitad del siglo XX dieron otra vuelta de tuerca este problema. Después de la Primera, se introdujo el concepto de rehabilitación en los Estados Unidos y, a partir de la Segunda, éste se extendió a los diferentes ámbitos de la medicina, incluyendo el psicológico. Las consecuencias que ambos conflictos bélicos acarrearón en la vida de las personas, civiles o soldados, afectados físicamente también impulsaron la promulgación de leyes para facilitar la reincorporación en la vida personal, familiar, laboral y social (Juárez, Holguín y Salamanca, 2006).

Actualmente, la discapacidad se entiende como un término genérico en el que interactúan tanto las capacidades y las limitaciones de las personas, como los recursos, apoyos, facilitadores, obstáculos y dificultades que se encuentran en el entorno (OMS, 2001).

En este artículo presentamos una propuesta para el análisis de la discapacidad, desde la perspectiva de la vulnerabilidad social, y que forma parte de una investigación más

amplia cuyo interés es analizar los saberes extraescolares que adquieren las personas con discapacidad a través de distintos agentes socializantes, en especial, las instituciones educativas. Exponemos sólo las dimensiones generales de nuestra propuesta, dado que ésta se encuentra todavía en construcción, e intentamos ponerla en relación con otras perspectivas que se han desarrollado para comprender las diferentes aristas del fenómeno de la discapacidad, también desde el ámbito de lo social.

## 1. Algunos modelos para el análisis de la discapacidad

Actualmente, se han desarrollado diversos enfoques para acercarse a la problemática de la discapacidad: el médico-rehabilitador, el normalizador-asistencialista, el funcionalista, el constructivista, el ambiental o contextualista, el jurídico, el social, el de los derechos humanos y el de calidad de vida, entre otros. Sin embargo, como señala Barnes (1998), el análisis de este fenómeno y la construcción misma del concepto de discapacidad ha sido un proceso largo y complejo, a pesar de que se han encontrado indicios, en los restos de algunos individuos de la prehistoria, de deficiencias que en nuestros días podrían ser consideradas como discapacidades.

En la antigüedad, culturas como la mesopotámica, la egipcia y la china ya disponían de prácticas médicas para tratar las enfermedades y limitaciones físicas, algunas de ellas datan incluso del 3000 antes de Cristo. Aunque la mayoría de las veces estas disposiciones se basaban en ideas mágico-religiosas, Juárez, Holguín y Salamanca (2006) sostienen que en estas sociedades la discapacidad no siempre significó la exclusión o eliminación de las personas afectadas, por el contrario, en los relieves, códices y textos antiguos es posible encontrar ciertas evidencias de los cuidados y del trato social que se recomendaba dar a estos individuos.

La noción de discapacidad asociada a hábitos personales poco cuidadosos, castigos divinos y malos augurios pareció predominar más en Occidente, aunque esto no quiere decir que en los pueblos y culturas de otras regiones geográficas, las personas con discapacidad hubieran estado exentas de toda discriminación y rechazo. Sin embargo, es en Occidente donde se han encontrado más registros de prácticas como el exterminio, la reclusión y la segregación. Algunos autores como Barnes (1998), Braddock y Parish (2001), Palacios (2008) y Portuondo (2004) han ubicado los orígenes de esta concepción de la discapacidad, que tiende hacia la eliminación o la marginación de las personas, tanto en la tradición greco-romana como en la judeocristiana. Ésta se extendería hasta la Edad Media, período en el que como resultado de los avances, aunque modestos, en los conocimientos y técnicas médicas así como del afianzamiento de los valores del cristianismo, comienza a generarse una nueva perspectiva: la médico-rehabilitadora.

En Europa, el estigma y la asociación de la discapacidad con el pecado o la intervención de entidades demoníacas, especialmente aquellas derivadas de afecciones psicosociales o deficiencias cognitivas, prevaleció durante muchos siglos y con diferentes grados de aceptación y rechazo. Sin embargo, durante la Baja Edad Media, en Inglaterra, España, Alemania e Italia empiezan a aparecer las primeras instituciones –hospitales, hospicios, refugios, manicomios y asilos– para el cuidado y ayuda de los enfermos de escasos recursos económicos y las personas con discapacidad.

*En suma, la Edad Media se caracterizó por las creencias contradictorias acerca de la discapacidad. Una concepción común era que algunas de discapacidades, en especial la sordera, la epilepsia y la discapacidad mental, tenían orígenes demoníacos. Este punto de*

*vista contribuyó a la persecución de las personas con discapacidad, consideradas como brujas o por el uso de la magia para intentar curar su condición discapacitante. Una segunda concepción de la discapacidad también bastante generalizada era que las personas con discapacidad formaban parte del orden natural, ubicadas al nivel de otros grupos como los pobres, y sujetas al azar de los estragos ocasionados por las plagas en Europa. (Braddock y Parish, 2001:20-21)*

El modelo médico-rehabilitador que se fortalece a partir del Medioevo coincide con la perspectiva normalizadora-asistencialista, que se desarrolla fundamentalmente a partir del siglo XIX gracias a la generalización en el uso de la estadística para el análisis de la salud y la enfermedad (Davis, 1995), en el sentido de que ambas intentaron abordar la discapacidad desde una perspectiva científica, partiendo de una línea basal que eran los individuos calificados como “normales” o “promedio”, por lo que todo lo que se apartaba de ella era considerado como “anormal” o “patológico”. Aunque diferían en varios aspectos fundamentales, ambos se planteaban como fin principal “normalizar” o “corregir” a la persona con discapacidad, lo que dio lugar a gran parte la implementación de las políticas asistencialistas así como a los intentos por atenuar, y cuando era posible desaparecer, las diferencias atribuidas a la discapacidad (Brognia, 2009; Palacios y Bariffi, 2007).

Estas dos perspectivas fueron dominantes en el estudio y tratamiento de la discapacidad hasta la década de los 70 del siglo XX. Dos elementos fueron esenciales en el cambio que se daría en este campo: por un parte, la creciente participación de las personas con discapacidad y sus familias en movimientos sociales que luchaban por el reconocimiento de sus derechos, principalmente en los Estados Unidos, junto con otros colectivos como el de los derechos civiles y los de género, y, por otra, los trabajos que en el ámbito académico empezaron a realizarse a partir de otras disciplinas fuera de las ciencias de la salud (Barton, 2009).

De este modo, se fue constituyendo el denominado modelo social de la discapacidad. Aquí, Shakespeare y Watson (2002) destacan la labor de los miembros de la Unión de Personas Físicamente Deficientes contra la Segregación (UPIAS por sus siglas en inglés), quienes pusieron en la mesa de discusión la idea de que era la sociedad la que discapacitaba a las personas con deficiencias, ubicándolas en una situación de desventaja, como resultado de la propia organización social. La discapacidad entonces comenzó a ser vista como algo impuesto por las barreras económicas, políticas y culturales; un proceso definido a partir de la opresión social que han vivido las personas y no a partir de sus deficiencias.

Este modelo contribuyó al empoderamiento y liberación de las personas con discapacidad así como al fortalecimiento de su autoestima. Incluso, cambió el lenguaje utilizado para referirse a ellas, pues, hasta ese momento, se habían utilizado términos como inválido, impedido, minusválido y retrasado, entre otros (Barton, 1998; Shakespeare, 2013).

Académicos británicos como Vic Finkelstein, Colin Barnes, Mike Oliver y Len Barton fueron los principales impulsores del modelo social que, con el tiempo, iría congregando a especialistas de otras disciplinas y daría pie a lo que hoy se conoce como el campo de estudios sobre discapacidad o *disability studies*.

Los estudios sobre discapacidad tienen un enfoque interdisciplinario en el que se articulan diversas propuestas desde la sociología, el derecho, la economía, la historia, la antropología, la filosofía, la ciencia política, la arquitectura y los estudios de género.

Quienes se adscriben en este campo abogan por una investigación con compromiso político que permita transformar “las relaciones sociales de producción de investigación, incluyendo el rol de los financiadores, las relaciones entre investigadores e investigados, y los lazos entre investigación e iniciativas políticas.” (Barnes y Mercer, 1997 citado por Verdugo, 2004).

Los estudios sobre discapacidad han analizado la incidencia de variables como el género, la edad, la pobreza y el origen étnico en la construcción de contextos de discapacidad. Asimismo, en su interior han surgido diversas corrientes críticas que han señalado la importancia de introducir las experiencias individuales de las personas con discapacidad, como la forma en que viven la insuficiencia y su relación con el cuerpo (Barnes, 1998).

Algunos otros modelos que se han derivado de campo son: el de los derechos humanos (Quinn y Degener, 2002), el de calidad de vida (Verdugo y Schalock, 2009), el ecológico que retoma la teoría de la ecología del desarrollo humano de Bronfenbrenner (Pisonero, 2007) y el de los estudios públicos (Cruz y Hernández, 2006), entre otros.

En este artículo presentamos los avances de una investigación en el que buscamos acercarnos a los saberes extraescolares, también denominados cotidianos, tácitos o no escolares, que las personas con discapacidad adquieren a través de los distintos agentes socializantes, en particular las instituciones educativas. En la literatura especializada, este tipo de conocimientos se han analizado fundamentalmente a partir de su relación con los denominados saberes escolares para observar la manera en que los estudiantes los reelaboran para darle sentido a lo que aprenden, construir conocimiento nuevo y mejorar el logro educativo (Ávila, 1993; Candela 2006), o bien, para elaborar prácticas de resistencia hacia la cultura escolar dominante (Berger, Galarraga y Valentinuz, 2009).

Partimos de la perspectiva social de la vulnerabilidad porque consideramos que la discapacidad es una problemática que no se remite solamente a sus orígenes o a los niveles en los que se expresa, sino que además conlleva la producción de contextos y situaciones de vulnerabilidad y estigma, los cuales se manifiestan de múltiples formas desde la elaboración de etiquetas que se atribuyen a las personas consideradas como diferentes (Goffman, 1970), hasta la distribución y el acceso de los espacios públicos.

Aquí, exponemos parte del marco analítico en el que se sustenta la investigación. Explicamos brevemente el modelo biopsicosocial elaborado por la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) así como el enfoque social de la vulnerabilidad para, después, plantear los elementos de la propuesta que estamos desarrollando.

## **2. Clasificaciones internacionales sobre la discapacidad**

En 1948, la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos, adoptada por la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) reconoce la igualdad en dignidad, derechos y libertades de todas las personas sin distinción de raza, color, sexo, idioma, religión, opinión política, origen nacional o social, situación económica, nacimiento o cualquier otra condición. Se establece también que todos los individuos tienen derecho a gozar de un nivel de vida adecuado que les permita lograr y mantener su salud y bienestar. Con esto se amplía el debate que ya se venía dando sobre la situación de las personas con discapacidad, el derecho que tienen a ser tratados como ciudadanos plenos y el papel que juega el Estado en la preservación y defensa de su ciudadanía (Cruz y Hernández, 2006).

Posteriormente, en los años 70, las Naciones Unidas proclama sendas Declaraciones sobre los Derechos del Retrasado Mental y sobre los Derechos de los Impedidos. Hasta este momento, prevalecía el modelo médico-rehabilitador en el que la discapacidad era vista como una desviación a partir de una línea basal de “normalidad” y en el que se establecía una relación directa entre la deficiencia, la discapacidad y la minusvalía (WHO, 1980).

En 1980, se publica la Clasificación Internacional de Deficiencias, Discapacidades y Minusvalías (CIDD), elaborada por la OMS y un amplio grupo de especialistas. Dado el enfoque que primaba en ese momento, las deficiencias eran entendidas como “toda pérdida o anomalía de una estructura o función psicológica, fisiológica o anatómica” (WHO, 1980:27). Por su parte, la discapacidad se definía como “toda restricción o pérdida (resultado de una deficiencia) de la capacidad de realizar una actividad en la forma o dentro del rango considerado como normal para un ser humano” (WHO, 1980: 28). Finalmente, por minusvalía se consideraba

*Cualquier situación desventajosa para un determinado individuo, como consecuencias de una deficiencia o una discapacidad, que limita o impide el desempeño de un rol que es normal (dependiendo de la edad, el sexo y los factores sociales y culturales) para un individuo. (WHO, 1980:29)*

Pero esta perspectiva fue objeto de mucha controversia. La misma OMS, en la revisión que hace en 1993, reconoce que este modelo había dado lugar a interpretaciones causales sobre la discapacidad. Este organismo también señalaba las dificultades para diferenciar entre los rasgos y las implicaciones de la discapacidad y la minusvalía, así como entre los de la deficiencia y la discapacidad y, finalmente, admitía la necesidad de trabajar más detenidamente los factores sociales y físico-ambientales que intervenían en la discapacidad.

Con base en estos señalamientos, en 2001, se elabora la Clasificación Internacional del Funcionamiento, la Discapacidad y la Salud (CIF) que continúa vigente y que, al igual que su antecesora, tiene como objetivo proporcionar un marco conceptual y una jerga estandarizada para atender las distintas condiciones de discapacidad, pero, con la diferencia de que en esta propuesta se definen dos grandes dominios: los de “la salud” y los “relacionados con la salud”. A partir de ellos, se determinan dos dimensiones: “Funciones y estructuras corporales” y “Actividades-Participación”, que vienen a sustituir los conceptos de deficiencia, discapacidad y minusvalía (OMS, 2001).

En esta nueva clasificación, la discapacidad se concibe como una problemática de carácter social, por lo que su tratamiento no sólo se centra en la persona afectada directamente, sino además en las distintas condiciones del entorno social (OMS, 2001). En ese sentido, se transitó de una perspectiva centrada en lo individual, las enfermedades y sus efectos, a otra orientada a lo social, los componentes de la salud y el funcionamiento.

Este componente social se divide en factores ambientales y factores personales. Los ambientales son externos a los sujetos y pueden intervenir positiva o negativamente en sus capacidades, estructuras y funciones corporales y en su desempeño en general. Los factores personales abarcan cuestiones como la edad, el género, la raza, los estilos de vida, los hábitos, las experiencias presentes y pasadas, la personalidad, la condición física, la educación y la autodeterminación, entre otras.



En cuanto a los componentes de la salud, la CIF diferencia entre los estados y los dominios de salud y los estados y dominios relacionados con la salud. Los estados de salud representan el grado de funcionamiento que tiene un individuo dentro del rango de un particular dominio de salud. Los dominios de la salud constituyen todos aquellos ámbitos que son intrínsecos y fundamentales a la persona, como las estructuras anatómicas, las funciones fisiológicas, las actividades o tareas de la vida cotidiana (OMS, 2001). Del mismo modo, los estados relacionados con la salud apuntan al funcionamiento mostrado dentro de un determinado dominio relacionado con la salud, mientras que, los dominios relacionados con la salud abarcan los campos de funcionamiento que participan en la condición de salud de un sujeto, pero que son extrínsecas a él e implican al conjunto de sistemas que permiten el bienestar global (OMS, 2001).

Por su parte, los funcionamientos son el resultado de la relación entre los individuos y sus factores contextuales, de tal manera que aunque dos personas muestren la misma condición de salud, sus niveles de funcionamiento serán distintos y viceversa. Desde la perspectiva de la CIF, la discapacidad es la otra cara de los funcionamientos, pues ambos conceptos permiten identificar tanto los problemas que enfrenta un sujeto, como los aspectos no problemáticos de su salud y de los estados relacionados con la salud.

Así, la discapacidad constituye

*Un término genérico que incluye déficits, limitaciones en la actividad y restricciones en la participación. Indica los aspectos negativos de la interacción entre un individuo (con una "condición de salud") y sus factores contextuales (factores ambientales y personales). (OMS, 2001:208)*

Todos estos elementos se encuentran estrechamente relacionados, por lo que un cambio en cualquiera de ellos genera modificaciones en los demás, sin embargo, como la misma OMS sostiene, dado que no se trata de un modelo causal, no se pueden predecir ni el sentido ni la magnitud de dichas transformaciones. De esta manera, aunque los individuos que sufren alguna deficiencia en sus funciones o en estructuras corporales tienen más probabilidades de enfrentar limitaciones en sus actividades y restricciones en su participación, esta relación no se da de una vez y para siempre.

El esquema de la CIF ofrece diversas posibilidades para entender la experiencia de la discapacidad, pero también intenta ir más allá para abarcar los diferentes estados de salud de cualquier persona con o sin discapacidad, de ahí que sus unidades de registro no sean los individuos, sino los dominios de la salud o los relacionados con la salud.

Ahora bien, a pesar de que tanto a nivel de los organismos internacionales como de la propia investigación académica hay una tendencia cada vez mayor por incorporar los elementos sociales en el análisis de la discapacidad, esto no quiere decir que los factores personales tengan que obviarse. Como ya hemos dicho, variables como la edad, el género, el grupo étnico, los hábitos y la condición física, entre otros, intervienen significativamente en el proceso de discapacidad. Además, aunque todos los seres humanos podemos tener una o varias limitaciones para desempeñar determinadas actividades o enfrentar ciertas dificultades con nuestro estado de salud, esto no nos convierte automáticamente en personas con discapacidad, sino que, en sentido estricto, esta denominación refiere a las personas que de manera efectiva han sido afectadas "por un estado negativo o problema de salud o deficiencia, que tiene las mismas características que el resto, con la especificación de sus limitaciones y restricciones (a causa de ese estado) y sobre las que operan sus factores personales" (Pantano, 2009:86), ya sea éste un problema congénito o el resultado de una enfermedad o un accidente.

Finalmente, cabría señalar la interacción que tiene la discapacidad con otros factores de tipo estructural, además de los que aquí hemos discutido. Especialistas de diversos ámbitos (Alves, 2009; Bellina, 2013; Callejas y Piña, 2005; Dell'Anno, 2012; Vázquez, 2008) y la propia Organización Mundial de la Salud (2011), han señalado la prevalencia de esta problemática en entornos caracterizados por la pobreza, el acceso limitado a los sistemas de salud, la desnutrición, los bajos niveles educativos, la falta de vivienda, el desempleo, la migración constante y la contaminación ambiental, entre otros. Estas variables, aunque no son determinantes, incrementan el riesgo y las condiciones para que se creen condiciones de vulnerabilidad. A esto se suman, el incremento de las enfermedades crónicas, como la diabetes y los padecimientos cardiovasculares, debido a los cambios en los hábitos y estilos de vida, por ejemplo: la mala alimentación, el estrés o la falta de ejercicio, y el envejecimiento de la población que en muchas ocasiones se ve aparejado con el desarrollo de enfermedades degenerativas.

### **3. Dimensiones de la propuesta para el análisis de la discapacidad**

Como parte de la investigación que estamos realizando, pretendemos construir un modelo de análisis desde el enfoque social de la vulnerabilidad. En particular, queremos observar las diferentes dimensiones y variables que intervienen en la construcción de contextos de vulnerabilidad y que, en su momento, facilitan u obstaculizan la inclusión social y el desarrollo pleno de las personas con discapacidad.

En las ciencias sociales, la noción de vulnerabilidad social ha estado estrechamente vinculada con cuestiones como la marginalidad, la exclusión y la pobreza (Pizarro, 2001).

Sin embargo, con el tiempo, este concepto se fue extendiendo para incluir otras problemáticas derivadas de las relaciones de inequidad existente entre individuos, grupos o sectores sociales y que se producen a partir de un proceso acumulativo en el que participan una serie de factores que se van implicando y complejizando con el tiempo.

En nuestro caso, recurrimos a la vulnerabilidad social porque buscamos entender a la discapacidad como un fenómeno desde la relación entre “lo externo” y “lo interno” (Chambers, 1989). Lo externo apunta hacia las tensiones, los riesgos y las amenazas que forman parte de la dinámica social, mientras que lo interno tiene que ver con la ausencia de recursos y medios para enfrentar y sobreponerse a sus efectos, lo que sitúa a los individuos y colectivos en situaciones que pueden ir desde la fragilidad individual, la inseguridad y el desamparo, hasta la marginación y la exclusión social.

Desde esta perspectiva, la vulnerabilidad es el resultado de un proceso de desequilibrio en una o varias de las dimensiones que intervienen en la interacción humana y la vida social y en la que están implicadas las siguientes dimensiones (Gómez, 2007; Palacio, 2000):

- Natural. Referida a las circunstancias y a los límites naturales que posibilitan la existencia. Aquí, están consideradas: la alimentación, la calidad de vida, la salud física, mental y psicológica, las condiciones laborales y las variaciones del entorno, como el ruido, la temperatura, la disponibilidad de agua y alimentos.

- Física. Alude a las características y localización de los asentamientos humanos así como a la disponibilidad de los servicios públicos mínimos para procurar el bienestar de las personas.
- Económica. Relacionada con la distribución de los recursos materiales y económicos que permiten la adquisición de bienes y la satisfacción de las necesidades básicas.
- Social. Comprende al conjunto de procesos y factores que hacen posible la integración y cohesión de los miembros de una colectividad. Cuando esta dimensión se encuentra debilitada, se pueden presentar problemas de discriminación, exclusión y marginación.
- Política. Representa la capacidad de los individuos y comunidades para intervenir en la toma de decisiones y solventar sus necesidades, a partir del grado de autonomía que poseen, el conocimiento de sus derechos y la identificación y uso de los recursos locales.
- Técnica. Se refiere al acceso a la educación institucionalizada o formal así como a la disponibilidad y manejo de los recursos tecnológicos, que contribuyen al mejoramiento personal y social y a la redistribución de los bienes materiales y simbólicos.
- Ideológica. Está constituida por las concepciones que los sujetos tienen sobre la realidad, el mundo, la vida social, el estado y las otras personas. Se concretan en criterios para la acción y determinan el modo en que se evalúan las condiciones individuales y sociales, así como en las estrategias que despliegan para enfrentar los problemas y mejorar los niveles de vida.
- Cultural. Estrechamente vinculada con la dimensión ideológica, apunta al conjunto de normas, valores, expectativas y costumbres que se encuentran en la base de la acción social e individual.
- Ecológica. Abarca las relaciones que los seres humanos establecemos con el medio ambiente, el manejo de los recursos naturales, los cambios que generamos en los ecosistemas y las consecuencias que todo esto tiene para las personas y los demás seres vivos en el presente y en el futuro.
- Institucional. Alude al papel que el estado y las estructuras sociales ocupan en la dinámica social y que se concreta en el nivel de autonomía de las instituciones, su pertinencia, su administración y manejo del presupuesto, la claridad de sus procedimientos, su eficiencia y flexibilidad para resolver las demandas sociales y, sobre todo, en su capacidad para incluir y atender a los diversos sectores sociales.

Estas dimensiones se conjugan de diversas maneras en la construcción de entornos de vulnerabilidad, de suerte que cuando un individuo o colectivo es vulnerado, por lo general, ocurre que varias de ellas están siendo afectadas. Es decir, se trata de un fenómeno multifactorial en donde ninguna de las dimensiones actúa de manera aislada. Las particularidades entre los distintos contextos de vulnerabilidad y sus consecuencias en los niveles de bienestar de los individuos y colectivos son resultado de la relación entre lo externo y lo interno a la que nos referíamos anteriormente.

Para la construcción de nuestra propuesta retomamos los elementos de la Clasificación Internacional del Funcionamiento, de la Discapacidad y de la Salud (CIF) elaborada por la OMS, las dimensiones constituyentes de la interacción humana y la vida social, y los planteamientos de Busso (2001) sobre la vulnerabilidad social, especialmente la relación que establece entre pobreza y exclusión. Aquí, nos detendremos a explicar brevemente el trabajo de este último.

En los primeros estudios que comenzaron analizar la pobreza desde la perspectiva de la vulnerabilidad social, gran parte de la atención se centraba en la disposición y manejo que los individuos y colectivos hacían de una serie de activos o recursos en los que se incluían el trabajo, el capital físico, el capital humano, las relaciones familiares, el capital social y los recursos financieros (Moser, 1998; Pizarro, 2001). Posteriormente, Kaztman y Filgueira (1999) dieron una vuelta de tuerca a la forma en que se estaban haciendo estas investigaciones al desarrollar el enfoque “activos-vulnerabilidad-estructura de oportunidades” (AVEO), en el que además de los recursos, consideraban la variedad y el uso de las estrategias implementadas por los individuos y los hogares, así como las oportunidades que les brindaban el estado, la sociedad y el mercado para acceder a sus activos, proveerse de otros, realizar y diversificar sus actividades.

En el caso de Busso (2001), su aportación consiste en que busca ir más allá de la determinación de los recursos que poseen los sujetos, al igual que Kaztman y Filgueira pero, a diferencia de ellos, centra su atención en los procesos y factores que les permiten entrar y salir de la vulnerabilidad. Este autor observa que la conexión entre los activos, las estrategias y el conjunto de oportunidades es multicausal, cambiante y compleja, por lo que no siempre se puede establecer una relación causal entre pobreza y exclusión. Así, distingue entre los activos que modifican la pobreza y al mismo tiempo contribuyen a la integración social, los que no cambian la pobreza pero favorecen a la integración, los que ayudan a salir de la situación de pobreza pero debilitan la integración y finalmente los que pueden acentuar la pobreza y atentar contra la integración.

Con base en esto, Busso (2001) construye una tipología que va desde los integrados plenos, es decir, los individuos y colectivos que no están en situación de pobreza y que ejercen plenamente sus derechos, hasta los excluidos totales que son los que se encuentran en pobreza y que además están desprovistos de cualquier tipo de protección social y jurídica. En medio de estos dos extremos están los que él denomina como vulnerables coyunturales, que comprende a las personas que aunque están dentro de la línea de pobreza, tienen acceso a beneficios, servicios o recursos, es decir son socialmente incluidos, y también a aquellas que sin llegar a ser pobres, son excluidos parcial o totalmente de la seguridad social y legal.

Concretamente, en el tema de la discapacidad, que es el que aquí nos interesa, para el enfoque de la vulnerabilidad social ésta deja de ser un rasgo inmanente de los individuos, lo que permite centrar la mirada en aquellos factores que inciden en la construcción de contextos de vulnerabilidad. Como hemos señalado, para nuestra propuesta, retomamos el modelo biopsicosocial de la OMS, especialmente la cuestión de los componentes de la salud y la relación entre funcionamientos y discapacidad. Del enfoque de la vulnerabilidad social, incorporamos las diferentes dimensiones que se definen para comprender la interacción humana y la vida social, pues consideramos que, a diferencia del modelo de la OMS en donde las variables sociales se tratan de manera general como factores ambientales y personales, éstas nos permiten distinguir los diversos grados de implicación de “lo social”, observar la relación de equilibrio y desequilibrio entre ellas y

valorar el impacto que pueden tener en el bienestar de los sujetos. Así, por ejemplo, ser vulnerable físicamente tendría consecuencias muy distintas a las de ser vulnerable ideológica o institucionalmente, aunque las tres dimensiones remitan a elementos del contexto. Por último, de los planteamientos de Busso, retomamos la relación entre vulnerabilidad e inclusión-exclusión, pues, al igual que él, creemos que no existe una correspondencia directa o causal entre discapacidad y la inclusión-exclusión, sino que los sujetos utilizan y transforman sus recursos, estrategias y oportunidades para compensar sus pérdidas así como para entrar y salir de la vulnerabilidad.

A partir de todo esto, construimos una primera tipología que estaría integrada por los siguientes grupos: 1) la discapacidad con inclusión plena, 2) la discapacidad con inclusión media, 3) la discapacidad con inclusión baja, 4) la discapacidad con exclusión baja, 5) la discapacidad con exclusión media y 6) la discapacidad con exclusión total.

El primer grupo se distingue porque existe un proceso de equilibración más o menos sostenido entre las diferentes dimensiones que sostienen la interacción humana y la vida social, lo que favorece la inclusión. Aquí, la dimensión natural se encuentra vulnerada porque los individuos tienen alguna deficiencia en sus funciones o estructuras corporales, pero las otras –física, económica, social, política, técnica, ideológica, cultural e institucional– se encuentran desarrolladas, lo que compensa el proceso de vulnerabilidad. Ejemplo de esto son aquellas personas con discapacidad que no muestran limitaciones serias en su actividad o restricciones en su participación. Es decir, pueden solventar de manera autónoma sus necesidades más inmediatas de autocuidado, movilidad, comunicación, vida doméstica, interacción, tareas y demandas generales y que además toman parte de las áreas principales de la vida, el aprendizaje y aplicación del conocimiento, de las relaciones interpersonales así como de la vida comunitaria, social y cívica. Estos sujetos poseen un acervo amplio y diversificado de recursos, estrategias y oportunidades, lo que les permite desarrollarse plenamente y mantener sus niveles de bienestar.

En el grupo 2, la discapacidad con inclusión media, las distintas dimensiones que conforman la interacción humana y la vida social no están tan sólidamente articuladas como en la categoría anterior. Además de la vulnerabilidad en la dimensión natural, se observan dificultades en algún otro ámbito, que puede ser el técnico, el social o el institucional, lo que repercute en las posibilidades de inclusión. En estos casos, variables como el acceso limitado a la educación formal o a los servicios de salud, propician entornos de vulnerabilidad que se traducen en algunas restricciones para la actividad o la participación de las personas con discapacidad. A pesar de esto, las otras dimensiones se encuentran lo suficientemente desarrolladas como para mantener cierta diversidad en los recursos, estrategias y oportunidades y hacer que el proceso de inclusión no se debilite de manera significativa.

En el grupo 3, la discapacidad con inclusión baja, los recursos, las estrategias y las oportunidades de las que disponen los sujetos están mucho más reducidos y, a diferencia de la categoría anterior, se enfrentan diversas limitaciones no en alguna, sino en varias de las dimensiones de la interacción humana y la vida social, como la física, la técnica, la institucional y la natural. Esto incrementa las condiciones de vulnerabilidad, afecta el bienestar individual y debilita el proceso de inclusión. Sin embargo, aún se cuenta con recursos derivados otras dimensiones que hacen que los individuos no lleguen a la línea de exclusión. Siguiendo a Busso (2001), podríamos decir que lo que diferencia a este

grupo del anterior es la cantidad y calidad de los activos, las estrategias y oportunidades que se poseen.

La siguiente categoría, la discapacidad con exclusión baja, se distingue porque a la par de las dificultades en las dimensiones que abarcan las condiciones materiales de existencia, se han elaborado representaciones, ideas o costumbres negativas que complejizan los contextos de vulnerabilidad e incrementan el riesgo. Aquí, el desequilibrio ha alcanzado los ámbitos cultural, ideológico, político y social lo que, sumado al acotado repertorio de recursos, estrategias y oportunidades disponibles para los individuos, genera condiciones de exclusión. Algunos ejemplos son las personas con discapacidad que enfrentan múltiples limitaciones para integrarse a la vida social o conservar un empleo que les permita ser independientes, o bien, aquellas que aunque no tienen limitaciones significativas en su actividad, ni restricciones en su participación, son excluidos ideológica y culturalmente.

En el grupo 4, la discapacidad con exclusión media, el desequilibrio entre las diferentes dimensiones es tal que los niveles de riesgo son altos y la disponibilidad de recursos, estrategias y oportunidades se ha reducido al mínimo. En estos casos, se registran condiciones de vulnerabilidad en la mayoría de los ámbitos que sostienen la interacción humana y la vida social, que impactan negativamente en los niveles de bienestar de los individuos y agudizan el proceso de exclusión, es decir, las personas tienen múltiples limitaciones en su actividad y restricciones en su participación que socavan su desarrollo personal y social.

La última categoría, la discapacidad con exclusión total, se caracteriza porque las condiciones de vulnerabilidad son severas y afectan todas las dimensiones: natural, física, técnica, económica, e institucional, pero también social, cultural, ideológica y política. Éste es el otro extremo del *continuum*. Los recursos, estrategias y oportunidades son casi nulos y los niveles de riesgo muy altos, lo que impide que los individuos puedan hacerse cargo de manera independiente de sus necesidades básicas de movilidad, autocuidado, comunicación, vida doméstica, tareas y demandas generales. También, obstaculiza su integración a las áreas principales de la vida, el aprendizaje y la aplicación del conocimiento, la realización de alguna actividad económica, el establecimiento de relaciones interpersonales y la participación en la vida comunitaria social y cívica. Ejemplo de esto son las personas con deficiencias en sus funciones o estructuras corporales que, aunadas a los serios contextos de vulnerabilidad y riesgo en los que viven, tienen graves limitaciones en sus actividades y múltiples restricciones de su participación, de modo que han quedado prácticamente fuera de la dinámica social y las probabilidades de mejorar sus niveles de bienestar son exigüos.

Cabe señalar que con esta tipología buscamos identificar los factores y dimensiones que inciden en la creación de contextos de vulnerabilidad, favorecen (u obstaculizan) el uso y desarrollo de los recursos, estrategias y oportunidades, y la forma en que todo esto interviene en los procesos de inclusión-exclusión social. En ningún momento es nuestro interés hacer un catálogo de los tipos de discapacidad y mucho menos establecer parámetros clasificatorios para los individuos. Es una propuesta que se encuentra en proceso de construcción y, como señala Weber (1964), no pretendemos que las categorías que hemos definido se encuentren en su forma ideal o pura en la realidad, sino que más bien se trata de un dispositivo analítico que esperamos nos permita acercarnos y comprender más detenidamente nuestro problema y a los sujetos de estudio.

#### **4. Las diferentes experiencias de la discapacidad**

En el apartado anterior, explicamos los elementos principales de nuestra propuesta para acercarnos al análisis de la discapacidad. Sin embargo, en nuestra investigación, también queremos adentrarnos a las distintas experiencias de este fenómeno, para ello, hemos buscado incorporar otras categorías y conceptos, fundamentalmente desde el campo de las ciencias sociales, que nos permitan observarlas de manera más fina.

Como señalamos, partimos del presupuesto de que éste es un problema que está más allá de las deficiencias funcionales o estructurales de los individuos, sino que apunta a la construcción social de contextos de vulnerabilidad. Por esta razón, distinguimos entre la ‘condición’ y la ‘situación’ de discapacidad. La primera “refiere a la índole, el carácter o estado en la que se halla una persona debido a problema (s) de salud que opera (n) sobre su funcionamiento, afectándola en sus actividades y participación, y otras consecuencias” (Pantano, 2009:90). La segunda “hace referencia al conjunto de factores o circunstancias que tienen que ver con las personas en cuanto estén o puedan estar en condiciones de discapacidad” (Pantano, 2009: 90-91).

Asimismo, entre las diversas formas en las que se expresa la vulnerabilidad, las personas con discapacidad se consideran vulnerables específicos, porque de manera temporal o permanente encuentran limitaciones para alcanzar su desarrollo pleno y porque potencial o efectivamente son agraviados en su valor y dignidad (Uribe y González, 2007). En la discapacidad se conjugan tres tipos de vulnerabilidad: la biológica o humana, la típica y la atípica. La vulnerabilidad biológica comprende los rasgos particulares atribuidos a los sujetos, como la edad, el género, la etnia y la propia discapacidad. La vulnerabilidad típica remite a las circunstancias que se crean a partir de la intervención o ausencia del estado, la economía y la sociedad en general, y se divide en: económica, que está directamente relacionada con la disponibilidad o ausencia de recursos materiales y económicos, la falta de seguridad social, la carencia de vivienda, el desempleo o subempleo, la pobreza y las condiciones de vida marginales, y social, que tiene que ver con las ideas o representaciones negativas que colectivamente se han hecho en relación con los otros y que atentan contra la dignidad, desarrollo personal, integridad y seguridad de aquellos considerados como “diferentes”. Por su parte, la vulnerabilidad atípica apunta a las políticas públicas, las disposiciones jurídicas y a la propia Constitución, las cuales, por acción u omisión, dejan resquicios legales en los que se van generando desigualdades y trato discriminatorio entre los individuos o entre los grupos sociales (Uribe y González, 2007).

En el enfoque social de la vulnerabilidad, lo que Uribe y González desde el enfoque de los derechos denominan vulnerabilidad biológica o humana está incluida en la dimensión natural, mientras que la vulnerabilidad social corresponde a las dimensiones ideológica y cultural. Finalmente, lo que ellos llaman vulnerabilidad jurídica está contenida en las dimensiones institucional y política. Sin embargo, hemos querido retomar estos planteamientos porque, consideramos, nos aportan elementos para comprender con mayor detalle la relación entre los contextos de vulnerabilidad y la discapacidad.

De este modo, dentro de la vulnerabilidad específica, en donde estarían incluidas las personas con discapacidad, pero que atañe igualmente a otros grupos sociales, estos autores distinguen entre los vulnerables en potencia y los vulnerables en el acto. En los vulnerables en potencia se conjugan factores de riesgo y amenaza bajo situaciones determinadas, por lo que la acción del estado debe dirigirse hacia la creación de un

marco jurídico y al diseño de políticas públicas que hagan que la condición de vulnerabilidad no se concrete. En los vulnerables en el acto o vulnerables vulnerados el trato discriminatorio, el acceso desigual y la violación a sus derechos civiles, sociales o políticos es algo real, ya sea ocasional, temporal o permanentemente, por lo que las políticas y las leyes deben tener un carácter restitutivo y de preservación.

Así, conjuntando el trabajo de Uribe y González con nuestra propuesta, aquellas personas con discapacidad que han logrado un equilibrio sostenido entre las diferentes dimensiones de la interacción humana y la vida social y que nosotros denominados como totalmente integrados, estarían en la categoría de vulnerables específicos en potencia, mientras que las personas con discapacidad y que son excluidos parcial o plenamente serían vulnerables específicos en el acto, porque la mayoría de las veces son discriminados, segregados y enfrentan múltiples problemas para lograr y mantener su bienestar.

Los orígenes de las limitaciones en la actividad y restricciones en la participación, como los denominados la OMS (2001) que enfrentan los individuos vulnerados, en potencia o en el acto, no están su discapacidad, sino más bien en la producción social de contextos y situaciones de vulnerabilidad y estigma. Justamente, la noción de estigma constituye el último componente de nuestro modelo de análisis que queremos discutir.

Para ello, retomamos la propuesta de Erving Goffman (1970, 1981). Para este autor, las personas, a lo largo de las numerosas interacciones que tenemos en la vida cotidiana, vamos recopilando información, a través de los gestos o expresiones verbales, que se convierten en 'pistas' sobre las personas y sobre la situación social y nos permiten orientar nuestros cursos de acción, porque las vamos cotejando con el acervo de conocimientos previos que hemos adquirido a través de los diversos agentes y procesos de socialización. Sin embargo, a veces, ocurre que los datos que recogemos no concuerdan con estos saberes disponibles, en este tipo de situaciones se genera un estigma y es así porque los sujetos solemos hacer clasificaciones de lo que consideramos 'socialmente aceptable' o 'socialmente no aceptable', ya sean prácticas, comportamientos, actitudes, expresiones o, incluso, los propios individuos. De manera que cuando percibimos alguna contradicción entre lo que una persona es, su identidad real, y lo que debería ser, su identidad virtual, ésta queda estigmatizada.

Goffman (1981) distingue entre dos tipos de estigma: el desacreditado, que resulta evidente en el momento en que la persona se presenta en la vida cotidiana y del cual ésta no puede distanciarse porque hay indicios muy claros de sus diferencias, y el desacreditable, que no es observable a simple vista y que por lo general hace que los individuos realicen múltiples esfuerzos para que la información destructiva que existe sobre ellos no quede expuesta. Las personas con discapacidad evidente y que sufren desde la exclusión total hasta la inclusión parcial estarían en la categoría de estigmatizados desacreditados, porque, como explicábamos en nuestra propuesta, son vulnerables en una o varias de las dimensiones de la vida social, mientras que las personas con discapacidad no evidente estarían en la categoría de estigmatizados desacreditables porque, aunque no tienen limitaciones en su actividad ni restricciones en su participación, cuando se conoce su discapacidad son vulnerados ideológica y culturalmente. No obstante, este autor reconoce que, en ocasiones, los individuos estigmatizado logran tener éxito, que es lo que nosotros hemos denominado personas con discapacidad e inclusión plena, estos individuos se convierten en héroes de



adaptación porque logran que los demás los dejen de ver únicamente a través de su estigma.

Finalmente, Goffman (1970) sostiene que los estigmas se pueden socializar a través de cuatro pautas: en la primera, el sujeto tiene conocimiento sobre la categoría en el que lo sitúan los demás, la acepta y trata de lidiar con sus consecuencias; en la segunda situación, el sujeto sale del grupo familiar o local que lo protegía para enfrentarse a los demás y a sus consideraciones; en la tercera, el sujeto se reconoce como estigmatizado en una etapa tardía de su existencia, ya sea porque no se percataba de su situación o porque ocurre alguna eventualidad que le quita el estatus de normalidad; y en la última, el sujeto supera su condición de estigmatizado y tiene que aprender a vivir de una forma distinta.

## **5. Consideraciones finales**

La discapacidad es un fenómeno complejo y multidimensional que es necesario abordar desde diversas miradas. Hasta ahora, los enfoques sobre esta problemática se han dividido entre aquellos que privilegian la dimensión individual, como el médico-rehabilitador, el normalizador-asistencialista y el funcionalista, y los que enfatizan la dimensión social, entre los que se encuentran el interaccionista, el ambiental o contextual, el jurídico, el cultural o de la diversidad y el de calidad de vida (Barnes, 1998; IIN, 2001; Rioux, 1997).

En medio de estas propuestas y de sus respectivos intentos por precisar y sistematizar los factores presentes en la discapacidad y el peso que tienen en la vida de las personas, han surgido voces que claman por la construcción de una perspectiva integradora y sistémica (Schalock y Verdugo, 2003), y otras que alertan sobre los riesgos que implican la elaboración de estos modelos explicativos, los cuales entrañan los valores y las interpretaciones que ciertos grupos han elaborado para etiquetar a los otros (Barton, 1998) así como las presiones económicas, políticas, sociales, éticas y profesionales que intervienen en el estudio de la discapacidad (Rioux, 1997).

En este trabajo, hemos querido acercarnos a este fenómeno tomando como ángulo de entrada el enfoque social de la vulnerabilidad y en el que recuperamos elementos de los modelos biopsicosocial de la OMS y la perspectiva sobre vulnerabilidad-pobreza-inclusión. Lo que buscamos es identificar las diferentes dimensiones de la interacción humana y social, la forma en que éstas pueden proveer o disminuir el acervo de recursos, estrategias y oportunidades para las personas y los procesos de entrada y salida de la vulnerabilidad.

Es decir, queremos enfocarnos en las múltiples formas en que los sujetos invierten, intercambian, convierten e, incluso, pierden sus recursos, estrategias y oportunidades y la manera en que todo ello les permite transitar de la vulnerabilidad sin exclusión a la vulnerabilidad con exclusión y viceversa. Esto nos lleva a situar la atención en los niveles macro, meso y microsociales (Busso, 2001), pues no sólo queremos ver el peso de los factores intervinientes, sino las oportunidades y limitaciones que se crean socialmente y el impacto que tienen en el bienestar de los sujetos. De ahí, que en nuestra propuesta, hayamos considerado desde las personas con discapacidad plenamente incluidas hasta las que tienen alguna discapacidad y son totalmente excluidas, pasando por aquellas cuya situación es más coyuntural.

Reconocemos los avances que se han dado teórica y metodológicamente en este campo de los estudios sobre discapacidad (*disability studies*), que cambiaron la forma de entender este fenómeno al apuntar hacia las dimensiones y variables sociales que intervienen en la discapacidad y rescatar las experiencias de las personas con discapacidad (Oliver, 1990). Sobre todo esta segunda se ha diversificado en las últimas décadas y ha tratado de comprender la manera en que la discapacidad se vive a través el género, la etnia y la pobreza, entre otros, así como los efectos que tienen los prejuicios sociales y la discriminación institucional, lo que poco a poco ha ido conformado el denominado enfoque de los grupos minoritarios (Verdugo, 2004).

Sin embargo, en nuestro caso, hemos privilegiado el enfoque social de la vulnerabilidad porque queremos situar nuestra investigación en la línea que desde la sociología se ha venido desarrollado con otros colectivos como los niños, niñas y adolescentes en situación de calle, los migrantes, los pobres, las mujeres jefas de hogar, embarazadas y en situación de pobreza, las personas que carecen de seguridad social, la población rural e indígena, las personas desempleadas, los trabajadores del sector informal y, entre los que por supuesto se incluyen las personas con discapacidad. Es decir, queremos acercarnos a las personas con discapacidad como grupo vulnerable.

Asimismo, hemos optado por este enfoque porque nos interesa comprender los saberes extraescolares que adquieren las personas con discapacidad en las instituciones educativas, los factores y dimensiones que permiten u obstaculizan estos aprendizajes y la manera en que éstos se desarrollan, invierten y convierten en activos, estrategias y oportunidades.

Por último, cabría decir que éste es un trabajo que está en plena construcción y que hasta ahora sólo hemos elaborado una propuesta general, que es la que aquí expusimos, pero que en el desarrollo de la investigación la iremos afinando para incluir, además de las dimensiones, los dominios, las variables e indicadores que esperamos finalmente nos permitan diseñar un modelo más acabado para el análisis de la discapacidad.

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## **RECENSIONES**

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## Recensión:

**Meyer, K. (2014). *Education, Justice, and the Human Good. Fairness and Equality in the Education System*. Nueva York: Routledge. 166 páginas. ISBN: 978-0-415-71480-8**

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Según Kirsten Meyer (Geboren, 1974), la justicia de un sistema educativo es un indicador clave de la justicia de una sociedad. La exigencia de justicia en un sistema educativo es un asunto de central importancia en el desarrollo de una sociedad justa, y debe ser tratado con el cuidado y la atención que merece. En su obra “Educación, Justicia y Bien Humano. Equidad e igualdad en el sistema educativo”, la profesora Kirsten Meyer aborda desde distintas perspectivas una serie de cuestiones nucleares de la justicia educativa, la cual, en su opinión, es frecuentemente obviada en los debates contemporáneos, y la relevancia de sus consideraciones, rara vez discutida.

Un sistema educativo debe asegurar la preservación de distintos aspectos de la justicia, siendo entre ellos especialmente relevante el de la igualdad de oportunidades. ¿Debería una sociedad promover una educación igual entre todos sus miembros o debería tratar de maximizar el potencial de los más desfavorecidos? ¿Deberían todos los niños afrontar las mismas perspectivas sin importar su trasfondo social? ¿Qué implica la igualdad de oportunidades en este contexto? ¿Iguales oportunidades para el desarrollo académico o iguales oportunidades de una buena vida? ¿O debería la educación buscar permitir a cada individuo su íntegro desarrollo como ciudadano?

Aunque en cierto sentido la educación pueda ser explicada dentro de un marco de racionalidad instrumental, su sentido no debe agotarse en éste; además debe ser entendida como un fin en sí misma. Meyer pretende ampliar el dominio del debate sobre la educación, queriendo conceptualizarla no ya como instrumento, sino como un fin en sí misma, cuyo sentido comprenda el pleno desarrollo del individuo como ser humano. Las reflexiones sobre el valor de la educación deben conducirnos a cuestiones más generales sobre el desarrollo íntegro del ser humano. Aproximándose a una concepción clásica de la educación, con Platón y Aristóteles como referentes, este volumen pretende recuperar la relación entre la justicia educativa y la reflexión acerca de una vida plena.

El marco teórico en el que se desarrolla el debate actual sobre la justicia educativa se encuentra definido principalmente por las contribuciones de Harry Brighouse, Adam Swift y Debra Satz, cuyos trabajos están estrechamente vinculados con obras de filosofía política contemporánea, especialmente con la obra de John Rawls y Amy Gutman. *Educación, Justicia y Bien humano* pretende contribuir al presente debate a través de la

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exposición de una serie de cuestiones: ¿en qué sentido deben integrarse las cuestiones de justicia e igualdad en el sistema educativo? ¿Qué persigue realmente el concepto de igualdad de oportunidades? ¿Son la igualdad o la adecuación el núcleo del debate de la justicia educacional? ¿Es la adecuación lo único que deba considerar la justicia educacional?

Kirsten Meyer incide en la importancia de la igualdad de oportunidades, advirtiendo que pese a ser un asunto recurrente en los debates sobre justicia educativa y aun siendo común en la esfera pública, no queda claro a qué hace referencia exactamente. Según Meyer, reclamar igualdad de oportunidades implica una demanda de igualdad de oportunidades de alcanzar una vida buena. Conferimos valor a la educación en la medida en que favorece la buena vida de cada individuo, de modo que las potenciales diferencias entre la demanda de iguales oportunidades educativas e iguales perspectivas de vida deberían ser, según esto, decididas a favor de la segunda. El objetivo de este libro es estimular la investigación de las conexiones entre la justicia educativa y las diferentes esferas de la excelencia humana.

El libro está compuesto por ocho capítulos escritos por diversos expertos en filosofía de la educación en los que se abordan distintas dificultades que encierra el debate sobre la justicia educativa. El primero, “El puesto de la igualdad educativa en la justicia educativa”, a cargo de H. Brighouse y A. Swift trata el concepto de igualdad educativa, desde el que sostienen que las perspectivas individuales para el éxito educativo no deberían verse condicionadas por el trasfondo social de cada persona. En el segundo capítulo, “Oportunidades desiguales: raza, clase y enseñanza”, Debra Satz explica, alejándose de la postura de Brighouse y Swift, la idea de la adecuación educativa en relación al desarrollo de una ciudadanía plena. En el capítulo tres, “Justicia no-comparativa en educación”, Thomas Schramme parte de los presupuestos igualitarios sobre justicia educativa para analizar de qué modo el modelo universitario aun promueve una imagen de la educación como fin en sí misma. A continuación Johannes Giesinger en “Justicia educativa y la justificación de la educación” intenta dar cuenta de los tipos de educación que merecen la pena, sosteniendo que la cuestión acerca de la justicia educativa distributiva está estrechamente vinculado al problema de la justificación de la educación. Randall Curren en el quinto capítulo, “Una perspectiva neo-aristotélica de la educación, justicia y bien humano”, recupera la concepción clásica de la educación para superar la educación “cívica” con una concepción más rica, cuyo fin sea el desarrollo pleno del ser humano. En el capítulo seis, ¿Qué significa igualdad en la educación?, Stefan Gosepath distingue tres estadios de la educación diferentes: la educación básica para todos, el desarrollo de talentos y capacidades individuales y la selección para la educación superior y el mercado laboral, en los que el concepto de igualdad toma un valor diferente, debiendo ser aplicado de forma distinta y adecuada en cada caso. En el séptimo capítulo, “Justa igualdad de oportunidades y justicia educativa”, Constantin Stroops, partiendo del pensamiento de John Rawls, hace ver la problemática que implica la idea de la justa igualdad de oportunidades, advirtiendo que ha de ser entendido correctamente para evitar planteamientos equivocados. Finalmente es la propia Kirsten Meyer quien en el capítulo octavo, “Justicia educativa y desarrollo de talento”, señala la multiplicidad de valores que una teoría de justicia educativa debería tener en cuenta, destacando la importancia que tiene en este contexto la igualdad de perspectivas de futuro entre individuos con diferentes trasfondos sociales.



“Educación, justicia y bien humano”, es un compendio de algunas de las cuestiones más relevantes dentro del discurso de la justicia educativa. Abordados desde distintas perspectivas, no siempre coincidentes, y con la claridad y el oficio que muestran todos y cada uno de sus colaboradores, pone de relieve problemas tan relevantes dentro del discurso de la justicia educativa como el de igualdad de oportunidades, la finalidad de la educación, la adecuación educativa o la igualdad de perspectivas.

La obra de Kirsten Meyer puede ser para muchos lectores una perfecta introducción a la filosofía de la educación, ya que facilita el acceso al amplio panorama en que se desarrolla el debate actual y posibilita formarse una opinión al respecto.



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## Recensión:

### **Tedesco, J.C. (2012). *Educación y Justicia Social en América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 272 páginas. ISBN: 978-950557-910-5**

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El año 2012 nos sorprendió con una gran libro escrito por Juan Carlos Tedesco. Una obra que profundiza en un tema de candente actualidad: la Educación y la Justicia Social. Este enfoque persigue lograr una educación más justa, necesaria en un contexto de crecientes desigualdades socioeconómicas como en el que nos encontramos hoy en día. La Justicia social aplicada a la educación va más allá de la equidad educativa, la igualdad de oportunidades, los derechos humanos y la atención a la diversidad. La escuela que trabaja para ser socialmente más justa pretende lograr una educación de todos y para todos donde todos los estudiantes aprendan y logren un desarrollo integral y donde la multiculturalidad y la democracia sean estandartes primordiales de la escuela. De la mano de un excelente autor con un tema fundamental nace el libro “*Educación y Justicia Social en América Latina*”.

Juan Carlos Tedesco es uno de los pedagogos y teóricos de política educativa más influyentes en el ámbito educativo, tanto en Latinoamérica como en el resto del mundo. Ha sido director de la Oficina Internacional de Educación de la UNESCO así como de otros centros de la UNESCO como el Centro Regional de Educación Superior para América Latina y el Caribe (CRESALC), la Oficina Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe (OREALC) o el Instituto Internacional de Planificación de la Educación (IIPPE). Asimismo, fue Ministro de Educación de Argentina. Actualmente es el director ejecutivo de la Unidad de Planeamiento Estratégico y Evaluación del Sistema Educativo de Argentina.

*Educación y Justicia Social en América Latina* es una libro de 272 páginas y cuenta con un prólogo de Ricardo Lagos (presidente de Chile entre los años 2000 y 2006). El volumen se escribió en 2007, pero no vio la luz hasta 2012, teniendo tanta o más vigencia que en el momento en el que fue elaborada. Se plantea como una síntesis de diferentes investigaciones y artículos teóricos del propio investigador. En palabras del autor esta publicación se entiende como:

*Un ensayo, una reflexión que recupera informaciones, hipótesis y marcos teóricos de larga vigencia en la teoría educativa, pero que, en la medida de lo posible, intenta ampliar la mirada, incorporando la visión que proviene de los estudios sobre las profundas transformaciones sociales, políticas, económicas y culturales que tienen lugar en la sociedad.* (p.20).

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El texto presenta dos partes claramente diferenciadas. En primer lugar, en el bloque “Educación y Sociedad en la Historia de América Latina” se analiza el recorrido histórico del papel de la educación en la sociedad en latinoamericana. En segundo término, el bloque “Educación y Justicia Social en el futuro de América Latina” se plantea un sistema educativo para el futuro orientado a la Justicia Social.

El primer bloque (conformado por tres capítulos), articula históricamente cómo se ha desarrollado en América Latina a lo largo del último siglo la relación entre el binomio educación-sociedad. Comprender la evolución de la concepción de educación en la sociedad es fundamental para identificar problemas y plantear la educación del mañana.

Existen tres modelos sobre cómo América Latina ha entendido la relación educación-sociedad:

- “Educación y Estado-nación”. En las últimas décadas del siglo XIX y mediados del siglo XX, el elemento clave de dicha relación fue la política. En ese momento histórico el sistema educativo constituyó un pilar fundamental sobre el que se construyeron los estados nacionales. La educación fue percibida como la herramienta para cambiar la sociedad y eliminar las diferencias culturales (entendida, por lo tanto, como elemento homogeneizador). La Educación se perfilaba como elemento clave en la formación de ciudadanos.
- “Educación y recursos humanos”. El segundo modelo se ubica aproximadamente en 1960 y considera la economía como elemento clave de la relación dicotómica. La educación se comprendió como el elemento fundamental para formar los recursos humanos necesarios para el desarrollo tanto económico como social del país. La Educación se planteaba como elemento clave en la formación de recursos humanos.
- “Educación y mercado-ciudadanía”. En los 90 aparece el tercer modelo como respuesta a la crisis de los modelos anteriores. La educación se planteó como el instrumento clave para responder a las exigencias de eficiencia que demandaba la sociedad. Se aplicó la lógica del mercado y de la producción a la educación. Desde este tercer modelo la educación se comprendía como formadora de clientes empresariales.

El cambio de lente de la segunda parte del libro es notoria. Este bloque es una mirada llena de fuerza al futuro, a la educación venidera. Narrado con sencillez y firmeza, Tedesco deja claro al su compromiso teórico y político con la educación orientada hacia la consecución de la Justicia Social. Este bloque cuenta con siete capítulos, de los cuales los dos primeros son más generales y los cinco restantes se centran en elementos concretos en los que profundizar para alcanzar una sociedad más justa. En los primeros capítulos reflexiona sobre la importancia de dejar atrás el pasado y pensar en una nueva educación, profundizando en las dificultades y pocos resultados logrados con los modelos educativos anteriores, los cuales han generado un gran escepticismo sobre el impacto de la educación en la sociedad. Considera que para lograr el cambio educativo y superar dicho escepticismo es necesario no apoyarse en las decisiones tomadas en el pasado, sino reformular una nueva educación creando condiciones de educabilidad adecuadas, entendidas como el equilibrio entre las principales variables socioeconómicas y el desarrollo de los estudiantes.

Para conseguir esta nueva educación, se plantean cinco líneas estratégicas de acción para construir una sociedad más justa. El autor considera que tienen un indudable impacto en la justicia educativa y que son los elementos por los que hay que empezar la transformación del sistema educativo. La primera es la educación inicial, entendiendo que es esencial empezar a educar a los niños lo antes posible ya que en los primeros años de vida se genera una enorme brecha entre ellos; la segunda es la organización del trabajo docente, centrado en mejorar las condiciones de trabajo, promover nuevos planes de desarrollo profesional y adaptar la práctica docente a las necesidades concretas de cada contexto; la tercera se centra en la alfabetización digital, para garantizar que todos los estudiantes tengan acceso y sepan utilizar las TIC; la cuarta es la alfabetización científica y a formación ciudadana, implicando a los estudiantes en la propia sociedad para que sean ciudadanos activos; y la quinta y última se centra en fomentar las políticas de subjetividad, adoptando un enfoque político comprometido con la equidad social y que busque acciones concretas para la mejora de la Justicia Social a través de la escuela.

La obra finaliza con un capítulo bajo el nombre de “Conclusiones y Cuestiones pendientes”, en el que se reflexiona sobre los diferentes temas abordados y profundiza en que adoptar escenarios del porvenir implica posicionarse ética y políticamente. El investigador afirma que el objetivo final de cualquier sistema educativo es lograr una educación de calidad para todos y construir una sociedad más justa a través de los principales actores de los sistemas educativos. Para ello, es necesario redefinir el sentido y papel de la educación en la sociedad y colocarlo en el centro de las estrategias para lograr una sociedad más justa, implicando a los dirigentes políticos, los docentes, los estudiantes y la sociedad en su conjunto.

El texto es una propuesta perfectamente hilada, que relaciona directamente el diagnóstico del ayer, con el problema del hoy y las necesidades y soluciones educativas del mañana. Con una narrativa que invita a la constante reflexión, Tedesco nos adentra a la Justicia Social desde la perspectiva educativa, en auge en las últimas décadas, y que es el planteamiento educativo imprescindible para erradicar la brecha existente entre los estudiantes (a nivel económico, cultural, lingüístico etc.) no tan solo en América Latina sino en todo el mundo. En palabras de Ricardo Lagos, Educación y Justicia Social en América Latina "será de consulta obligada para aquellos que deseen enfrentar las políticas educacionales y los desafíos de este siglo XXI" (p.12); y nosotros, firmamos estas palabras.



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