LEADING FOR EQUITY: AN EXPLORATION OF INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR TEACHER ACTIVISM

by

Susan M. Croteau, B.A., M.Ed.

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Committee Members:

Michael O'Malley, Chair

Stephen P. Gordon

Larry Price

Brandon L. Beck

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved husband, Roger, and our dear children Rosanne, Robert, Emily and Dylan, without whose support the work contained here would not have been possible.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
CFA - Confirmatory Factor Analysis	
SEM - Structural Equation Modeling	
SJA - Social Justice Activism	
SJL - Social Justice Leadership	
SJS - Social Justice Scale	

ABSTRACT

Background and Objective: Curricular activism is proposed as a means by which teachers may challenge educational inequity for marginalized students in our nation's public schools. This research aims to determine the frequency of teacher engagement in curricular activism, to explore the factors that predict this activism, and to examine activist teachers' perceptions of school leaders' support for their activism. Azjen's theory of planned behavior (1991), which asserts that attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and social norms predict intentions, which then lead to behaviors, provides the structural model for this study.

Study Design/Materials and Methods: Data from the Social Justice Scale (Torres-Harding, Siers & Olson, 2012) were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling; interview data were analyzed using narrative techniques. Both sets of findings were then integrated using an explanatory-sequential mixed methods approach.

Findings: Surveyed teachers (n=172) reported engaging in curricular activism at a modal frequency of at least once per week. SEM analysis of the proposed model produced a suboptimal fit, with perceptions of behavioral control failing to regress significantly on both intentions and activism behaviors. Interviews provided explanations for the quantitative findings.

Conclusions: Curricular activists appear to be motivated to engage in these actions by the pro-social justice attitudes of themselves and a few trusted teacher allies. They report

having limited power to address educational inequity outside of the classroom context. Principals were perceived as offering little in the way of support for curricular activism, and as being impeded from offering more by multiple external factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background Information

Universal public education in the United States has a long and troubled history. Largely the brainchild of Progressive Era reformers, the champions of its genesis envisioned it as a vehicle for strengthening democracy by ensuring that all children received the necessary training to become productive citizens. Implicit in the goals of universal education was a belief in the equality of those citizens, as can be seen in the words of Horace Mann: "Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery" (Cremin, 1957, p. 86). Unfortunately, that early ethos has not borne the full fruit of its promise. Instead, many educational researchers contend that the role of public education in the West has been to maintain the social, political and economic *status quo* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Giroux, 1983; Wills, 1977). That *status quo* is demonstrably one in which people of color, women, sexual and gender minorities and the poor have unequal access to economic, social and political power (Perry & Gundersen, 2011; Robinson, & Espelage, 2011; Stotzer, 2009).

The ways in which the *status quo* is being perpetuated by our public schools can be seen both in the conditions in which marginalized students are educated, and in the outcomes of those conditions, as will be discussed in Chapter Two. The impact of inequitable education is especially troubling for the future of Texas, in particular: according to the Texas Education Agency (2016a) in the school year 2014-2015, 70.5 percent of Texas public school students belonged to a racial/ethnic group other than non-Latino White, and 58.7 percent were identified as economically disadvantaged. Furthermore, these percentages are on the rise, and are predicted to continue rising for the

foreseeable future (Murdock, Cline, Zey, Jeanty & Perez, 2014; Texas Education Agency, 2016a). With these statistics in mind, the researcher has chosen to study the ways in which teachers and leaders may alleviate such inequity by engaging in *curricular activism*. In so doing, the researcher hopes to provide findings that might help school leaders cultivate equitable learning environments for the growing numbers of marginalized students they are charged with serving.

Social Justice Activism

Despite the pervasive nature of educational inequity, there may be reason for hope: Social Justice Activism (SJA). Although there is a lack of single accepted definition of social justice as it relates to education, Fraser and Honneth (2003) provide a compelling umbrella definition in stating that social justice requires the *redistribution* of wealth and access to economic opportunity; *recognition* (i.e., awareness and appreciation) of cultural differences; and equitable political *representation* for members all marginalized groups.

Social Justice Activism must be distinguished from the broader category of *activism*. Activism, writ large, has been defined by Forenza and Germak (2015) as "the process of understanding, contextualizing, and negotiating issues with and on behalf of a have-not community" (p. 230). SJA, on the other hand, demands that such action be carried out for the purpose of furthering social justice. Bell (2007), describes the goals of social justice as being "full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (pp. 1-2). It is, therefore, quite obvious that certain movements, Neo-Nazi and anti-immigration movements, for example, do not fit this description, in that they seek to oppress certain groups within society. Therefore, for the

purposes of this study, SJA is defined as activism that seeks to ensure that all members of society, regardless of identity or status, are treated with respect and assured equal opportunities and full inclusion in all societal institutions.

Social Justice Activism (SJA) has proven to be a powerful means of challenging unjust educational practices. In the past decade, for instance, parent activists have protested against the over-use of standardized testing by refusing to allow their children to take said tests (Evans & Saultz, 2015). In New York City, more than 20 percent of all students "opted out" of these tests in 2015 (Ujifusa, 2015). Also in 2015, the Chicago Public Schools reversed a decision to close a local high school in response to hunger strike conducted by dissatisfied parents (Perez, 2015). In 2016, community members successfully lobbied the school board of St. Paul, Minnesota to reverse budget cuts that would have negatively affected student services (Verges, 2016). SJA is clearly a powerful tool that social justice-minded people can utilize to affect positive change, both within schools, and in society at large.

Teacher activism for social justice

The nation's public school teachers have also been engaged in Social Justice Activism, both historically and in the current era (Baker, 2011; Chandler & Khan, 2011; Crocco, 1999; Goldenberg, 2016; Johnson, 2002; Larsen, 2016; Lyderson & Brown, 2016; Midura & Larson, 2016; Munro, 1999; Trinidad, 2015; Winslow, 2016; Weiler, 1999). While a full accounting of the issues, methods and efficacy of these efforts will be addressed in Chapter Two, in brief, it can be stated that teacher activism has, both in the past and today, served to break down barriers to educational equity for many marginalized students (Baker, 2011; Lenkes, Levine & Au, 2016; Munro, 1999;

Trinidad, 2015).

Types of teacher activism for social justice. In the context of late modernity, teacher activists have used the following methods to affect social and educational change: curricular activism (Marshall, 2009); teacher leadership (Marshall, 2009); research and publication (Levine & Au, 2013); and organizational membership and action (Marshall & Anderson, 2009). For the purposes of this dissertation, although the researcher will address all forms of teacher activism, she will give special attention to the method that is implemented almost entirely within the classroom setting: *curricular activism*. In her study of 52 activist educators, Catherine Marshall (2009) found that many employed what she referred to as "curricular activism" to address issues of educational inequity in the classroom: "Within their sites, working behind the scenes mostly, they created opportunities for activism about the issue" (p. 141). Examples of this activism included advocating for the placement of minority students in advanced classes, reviewing classroom reading materials to weed out those that presented or reinforced misinformation about marginalized groups, intervening with students to address homophobic or racist remarks, and introducing units or lessons on issues of social injustice (Marshall, 2009).

Explaining teacher activism. Unfortunately, teacher activism for social justice is not common in our nations' public schools. Researchers have found that many pre-service teachers embrace and perpetuate hegemonic attitudes about minority students (Castro, 2010; Glock & Karbach, 2015; Hatch & Groenke, 2009; Florio-Ruane, 2001; Flynn, et al, 2009; Kumar & Hamer, 2013; Lewison, et al, 2008; Marx, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2012), and are frequently resistant to the idea of addressing issues of social

inequality in the classroom (Han, et al, 2013; Hatch & Groenke, 2009; Sleeter, 2008; Stoll, 2014). The question then becomes: What are the factors that support the development of Social Justice Activism for educational equity among teachers?

Azjen's theory of planned behavior. Ajzen (1991) developed a theory of planned behavior which may shed some additional light on the reasons why some teachers do, and others do not, engage in social justice-oriented activism in their schools. This theory posits that three conditions impact a person's *intention* to engage in a given behavior. The individual's *attitudes towards the behavior*, the degree to which he believes he has *control over the behavior*, and the amount of *social support for the behavior that exists in the individual's environment* all impact the likelihood that the person will develop an *intent* to engage in said behavior (Figure 1). The higher each factor is, the more likely it is that the person will intend to act. The model goes on to assert that this intention predicts actual behavior.

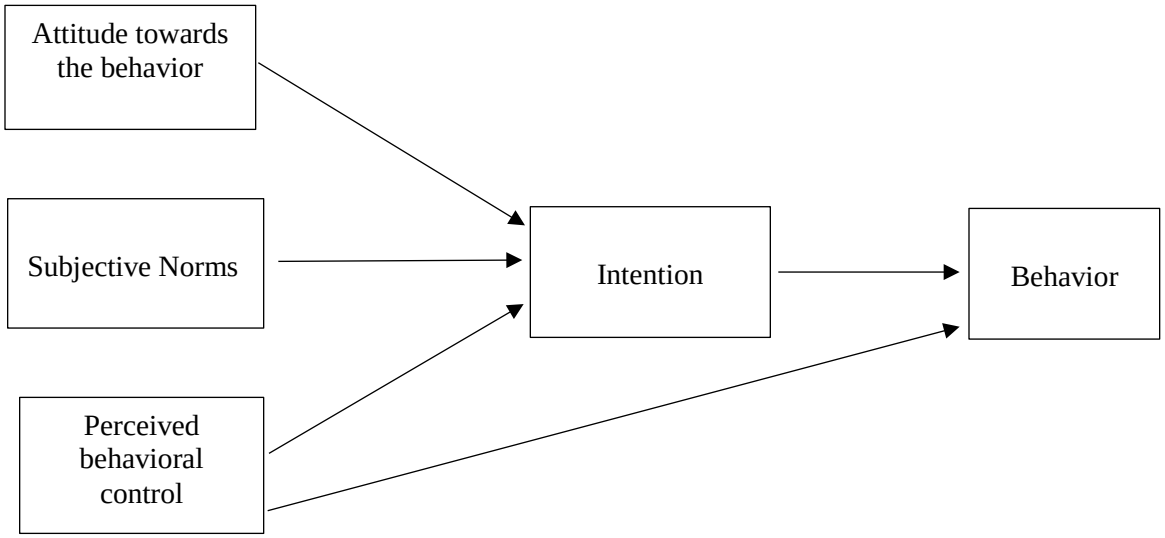


Fig. 1: Azjen's (1991) theory of planned behavior

A more in-depth discussion of this model and its implications will be addressed in Chapter Two, but for the moment, one particular facet of the model must be elucidated: the primacy of the perception of behavioral control in influencing action. According to Azjen, this perception is rooted in an individual's belief that her attempts to act will be successful (i.e. agency), and is influenced by the presence or absence of requisite resources and opportunities (Azjen & Madden, 1986, p. 457). This perception affects behavior in two ways: first, by influencing the individual's intent to act: "The more that attainment of a behavioral goal is viewed as being under volitional control, the stronger is the person's intention to try" (p. 472). Secondly, the perception can simply be undermined by the lack of resources and opportunities, regardless of the individual's intention. To give a simplistic example, a person may intend to drive to the grocery store, as this intent is supported by her positive attitude towards shopping, social support for her desire to provide food for her family, and the perception that she is capable of choosing groceries successfully, but still fears going because her car (a vital resource) is mechanically unreliable. That fear, based on her previous experience with being stranded on the road in said car, may prevent her from acting despite all of the other factors supporting it.

In short, Azjen contends that there are a variety of factors in an individual's experience that influence her intention to act in certain ways. In a school environment, few individuals have more power over teachers' work experiences than the campus principal. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that formal school leaders play an enormous role in creating conditions that encourage teachers to act for social justice, a role that can be explored through the lens of Social Justice Leadership theory.

Theoretical Framework for the Study: Social Justice Leadership

Educational literature is immersed in a wide variety of leadership theories, and the focus on leadership is well-warranted: many studies show that the effectiveness of change efforts is directly related to the characteristics of leaders (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Social Justice Leadership (SJL), in particular, concerns itself with the development of leaders who "make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision" (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223). Current conceptions of SJL often borrow from Nancy Fraser's conception of social justice (Fraser & Honneth, 2003) and include a tripartite focus on economic, political and cultural equity; for instance, Gerwitz and Cribb (2002) contend that such leadership must deal with distributive, cultural and associational justice.

Considering the centrality of resources and opportunities that support action in Azjen's theory, the application of SJL, which seeks to promote such support, is apt. The appropriateness of using SJL as a lens through which to study teacher activism can also be seen in Marshall and Oliva's (2006) description of the goal of such leadership: to build leaders who are "astute activists, ready with strategies and the sense of responsibility to intervene to make schools equitable" (p. 1). Many scholars have called for the development of school leaders who support socially-just schools (Bates 2006, Bogotch 2002, Furman 2012; Marshall 2014; Nieto 2005; Pazey and Cole 2013; Theoharis, 2007), and several have attempted to codify the attitudes and behaviors of socially-just leaders (Capper, Theoharis & Sebastian, 2006; McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley & Scheurich, 2008). Theoharis and Ranieri (2011) claim that since social justice reform efforts require deep shifts in beliefs and structures, leaders who

uphold transformative ideals and have an orientation of advocacy are essential to the success of these endeavors. If educational leaders are to create school environments where teachers are encouraged to act for social justice, it is vital that they identify the ways school leaders act and the things they do that support and hinder such environments. That these leaders have the ability to affect such change is clear from the research: specifically, studies on the principalship show that school leaders have a great deal of influence over all three of the factors that impact behavioral intentions in Azjen's theory of planned behavior: *attitudes towards the behavior*, the degree to which he believes he has *control over the behavior*, and the amount of *social support for the behavior that exists in the individual's environment.*

Principals' influence on teacher attitudes

Principals' leadership and communication styles have been linked to a variety of teacher attitudes, including job satisfaction (Dipaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001), openness to reform efforts (Price, 2012), and trust (Cosner 2009; Chuang & Bird, 2011; Lee & Nie), 2013). Furthermore, principals may, through a variety of ways, influence teachers' attitudes towards issues of social justice (Kose, 2007; Rivera-McCutchen & Watson, 2014). Although no extant research has explored the direct relationship between principals' behavior and attitudes and teachers' attitudes towards activism, *per se*, clearly, principals do have a measure of control over the attitudes and behaviors of their teachers; this study seeks to explore this connection further.

Principals' influence on teachers' campus social support for activism (school climate for social justice). School climate is a concept for which there are many proposed definitions (Alliance for the Study of School Climate, 2014; Cohen, et al.,

2009; National School Climate Center, 2010). According to Cohen, et al., (2009), "virtually all researchers agree that there are four major areas that clearly shape school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the (external) environment" (p. 182). This researcher agrees that school climate "is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life, and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures," (National School Climate Center, 2010). Relationships among teachers constitute an important part of school climate; research indicates that trust among school personnel fosters the effectiveness and improvement of schools (Bryk and Schneider 2002; Forsyth, 2008; Louis, 2007; Moolenaar & Sleegers 2010). Principals hold a great deal of sway over the development of school climate (Kelley, Thomton & Daugherty, 2005; Marzano,Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Velasco, Edmonson & Slate, 2012), including those that are socially just and positive (Moolenaar et al., 2010; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016). Thus, principals have considerable influence over the degree to which activism for educational equity is supported in the school environment.

Principals' influence over teachers' perception of behavioral control. As was stated earlier, teachers' perception of behavioral control can be linked to two factors: feelings of agency, and access to requisite resources and opportunities. Researchers have found that principals can influence the degree to which teachers perceive agency over their actions through the development of trusting relationships (Burkhauser, 2017; Duyar, Gumus & Bellibas, 2013) and the facilitation of collaboration between teachers and other stakeholders (Heijden, et al, 2015; Soini, et al, 2015). Furthermore, principals play a key role in providing resources and opportunities to teachers that support teacher activism for

educational equity, including professional development that addresses issues of inequity (Kose, 2009; Tallerico, 2005), recruitment of social justice-oriented teachers (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2016), ongoing evaluation of programs to assure equitable opportunities for and treatment of all students (Furman, 2012), and facilitating positive and collaborative working environments with families and the community (Ishimaru, 2013; Jacobs & Casciola, 2016). Although all members of a school community have the capacity to influence teachers' intentions to engage in classroom activism, principals, by virtue of their position of authority, generally have more power to impact teacher behavior than any other individual on their respective campuses. For this reason, one of the foci for this study looks at how formal school leaders support or undermine teachers' education-related Social Justice Activism.

The Social Justice Scale. Using Ajzen's model as a guide, Torres-Harding, Siers and Olson (2012) developed a scale for exploring the factors influencing SJA behaviors in individuals who work in human services fields. Called the Social Justice Scale (SJS), it examines the following factors:

- Attitudes towards and values associated with social justice
- Perceived self-efficacy around social justice efforts (i.e., behavioral control; agency)
- Social norms around social justice efforts (i.e., social support within the institution)
- Intentions to engage in social justice-related activities and behaviors

The SJS has been used to explore the interaction of religious beliefs and civic engagement among students at a Catholic university (Kozlowski, Ferrari & Odahl, 2014),

the link between psychological sense of community, university mission statements and student engagement in social justice-related activities among students at a secular, private university (Torres-Harding, et al, 2015), and the degree to which college students' social justice beliefs associate with anxiety and religiosity (Khan, 2016). It has also been used to examine activism among prospective public school teachers in Turkey (Cirik, 2015). It has not, however been used to examine K-12 teachers' intentions towards activism in the United States.

As Azjen's theory predicts, even those teachers who intend to engage in Social Justice Activism may lack the opportunities and resources necessary to enact this commitment in their schools. Researchers have concluded that certain policies and practices, enacted by campus leaders, presented barriers that stymied teachers' efforts in effectively teaching for social justice (Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013). The extant research has not, however, already addressed the relationships among specific leadership factors and the factors measured by the SJS.

Purpose of the Study

This mixed-methods study seeks to investigate principals' support for teachers' curricular activism for educational equity in high schools in four public school districts in Texas. The primary objectives of the current study are to determine the degree to which public high school teachers engage in curricular activism for educational equity, determining the different institutional and individual factors that influence this activism, and exploring activist teachers' perceptions of how school leaders support or impede their activism. In order to conduct this study, the researcher employed an *explanatory sequential mixed methods* design; the researcher plans to interpret the quantitative

findings to answer the quantitative research question “to what degree do public high school teachers in this study engage in curricular activism for educational equity?” by using Structural Equation Modeling to analyze the relationships among responses on the Social Justice Scale. Then the researcher will discuss both the survey and interview findings that were aimed at answering the mixed-methods research questions “What factors influence this activism, and how do they interact?” and “What do those teachers who report high levels of involvement in curricular activism perceive as the supports for and barriers presented by campus principals to their activism?”.

Personal Narrative: Why this Topic?

My decision to study teacher activism grew out of my own experiences as a teacher activist, which were, in turn, shaped by key events in my pre-teaching life. I had the fortune to be born into a life of privilege: the child of two highly-educated White parents, I grew up in a safe neighborhood and was afforded every opportunity to succeed in society. At the same time, my parents raised me to understand that not every child had those same opportunities, and that I should both be grateful for them and seek to help others who had not been as fortunate as I. Prior to my birth, my mother taught in several low-income inner-city schools, and loved to share stories of the children she had taught, about their quirks and foibles, to be sure, but never failing to demonstrate her belief in their intrinsic value as human beings. One particular story stays with me to this day: she once had a seventh-grade student named Pedro, a boy who struggled academically because of his limited mastery of English, and who had a tendency to get into trouble at school. Still, she connected with him, because, she said, she could see a little spark of “something special” in him. He frequently expressed to her his desire, above anything, to

own a pet, a luxury his family could not afford. One Saturday, my mother was at the flea market, and saw someone selling Mexican jumping beans. She decided to buy one as a present for Pedro, rationalizing that here was a small "pet" that Pedro could have that would not pose a financial burden to his family. He accepted this gift with great excitement, naming the pet "Hoppy". Pedro brought "Hoppy" to school every day for a week, but one day after school, "Hoppy" somehow escaped. Mom found Pedro on the playground, with tears streaming down his face, calling out for his lost pet as if his heart was breaking. She got down on her hands and knees, and helped him search, ultimately locating "Hoppy" in the grass. The look of relief and gratitude on Pedro's face as she returned his beloved pet to him struck her to the very core. She has told me this story many times, but even sixty years later, she cannot tell it without breaking down; and in this story, I learned a powerful lesson: that all children, regardless of their status, have voices that deserve to be listened to, and lives that deserve to be valued. I also learned that even the smallest gesture, either negative or positive, can have a profound impact on those around us and that teachers, in particular, have an enormous responsibility to use our positions of power to provide as many of those good experiences for our students as we can.

My mother was also an activist in her own right: as a child she took me to anti-Vietnam War and pro-feminism protests, despite my father's warning that if we got arrested, he would come bail me out, but leave her in jail! The first time I got to experience a demonstration as an adult came during my sophomore year at the University of Texas at Austin. The year was 1986, and college students across the nation were rising up in opposition to their institutions' investments in apartheid-era South African

corporations. It was a lovely day in March, and as I walked across the West Mall, I noticed masses of students congregating, waving signs and chanting. I joined in, reveling in the sensation of joining with others for the purpose of protesting injustice. About one hour later, the Austin Police Department arrived, dressed in riot gear, and aligned in military formation. Most of us, including myself, were shocked. This was, after all, a peaceful protest and we were in a place that supposedly supported free speech and expression. And yet, the police moved in, arresting all of those who refused to beat a hasty retreat. I was handcuffed, had a mug shot taken, and was driven to a holding area underneath the football stadium. Strangely, I felt no fear, just a righteous indignation that we had been silenced in such a manner. Ultimately, however, our voices were heard: within two years, following several other protests, the university did divest all of its holdings from South Africa. Furthermore, the spot where we were arrested that day is now a protected free speech zone, where protests occur on a regular basis.

Following graduation, I turned my desire for "righting" the world's wrongs in a professional direction. Over the course of the next several years, I worked with adults with developmental disabilities, adults with chronic mental illness, and families struggling with issues of child abuse and neglect. Time and time again, I saw the injustices our society visits upon those we view as "others", from the severely disabled, whom I saw living in almost penitentiary-like conditions, to the families of color who are punished much more severely for abuse and neglect, and offered fewer resources for recovery than their White counterparts. My work as a caseworker for Children's Protective Services was particularly eye-opening: of the many families I worked with, the *only* ones to regain custody of their children from the State of Texas were White, even in

cases where red flags for continued maltreatment were clearly apparent. This work was frustrating on many levels, but foremost among these frustrations was the limited amount of time I was able to spend with the children on my caseload. I eventually decided to obtain teacher certification, with the belief that, with greater access to children in need, I could perhaps be a greater source of support.

I entered the teaching profession full of hope and naïveté, and was met with rather predictable disillusionment. I loved teaching right away, loved the kids, the way their eyes would light up when they learned something new, planning lessons…I even loved organizing school supplies. But I was discouraged to see the things that went on outside of my own classroom: teachers who were quite vocal about their dislike for certain racial groups, administrators that overlooked bullying and harassment, and the policies and procedures that were used to both promote and excuse educational inequity. I also chafed at the lack of agency that students and their families were afforded over their educational choices. On one occasion, I found myself in a battle of wills with an assistant principal who refused to allow a student to be tested for special education services because of the limited funding available. My advocacy went unanswered, and I was told to advise the family to have such testing completed at their own cost, something they were unable to afford. Eventually, I encouraged the family to demand that the school provide the testing, but, in the end, the parents said they felt it wasn't their "place" to make such demands. Needless to say, the student struggled immensely that year, and the next. Finally, he was tested, but only after he became old enough to take the state's standardized exam; then, it was argued, the expenditure was justified because his reading difficulties might have a negative impact on the school's accountability rating. That was when I learned an ugly

truth about our education system: that maintaining the status quo was often valued over students' well-being.

I found refuge with several like-minded teachers, and within the safe confines of my classroom. Over my 15 years as a public school teacher, I engaged in all four of the practices Marshall and Anderson (2009) refer to as *curricular activism*, without knowing that such a concept existed. Of these, the one that was, without a doubt, the most difficult was the fourth, which involves advocating for marginalized students' equal access to educational opportunities, as this requires actively combatting discriminatory mindsets that are so ingrained into the fabric of schools as to be almost invisible. It was my generally-fruitless efforts in this arena that eventually led me to enter doctoral studies: I became aware that, as a teacher, while I had an enormous amount of power over how to treat students in my own classroom, that power diminished to almost nothing when exerted against the system as a whole. As a result, I focused my studies on the causes of educational inequities, and to the means by which such inequities might be overcome on multiple levels of school institutions. I also gained quite a bit of insight into my own prior motivations for helping marginalized students, recognizing that I had embraced a "savior" mentality that needed to be addressed. By reading many critical theorists, especially Freire, I came to understand that it is not my role to bestow emancipation upon others, but instead to provide the opportunities that will allow them to fight for justice on their own terms. I believe that teacher activism and school leaders' support of such present a rich vein of opportunity in this quest; every time a teacher comes to believe that all of her students have intrinsic value, and deserve the chance to assert power over their own lives, and her administrators come to support her efforts to uphold those beliefs, we

have taken one step closer towards fulfilling the promise of public education in a democracy.

Problem Statement

The inequitable treatment of marginalized students in the nation's public schools is well-documented problem (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Ascher & Fruchter, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Archbald & Farley-Ripple, 2016; Mangiante, 2011; Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014; Palardy, Rumberger & Butler, 2015; Vasquez Heilig, & Jellison Holme, 2013; Zarate and Pachon, 2006), and one that can have severe and enduring negative consequences for such students (Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 2015; Hallett & Venegas, 2011; Haverman & Wilson, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012; Palardy, et al, 2011). The United States, in general, and the state of Texas, in particular, are facing extreme demographic changes (Glass, 2008; Murdock, Cline, Zey, Jeanty & Perez, 2014). In the years to come, the need for public schools that meet the needs of students from marginalized groups will do nothing but grow. Now, more than ever before, public school principals need information that will assist them in making choices that will contribute to teacher activism for educational equity, and, consequently, a more socially-just education system for all students.

School principals have a vital role to play in addressing such inequities; through their position of power, they have the ability and authority to make decisions that create a climate that supports social justice in general and educational equity in particular (Kose, 2007; Rivera-McCutchen & Watson, 2014; Theoharis & Ranieri, 2011). One method by which principals affect such a climate is through their influence over the teachers on their campuses (Kose, 2007; Moolenaar, et al, 2010). Teacher activism for educational equity

can take many forms (Marshall & Anderson, 2009), and can be quite effective in producing real change (Jasis, 2013; Liou & Rojas, 2016; Martinez & Quartz, 2012; Picower, 2012). It is therefore important to understand what drives teachers' decisions to engage in such activism. Azjen's theory of planned behavior posits that an individual's behavior can be predicted by their intention to act; this intention is shaped by three factors: the individual's attitudes about the behavior, her perceptions of self-efficacy, and the social support that exists for the behavior in her environment (Azjen, 1991). Principals have the capacity to influence all three of these factors vis-à-vis teachers (Burkhauser, 2017; Duyar, Gumus & Bellibas, 2013; Heijden, et al, 2015; Kose, 2007; Moolenaar et al., 2010; Priestly, et al, 2012; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Rivera-McCutchen & Watson, 2014; Soini, et al, 2015); thus, understanding what principals can do to promote pro-activist teacher attitudes, teacher self-efficacy and schoolwide support for activism may be critical to the development of a school climate that works for educational equity. The Social Justice Scale is an instrument that predicts Social Justice Activism by exploring the factors listed above (Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olson, 2012); as such, it is a tool that can be used to discover the beliefs affecting teachers' decisions to engage in SJA on their campuses (Cirik, 2015), information that can guide principals in their efforts towards achieving educational equity in their schools.

Although the Social Justice Scale has been used on a number of populations in several countries (Cirik, 2015; Khan, 2016; Kozlowski, Ferrari & Odahl, 2014; Torres-Harding, et al, 2015), it has not as of yet been used with public school teachers in the United States. Furthermore, while some research exists on the behaviors and attitudes of school leaders who support activism for educational equity (Capper, Theoharis &

Sebastian, 2006; Furman, 2012; McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley & Scheurich, 2008; Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis and Ranieri), only a few studies have examined teachers' perceptions about how those leaders support or impede social justice on their campuses (Brown, Irby, & Yang, 2008; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Mafora, 2013) and none have explored how teachers perceive principals' impact on their educationally-related activism.

Research Questions

A. To what degree do public high school teachers in this study engage in curricular activism for educational equity?

B. What factors influence this activism, and how do they interact?

C. What do those teachers who report high levels of involvement in curricular activism perceive as the supports for and barriers presented by campus principals to their activism?

Significance of the Study

Ultimately, the goals of this study are to examine the degree to which Texas teachers engage in curricular activism that supports educational equity, and to explore the personal and institutional factors that may encourage or prevent them from doing so, especially the supports and barriers presented by their campus leaders. In keeping with the stated premise that Social Justice Activism is capable of producing long-term, positive social change, and in light of the many inequities embedded in our education system in the modern era, it is essential that school leaders are aware of the social justice-related attitudes and behaviors of their teachers, and understand what can be done to encourage teachers to work for educational equity. It is this researcher's hope that the information gleaned from this study may be used to assist school leaders, school districts,

teacher-preparation and leadership-preparation programs in creating policies and practices that support teachers in undertaking this vital work in their classrooms and schools.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope (Delimitations)

Certain assumptions were be made in the course of the study. The study utilized a purposive (voluntary) rather than a random sampling technique. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to teachers, leaders or schools as a whole (Fowler, 2014; Patton, 1990). Thus, because this study includes teachers in only four public school districts in Texas, some findings may be specific to this context and may not be applicable to other contexts. The researcher also assumed that the teachers in the study are aware of the factors that support or impede their activism, and were willing to share this information.

Organization of Study

Chapter Two will review the extant literature on systemic educational inequity, teacher activism for social justice, Azjen's theory of planned behavior, the Social Justice Scale, and the fundamentals of Social Justice Leadership that underpin this study. Chapter Three will explain, in detail, the mixed methods that will be used to collect and analyze the study data. Chapter Four will report how the research was conducted, and present the integrated findings. Finally, Chapter Five will evaluate and interpret the findings presented in Chapter Four, draw conclusions that contribute to existing knowledge on the topic, make suggestions for further study, and make recommendations to the field of educational leadership to promote teacher activism for educational equity.

Summary

In sum, this study used both qualitative and quantitative research techniques, integrated through a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, to explore the relationships among attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, institutional norms, intention to engage, and actual involvement in curricular activism and teachers' scores on the Social Justice Scale. It will examine activist teachers' opinions about the supports and barriers to Social Justice Activism presented by their campus administrators.

Definition of Terms and Abbreviations

Curricular activism- a form of teacher activism that involves teaching on topics of social justice, advocating for equitable access for marginalized students to educational opportunities, removing classroom materials that present or reinforce misinformation about marginalized groups, and intervening with students to address oppressive actions in the classroom setting.

Mixed methods research- " a type of research design in which [quantitative] and [qualitative] approaches are used in types of questions, research methods, data collection and analysis procedures, and/or inferences" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009, p. 7).

Social Justice Activism (SJA)- activism that seeks to ensure that all members of society, regardless of identity or status, are treated with respect and assured equal opportunities and full inclusion in all societal institutions.

Mediator - An independent variable that has an indirect causal effect on a dependent variable ; explains the relationship between the two other variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986)

Moderator -variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986)

Nonrecursive Path Model - A path model containing a feedback loop (Klein, 2016).

Path Analysis - A method for studying direct and indirect causal effects within a set of variables (Pedhazur, 1982).

Path model - A diagram illustrating the interactions of mediators and moderators in a structural equation model (Klein, 2016).

Recursive Path Model - A path model not containing any feedback loops (Klein, 2016).

Social Justice Leadership (SJL)- a form of educational leadership that concerns itself with the development of leaders who "make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision" (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223).

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)- a set of mathematical models, computer algorithms and statistical methods that are used to examine relationships among data, and to fit said data to one or more theoretical models.

II. Literature Review

Introduction

According to Boote and Beile (2005), "a substantive, thorough, sophisticated literature review is a precondition for doing substantive, thorough sophisticated research" (p. 3). They assert that the goal of the literature review is "to summarize the existing literature, but also to synthesize it in a way that permits a new perspective" (p. 4). Yet, there is disagreement in the field about the proper scope of said review. Some academics argue for a *comprehensive* approach, one that emphasizes breadth and exhaustiveness of range (Boote & Beile, 2005). Others argue for a focus on *relevancy* (Maxwell, 2005). Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (1999), for instance, claim that "the writer's task is to employ the research literature artfully to support and explain the choices made *for this study*, not to educate the reader concerning the state of science in the problem area" (p. 69). In other words, selectivity of focus is a key element of the relevancy approach.

Maxwell (2005) is a prime proponent of the relevancy technique, defining a source as relevant if omitting it would leave a gap in the argument the scholar is trying to make, pose unanswered questions for the reader, or "miss a potentially valuable contribution to the research" (p. 29). Maxwell also proposes that the literature review should act as a conceptual framework, a document that, through the presentation of selective body of research, allows for the formation of "an integrated set of theoretical concepts and empirical findings, a model of the phenomena…that informs and supports the research" (p. 30). Furthermore, Maxwell argues that this conceptual framework should operate in concert with the goals, research questions and methods to create a dynamic whole (2005).

In order to achieve a well-integrated study, Maxwell recommends that researchers begin by creating conceptual maps and outlines of their proposals to ensure that all of the elements inform each other in a logical manner. The researcher has chosen to take a relevancy approach to this literature review, in appreciation of the concrete suggestions Maxwell makes for structuring both the review and the study as a whole, and with the belief that following his recommendations will allow the creation of a study that is compelling, well-argued and contributive to the field of study. Thus, the researcher began by generating both a conceptual map and an argument outline for this proposal, using them to construct a set of search terms that addressed all of the concepts included therein. The original conceptual map (figure 2) begins with the broad problem for which the study seeks a solution: educational inequity.

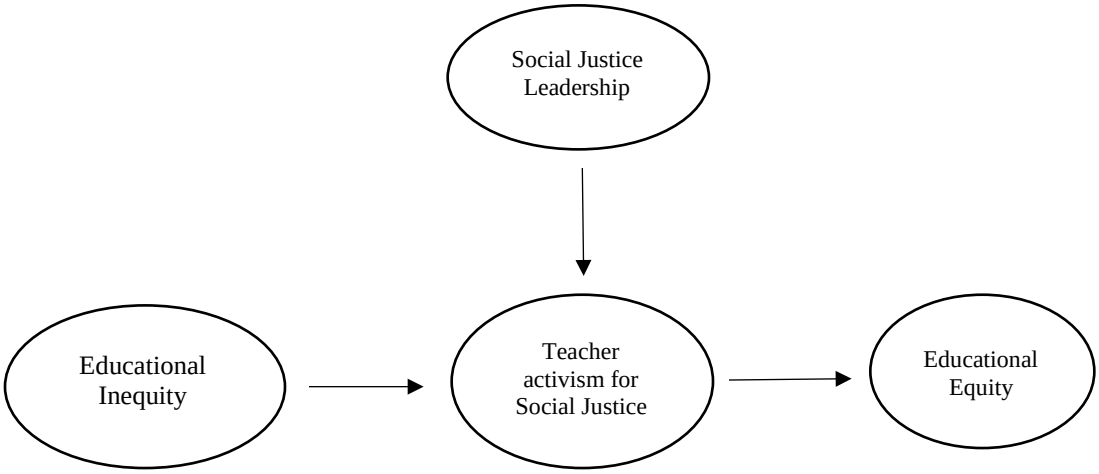


Figure 2: Original conceptual map

From there, the map leads to the solution proposed by this study: social justice activism among teachers. Next, the map proceeds to the means through which such activism may be developed: Social Justice Leadership. The original search terms were as follows: educational inequity; school segregation; social justice; social justice in education; Social Justice Leadership; social justice activism; teacher activism; social justice measurement instruments. As the review progressed, the researcher added elements to the map in order to delve more deeply into the afore-mentioned topics as they applied to this study (Figure 3); the completed map was then used to create an outline that guided the literature review.

The new elements involved the types, causes and effects of educational inequity, the historical development of the concept of Social Justice, the history and efficacy of Social Justice Activism as a whole, and specifically in the field of education, the characteristics of socially-just school leaders, the ways in which such leaders support or impede teacher activism, the history, methods and efficacy of teacher activism, and the individual and institutional factors that influence the development of teacher activism. Furthermore, the research on measurement instruments led to the decision to utilize the Social Justice Scale (Torres-Harding, et al, 2012); this choice led to further study of the theory of planned behavior (Azjen, 1991) upon which this scale was developed. The researcher then developed a set of secondary search terms: within-school inequities; types of educational inequity, *de jure* segregation, *de facto* segregation, *Brown v Board of Education*, school re-segregation; school integration; causes of educational inequity, effects of educational inequity, definition of Social Justice, history of Social Justice; Social Justice theorists; history of Social Justice activism, efficacy of Social Justice activism; history of Social Justice activism in education; efficacy of Social Justice

activism in education; Social Justice Leadership theorists; characteristics of Social Justice leaders in K-12 schools, school leader support for Social Justice; principals support for Social Justice; barriers to Social Justice in K-12 schools, history of K-12 teacher activism; efficacy of K-12 teacher activism; methods of K-12 teacher activism; individual factors influencing K-12 teacher activism; institutional factors influencing K-12 teacher activism; curricular activism; K-12 teacher attitudes towards educational equity; Azjen's theory of planned behavior; and Social Justice Scale.

The search itself was conducted using a variety of databases and search engines: EducationSource, ERIC, Dissertations and Theses Global, Sociology Source Ultimate, Google Scholar and the Texas State University Alkek Library catalogue. Humanities Source Ultimate was also used to conduct specific research on the influence of the Catholic Church on the development of the concept of social justice. Sources obtained were peer-reviewed journal articles, books and book chapters, dissertations, and newspaper accounts of current events. Although most of the sources were published between 2007 and 2017, some older sources were utilized, particularly those that were the original sources of theories or historical events, and studies that were not replicated during that ten-year period. The number of sources screened approached 1,000; the final number used numbered approximately 370. As sources were collected, the researcher frequently returned to the map and outline to evaluate the appropriateness of each source to the study. In keeping with Maxwell's guidelines, the researcher retained those that directly contributed to the logical progression of the arguments, answered potential questions the reader might have, and pointed out substantive gaps in the literature.

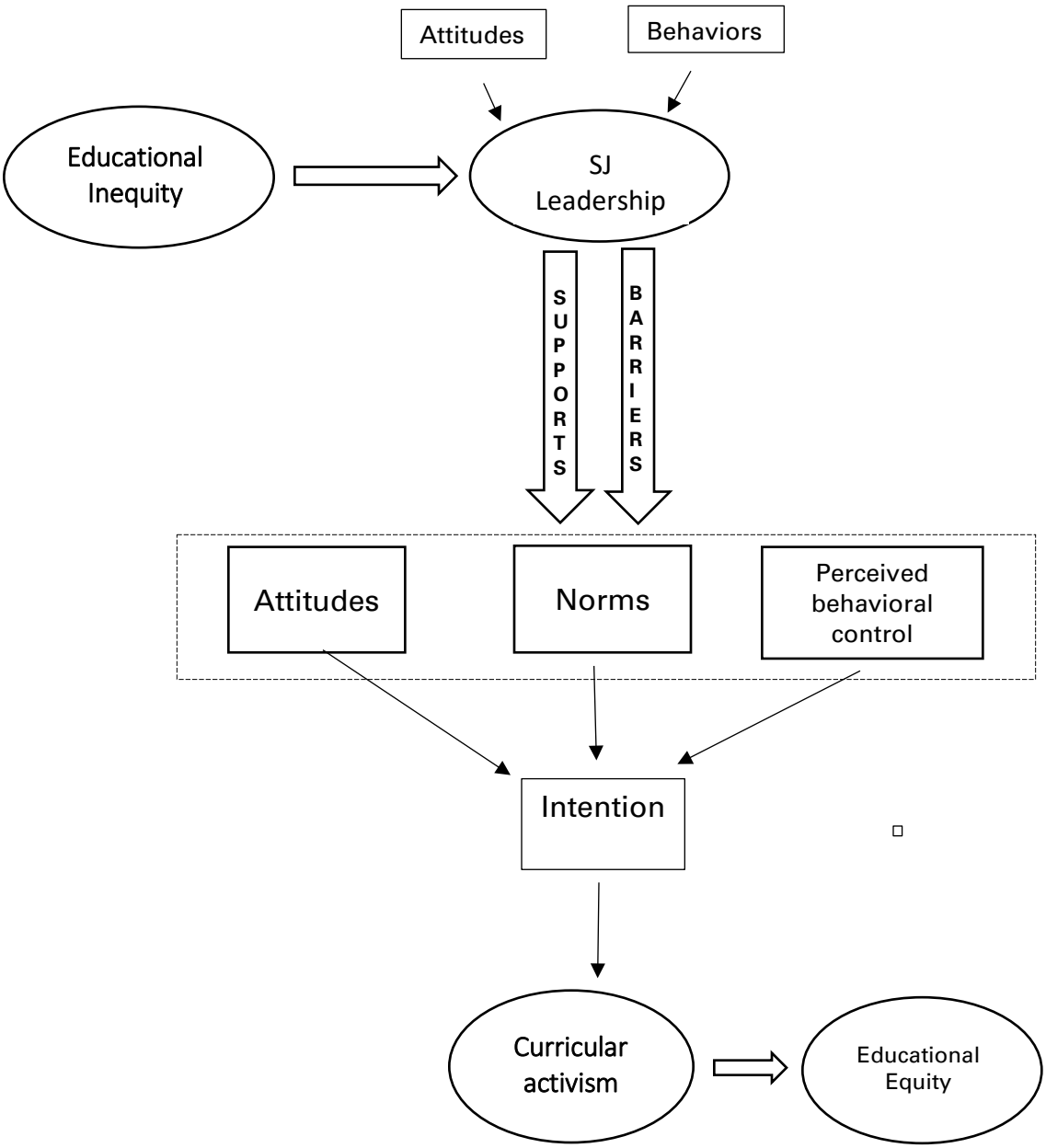


Figure 3: Completed conceptual map

This review proceeds in the following fashion: first it establishes the rationale for the study by demonstrating the educational inequities the study purports to address. Second, it discusses the topic of social justice, both as a general philosophical concept

and as it has been applied to education, and use its historical and current contexts to formulate an operational definition for the study. Next, Social Justice Leadership is presented as the theoretical framework upon which the study is based. Subsequently, the development of social justice activism (and teacher activism, in particular) as the vehicle by which social justice-minded education leaders might improve educational equity for all students is traced. Finally, Azjen's theory of planned behavior is discussed, along with its implications for understanding the barriers and supports that educational institutions present for the development of teacher activism, as well as the psychometric properties of the Social Justice Scale, which is designed to measure the institutional elements proposed by Azjen's theory.

Educational Inequity

From the inception of public education in the United States to the modern day, equity for all students has been espoused as one of its main goals. Horace Mann, "father" of the public school movement, once famously said, **"**Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is a great equalizer of the conditions of men [sic] -- the balance wheel of the social machinery" (Mann, 1868, p. 669). Echoes of Mann can still be heard in the U.S. Department of Education today, in that its stated mission is to "promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and *ensuring equal access* [italics added]" (U.S. Department of Education, 2017b, n.p.). Unfortunately, this ideal has rarely, if ever, been attained for the millions of students who occupy less-privileged positions in our society. This section describes the current state of inequity for those students, thereby presenting the rationale for this study. Inequity is endemic to the U.S. educational system, and is the core problem this study seeks solutions for.

Racial/ethnic and economic segregation

The structuring of our nation's schools so that minority students are frequently separated from their majority counterparts has long been a feature of American public education. Until the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, racial segregation of U.S. public schools was enforced by state law in the American South, and also occasionally occurred at the local level in school districts in the northern and western regions, including in the cities of Danville, Illinois (Ming, 1955), Newark, New Jersey, and Eloy, Arizona (Shagaloff, 1963). For the most part, the segregation that existed in the non-southern regions of the nation were of a *de facto* variety: in other words, schools were racially segregated as a result of residential segregation (Tillman, 1964). *De jure* segregation was the focus of *Brown*, and for that reason, the *de facto* segregation that existed in the northern and western states (and in the areas where *de facto* segregation followed *de jure* segregation) went largely ignored for several years following the *Brown* decision (Hilbert, 2017; Wilkerson, 1965). It wasn't until 1971 that the Supreme Court upheld the use of busing to combat *de facto* segregation in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (Hilbert, 2017).

Although desegregation efforts did lead to an all-time low of 28 percent of African-American students attending racially-concentrated schools in 1988, that percentage has rebounded in recent years to 40 percent (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014). Latino[1] students are also subject to segregation in our nation's schools, with 45 percent

[1] For the purposes of this study, the term "Latino" will be used to refer to individuals who identify their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino, regardless of their identified race. Those individuals who identify their ethnicity as Not Hispanic or Latino, and their race as White will be referred to as "non-Latino White".

attending schools with between 90 and 100 percent minority populations in 2011 (Gandara & Aldana, 2014).

Furthermore, economic segregation in schools is also on the rise. According to Owens, Reardon and Jencks (2016), income segregation between school districts rose by 15 percent, and within districts by 40 percent between the years 1990 and 2010. Reardon and Bischoff (2011) attribute this rise to the dramatic increase in income segregation among neighborhoods that occurred during this same time period.

In sum, at the present time, American schools are highly segregated by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic stat us and native language (Palardy, Rumberger & Butler, 2015; Vasquez Heilig, & Jellison Holme, 2013), what Howard (2010) refers to as the "demographic divide" (p. 40). Research indicates that such segregation has deleterious academic, social-emotional and behavioral impacts on students (Palardy, et al, 2015). While it has been posited that many of these negative effects stem from the unequal distribution of resources (Gamoran & An, 2016; Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003), others posit that, even in the presence of equal resources, there are negative psychological impacts that accrue to students in segregated schools, including: " feelings of inferiority and insecurity, self-doubt, self-ambivalence; feelings of isolation and of not belonging anywhere; cynicism; loss of initiative and efficiency; diminished sense of personal responsibility; ideas of persecution; displaced aggression; anti-social behavior; and disturbances in the sense of reality" (Chien, 2004, p. 87). That being said, it is clear from the research that there are many disparities between minority and majority schools, including the qualities of school infrastructure, instruction and school climate, and the

amount of funding they receive, and that these inequities often produce inequitable outcomes for minority students.

School infrastructure. For years, scholars have argued that students who are poor or belong to racial/ethnic minority groups attend schools that are structurally substandard and hazardous to both their health and their academic growth. In his ground-breaking book *Savage Inequalities* (1991), Jonathan Kozol exposed the fact that low-income and minority students frequently attend schools that are structurally substandard, plagued by crumbling buildings with plumbing and electrical problems, outdated and damaged materials and equipment, and located in neighborhoods lacking access to important community assets such as medical facilities, libraries and safe outdoor areas.

Unfortunately, more recent research indicates that these conditions are still a problem for many American students. According to Sampson (2012), for instance, children are exposed to a wide variety of environmental hazards in schools, including psychological stressors, mold, volatile organic compounds, noise, particulate matter, airborne metals, lighting, radon, asbestos and polyvinyl chloride. Furthermore, such exposure is more likely to occur in schools that have a higher percentage of students from racial/ethnic minority and low-income backgrounds. Such toxins can have a detrimental effect on students. Pastor, et al (2004) found a strong link between school proximity to toxic waste sites and low scores on academic tests, even when other demographic variables were held constant. In addition, the scientific evidence is quite clear about the role of toxins in causing a variety of developmental delays, as well as contributing to increased absenteeism due to illness (Mendel & Heath, 2005). School funding is almost certainly a key factor, here: Crampton, et al (2004) assert that low-performing schools

spend substantially less than high-performing schools on school maintenance, thereby further enhancing the risk of exposure to environmental hazards.

Instructional quality. Marginalized students also lack equitable access to qualified and effective teachers. Teacher quality is one of the most important factors affecting students' educational outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson, 1998). Unfortunately, research has demonstrated that low-income and high-minority schools experience difficulty recruiting and retaining highly-qualified teachers (Mangiante, 2011; Darling-Hammond 2004; Ascher & Fruchter, 2001). Skrla, Scheurich and Garcia, (2004), in their influential work on equity audits, measure a school's teacher quality using four metrics: years of experience, amount of education and training completed, placement in a teaching assignment within the teacher's area of certification or expertise, and the number or percentage of teachers who stay or leave the campus annually (teacher mobility). These authors contend that on all four metrics, low-income/high minority schools consistently have teachers who are of lower quality than those schools with higher income and lower minority student populations.

This inequity in teacher quality has several potential causes. First, teacher salaries in low-income/high-minority districts tend to be lower than those in higher-income/low-minority districts (Maiden & Evans, 2009). Additionally, Skrla, et al (2004) point out that teachers often vie for "plum" teaching positions among campuses and districts, with the most qualified teachers usually receiving them. These higher-status positions are predominantly those at higher-income, lower-minority schools. Finally, it also appears that many teachers simply have a bias against working in schools with less-advantaged populations of students (Marx, 2006). Whatever the reasons, it is clear that the students

most in need of highly-qualified, effective teachers are the least likely to have access to them.

Students in low-income/high-minority schools also tend to take fewer advanced classes. For example, these schools are less likely to offer Advanced Placement courses than those in more affluent communities (College Board, 2013; Zarate & Pachon, 2006). Furthermore, the advanced classes that are made available in these schools tend to be less rigorous and produce fewer students who are able to pass the end-of-year AP exam (Hallett & Venegas, 2011).

School climate. School climate is a concept for which there are many proposed definitions (Alliance for the Study of School Climate, 2014; Cohen, et al., 2009; National School Climate Center, 2010). According to Cohen, et al., (2009), "virtually all researchers agree that there are four major areas that clearly shape school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the (external) environment" (p. 182). In this case, the author agrees that school climate "is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life, and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures" (National School Climate Center, 2010, n.p.). Positive school climates impact attendance (Ekstrand, 2015) and academic achievement (Bear, et al., 2011) and foster learning necessary for achieving productive and satisfying lives in a democratic society (Cohen, et al., 2009). Unfortunately, research has found that students in high-minority/low-income schools are less likely to experience a positive school climate that their more advantaged peers. For example, in their survey of California public schools, Jain, Cohen, Huang, Hanson, & Austin (2015), found that teachers and staff at schools that serve low-income populations, Latino- and Black-

majority schools, or low-performing schools reported less positive school climates, in terms of the quality of staff/student relationships, norms and standards, student agency, and perceived physical safety, than their counterparts in higher-income, majority non-Latino White and higher-performing schools. Additionally, Lleras (2008), found that, nationwide, students in low-income schools were significantly more likely to experience classroom disruptions that they believe interfered with their ability to learn, and more likely to be the victims of bullying, harassment and other forms of violence.

School funding. Many critics contend that many of the racial and economic class disparities in educational and career outcomes can be traced to inequitable funding patterns in public schools. On average, states spend more money to support schools in high-income areas than those in low-income areas (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012). Lack of funding, of course, contributes to many of the other inequities already discussed above. Furthermore, federal funding, which allocates aid to states in proportion to each state's per-pupil expenditures, reinforces these spending inequalities, to the increasing detriment of children in high-poverty areas (Liu, 2007). For example, districts with limited budgets have difficulty attracting the most qualified teachers (Maiden & Evans, 2009) and cannot afford better-quality materials and equipment (Ostrander, 2015). Additionally, Crampton, et al (2004) assert that low-performing schools spend substantially less than high-performing schools on school maintenance, thereby further enhancing the risk of exposure to environmental hazards.

Within-school inequities

Clearly, the extant literature shows that low-income and racial/ethnic majority students are frequently consigned to schools or districts in which they are separated from

non-Latino White or higher-income peers, and that such separation means unequal opportunity. It should also be said, however, that even those minority students who attend majority-non-Latino White or racially and economically-mixed schools still receive inequitable treatment within them. Tracking practices in many schools assure that many lower-socioeconomic and racial/ethnic minority students are placed in lower-track programs that lack intellectual depth (Archbald & Farley-Ripple, 2016; Klopfenstein, 2004; Tyson, 2011). Banks (2000) asserts that "classes for lower-track students tend to be characterized by low-level instruction, drill exercises, and a lack of higher-level content" (p. 37). Michelle Fine (1997), characterizes these tracking trends as examples of how schools create "Whiteness" as a racial category that is synonymous with academic merit. In order to maintain and reinforce this idea of White academic superiority, Fine asserts, African American and Latino identities are constructed in such a way that they "disintegrate to embody deficit or 'lack'" (p. 246). In other words, White and non-White identities have a symbiotic relationship; in order for Whiteness to remain the signifier for achievement, non-Whiteness must remain the signifier for deficiency. In this way, schools can be seen as identity factories where protecting the superiority of majority students is ingrained into the fabric of the institution, virtually assuring the placement of minority students into lower-status positions. This tendency also appears in the fact that minority students are also disproportionately targeted for the most extreme forms of discipline, including in- and out of-school suspensions and placements in alternative school settings (Hatt, 2011), and in statistics that show they are less likely to be placed in gifted education programs (Ford, 2014) and more likely to be placed in Special Education classes (Reid & Knight, 2006).

All of these factors create *de facto* segregation, wherein ethnic minority or low-income students are deprived of equal access even in technically desegregated schools. This type of segregation also has extra-academic affects, in that schools with high levels of within-school segregation tend to produce environments in which negative stereotypes about minorities are intensified, and in which minority students are more likely to be excluded and marginalized by teachers and non-minority peers. (Walsemann & Bell, 2010).

Inequitable educational outcomes

It should come as no surprise that, given the educational inequities experienced by minority and low-income students, these students tend to do less well in school and in later life. These outcomes include inequities in academic achievement, occupational achievement and quality of life.

Academic achievement. One example of inequitable outcomes can be seen in how minority/low-income students perform academically.

Test scores. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012) students whose families live below the poverty line, and those who are African-American or Latino, consistently demonstrate lower levels of proficiency on basic skills in math, reading, writing and science as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In the state of Texas, where the research for this study was conducted, similar findings can be found on the state's STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) exam. In 2016, for instance, 52 percent of Latino, 45 percent of Black, and 49 percent of economically disadvantaged students received an acceptable score on the English I STAAR on their first attempt, compared to 77 percent of non-

Latino White, and 73 percent of non-economically disadvantaged students. Similar patterns emerged on the End of Course (EOC) exams for Algebra, Biology, U.S. History, and English II (Texas Education Agency, 2016b). Additionally, students from these groups consistently underperform their non-Latino White and higher-income peers on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (College Board, 2016) and the ACT exam (ACT, 2015), both in the frequency with which they take the exams, and in the scores received on them.

High school completion. Furthermore, minority and low-income students are more likely to drop out of high school than their non-Latino White and higher-income peers. Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2015) noted that fewer than 60 percent of students in low-income districts graduate from high school, compared to over 75 percent of students in high-income districts. Meanwhile, the National Center for Education Statistics (2016) reports that while 87 percent of non-Latino White students in U.S. public high schools graduate within four years, only 76 percent of Latino students and 73 percent of African-American students did the same.

Higher Education. Research also indicates that students from these marginalized groups attend college at lower rates. For instance, Welton and Martinez (2014) report that not only is there a 13 percent gap between Blacks and non-Latino Whites and a 10 percent gap between Latinos and non-Latino Whites in college enrollment rates, but this gap has increased since 1997. In 2006, while 44 percent of non-Latino White youths aged 18 to 24 were in college, only 25 percent of Latino and 32 percent of Black youth were (Brock, 2010). Students from low-income backgrounds are also significantly less likely to attend college, a situation which has led to the somewhat-controversial use of dual-enrollment programs as a way of bridging that gap (Hoffman, Vargas, & Santos

(2008). Furthermore, research shows that only 26 percent of students from the bottom quartile of the income distribution complete a college degree by age 25, as opposed to 59 percent of students from the top quartile (Haverman & Wilson, 2009).

Occupational achievement and quality of life. The disproportionality of high school graduation, college attendance and college graduation has severe consequences for minority and low-income students later in life.

Salaries. In 2014, employed African Americans earned an average of 611 dollars per week, Latinos earned 548 dollars, while non-Latino Whites earned 734 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Interestingly, this racial earnings gap persists even at equal levels of educational attainment and occupational category (Carnavale, Rose & Cheah, 2011). This salary gap also manifests in the poverty rates for racial/ethnic minorities; according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 24.1 percent of African-Americans and 21.4 percent of Latinos live below the poverty line, as compared to 9.1 percent of non-Latino Whites (2015). People who are raised in low-income backgrounds are also more likely to live below the poverty line as adults. Research conducted by Ron Haskings of the Brookings Institute that examined the economic outcomes of children raised in poverty found that have a 43 percent chance of winding up in the bottom themselves, and only four percent of them wind up in the top quintile" (2015, n.p.) In fact, this lack of social and economic mobility has increased in recent years (Haskings, 2015).

Unemployment. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, during the second half of 2016, 8.3 percent of African-Americans and 5.6 percent of Latinos over the age of 16 were unemployed, versus 4.2 percent of non-Latino Whites (2016). Although people from low-income backgrounds are not more likely to lose their jobs that those from

higher-income backgrounds, when they do, they are more likely to suffer serious impacts, such as homelessness, mental health issues and incarceration (Nichols, Mitchell, & Lindner, 2013). In sum, educational inequity has extreme and deleterious effects upon the lives of Americans who are of racial/ethnic minority or low-income status.

Social Justice

In this study, Social Justice Activism among teachers is proposed as a means by which to address ongoing issues of educational inequity. In order to fully implement said activism, however, it is vital to understand what it truly entails; thus, defining the concept and its components is necessary. Despite being a much-discussed and researched topic in the social sciences, the fundamental concept of *social justice* lacks a single, agreed-upon definition in the scholarly literature (Gordon & Generett, 2011). In order to define the concept for the purposes of this study, the researcher reviewed the extant literature of the historical and current theory and synthesized an operational definition of social justice as it applies to education. The schema used by the researcher to choose which philosophers to explore was constructed by "beginning at the end". In other words, the concept of social justice generally considered to have had the greatest influence on Social Justice Leadership was developed by Nancy Fraser (Grant & Gibson, 2013) whose ideas will be discussed at the end of this section. The researcher then worked "backwards," discovering which writers influenced her, then who influenced them, and so on, until the origin of the Western conceptualization of social justice was reached.

Philosophy of social justice

This section will trace the transformation of social justice from a conservative libertarian concept concerned almost exclusively with issues of economic class to a progressive, socialist-leaning approach that addresses issues of class, race, gender, and

sexuality. The landmark theories that have shaped the concept as it applies to philosophy writ large will be addressed next; those more directly related to education and educational leadership will be addressed in a subsequent section.

Theorists of the Italian Risorgimento Era. Although current Western philosophical conceptions of Social Justice come from both religious and secular sources, it was, at the beginning, the Roman Catholic Church from which it sprang and was popularized. The origin of social justice in Catholic teaching can be traced back to St. Thomas Aquinas, "the single most formative theological influence on Catholic ethics" (Cahill, 2015, p. 194). Aquinas, a thirteenth-century Dominican friar and Catholic priest from Italy, had an enormous influence on Catholic thought in particular, and Western philosophy in general. He is perhaps best known for his efforts in infusing Aristotle's teachings with Catholic theological principals (Jenkins, 1997). Kettern (1998) contends that the essence of Thomasian justice lies in an emphasis on "the duty of the individual to adjust himself or herself to the society for the benefit of the common good,"(p. 90) combined with the acknowledgement that the individual also has the right to pursue his own self-interest. Aquinas, did not, however, explain how these competing interests should be regulated; this question remained unanswered in the Catholic canon until it was taken up in the mid-1800s by a politically conservative Jesuit philosopher named Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio (Kettern, 1998).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Europe was struggling with economic issues arising from the Industrial Revolution, and the concomitant political push towards the formation of strong nation-states (Mann, 1996). On the Italian peninsula, a movement to unite the region into one political entity, known as the Risorgimento, generated fierce

debate over fundamental questions about the nature of government and society (Boyles, Carusi & Attick, 2009; Burke, 2010;). Into the fray entered Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio, a politically conservative Jesuit philosopher who is credited with originating the term "social justice" in 1843. Drawing heavily from Aquinas' writings on ethics (Paulhus, 1987), Taparelli d'Azeglio's conception of social justice rested upon two competing ideas: that humans were both equal in the eyes of God, and unequal in terms of their abilities, characteristics and possessions (Burke, 2010). In order for social justice to occur, society must acknowledge the dual nature of humanity and take steps to rectify the inequalities: "social justice should therefore level all men [sic] in regard to the rights given with their humanity, since the Creator has equalized them by nature; man fulfills the intentions of his Maker by acting according to the norm of this justice" (Taparelli d'Azeglio, quoted in Burke, 2010, p.101). Taparelli d'Azeglio also saw social justice in relatively libertarian terms: "The first principle of morality applied to social existence commands us to procure the good of others and therefore to abstain from impeding it. This implies a correlative right on the other's part to procure his own good without being impeded by us, so long as he does not pose an obstacle to ours." (quoted in Burke, 2010, p. 103). In other words, social justice exists as long as individuals are able to pursue their own self-interest, and do not actively seek to keep others from pursuing theirs. Over time, however, the concept evolved into one that takes a much more socialist, communitarian stance.

The first turn in a socialist direction came only a few years later, in the works of Antonio Rosmini Serbati. Serbati, an Italian educational philosopher, pedagogue and Jesuit priest, wrote *The Constitution of Justice* in 1848, in which, instead of relying upon

individuals to act in socially just ways, he advocated for policies that would support social justice (Scarangello, 1964). He urged civic and social institutions to strive for equilibrium between: population and wealth; wealth and civil power; civil power and material force; civil/military powers and knowledge; and knowledge and virtue (Noble, 2015, p.109).

John Stuart Mill and Utilitarianism. By the 1860s, social justice began to appear in non-clerical circles. John Stuart Mill, British philosopher and economist, tackled the issue in his 1861 work, *Utilitarianism.* Briefly, utilitarianism is a philosophy based on the principle of "Utility" (or "The Greatest Happiness Principle") that argues that "actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness" (Mill, 1861, n.p.). In this book, Mill advocates for a form of society in which the "security" [i.e., freedom] of all individuals is paramount, one in which legal and moral codes are needed that give equal rights to security to all individuals. Like Serbati, Mill believed that societal institutions must intervene to assure that individual freedoms are protected: "Security emanates from a network of individual rights and correlative obligations assigned by social rules, including laws, customs, and common dictates of conscience" (Riley, 2005, p. 47). However, Mill's conception does not, in reality, assure equal rights for all. According to Riley (2005), Mill saw legal contracts and private property rights as the essential means by which such security is protected. This stance ignores the fact that people living in poverty generally have little property and few "purely self-regarding affairs" (e,g., they are less likely to control their own means of production or any other aspects of their lives). Therefore, under this model, the poor wind up having fewer rights than the

privileged. Mill also adds a rather pessimistic flavor to his views, in that he contends that the development of a socially-just society is unlikely because of fundamental flaws in human nature. This can be seen in the following quote about “utility”, the principle upon which his argument rests: “As every other maxim of justice, so this [the maxim of utility] is by no means applied or held applicable universally; on the contrary, as I have already remarked, it bends to every person's ideas of social expediency” (Mill, 1861, n.p.) In other words, social justice is improbable because humans tend to value their own freedoms more than those of others.

British Idealism. The British Idealists of the next decade, however, focused greater attention both on the rights of the poor, as well as proposing concrete recommendations whereby social justice could, indeed, be achieved. British Idealism, exemplified in the works of philosophers T.H. Green, F.H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet, developed in response to the myriad social ills (disease, squalor, unsafe working conditions, alcoholism, prostitution, etc.) caused by the rapid industrialization and urbanization then occurring in Britain. According to Boucher (2005), theirs was a highly judgmental and moralistic movement, one that roundly condemned all strata of society as degenerate for allowing such problems to occur. But as they blamed all, they also called all to take corrective action: the movement “emphasized both the responsibilities of individuals to seize the opportunities to make themselves more virtuous, and of the owners of capital to transform their workshops into exemplars of virtue” (Boucher, 2005, p. 84). The means by which these evils should be addressed were two-fold: stringent adherence to Christianity and a strong educational system. Schooling, in particular, was touted as a cure for civilizing the poor and imparting vital skills of

leadership to the wealthy, conditions that a socially-just society would require (Mander, 2011).

Pope Pius XI. With the turn of the twentieth century came an even greater concern for the plight of the poor in conceptualizations of social justice, and, once again, the Roman Catholic Church took the lead. Deeply concerned about the ever-widening gap between rich and poor, and the global suffering that resulted from the Great Depression, Pope Pius XI directly addressed these issues in his 1931 encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno:On Reconstruction of the Social Order* (Pope Pius XI, 1931). In this text, the Pope emphasizes the central role the Church must take in fighting for social justice in the world. Additionally, he argues for a living wage, an equitable distribution of property and the formation and support of labor unions and guilds. Furthermore, he openly advocates in favor of socialism as an economic system more likely to yield social justice than capitalism: "socialism inclines toward and in a certain measure approaches the truths which Christian tradition has always held sacred; for it cannot be denied that its demands at times come very near those that Christian reformers of society justly insist upon" (n.p.). The impact of Pope Pius IX's work should not be underestimated: it represents the first popular linkage of social justice and socialism, a trend which picked up steam after World War II and continues to this day (Burke, 2010, p. 90). Since 1931, this encyclical has been part of the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, and greatly influenced the teachings and actions of the Liberation Theology Movement.

Liberation Theology. Liberation Theology is a school of Roman Catholic thought which teaches that a primary duty of the church must be to promote social and economic justice. Originating in Latin America in the 1950s, it represented a turn away

from the Eurocentric model of theology that had dominated Roman Catholic thinking for centuries. Fueled by worries over the political and economic strife gripping the region as a result of imperialism, the movement proposed "an interpretation of Christian faith through the poor's suffering, their struggle and hope, and a critique of society and the Catholic faith and Christianity through the eyes of the poor" (Berryman, 1987, p. 151). Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutierrez is credited with naming the movement; in his text *A Theology of Liberation*, he equates social justice with human emancipation within social, political and economic spheres (Gutierrez, 1973). In order to achieve such emancipation, he argues in favor of making a radical break from the capitalist system in favor of a socialist system (Maia, 2013). The movement strengthened following the writing of the so-called Medellin Documents, a response by Latin American bishops to the Second Vatican Council of 1959. According to Berryman (2014), the commitment of the Latin American Bishops to social justice is clearly demonstrated in the conclusions of the Medellin Documents: "The first five topics were not 'religious' but dealt with 'human development' (justice, peace, family and demography, education, youth)" (p. 143).

Throughout Latin America, the Roman Catholic Church began working for social justice via the emancipation of its followers. Although much of this effort was traditional in nature (parish outreach programs, etc.) it also took a more radical form: supporting revolutionary movements against puppet military regimes in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador (Berryman, 2014).

> The churches were a major point of resistance to the abuses of military regimes. Priests, sisters, and pastors often helped people being hunted by the police or military to hide and escape from the country. They helped family members of

> those killed or "disappeared." When government policies produced widespread unemployment, parishes formed communal soup kitchens run by local volunteers. They provided information on human rights violations to international organizations. In many instances, individual bishops and the national conference of bishops issued statements condemning human rights violations. This was especially important at a time when all other voices in society (congress, media, labor unions) were muzzled. These actions made church people enemies in the eyes of the military and repressive governments. (Berryman, 2014, p. 146)

It cannot be doubted that Church members placed themselves in great danger: the 1980s saw the assassinations by U.S.-backed Salvadoran forces of Archbishop Oscar Romero, theologian Ignacio Ellacuria and eight members of his household, as well as the brutal rape-murders of three nuns and an American church lay worker. In Guatemala, Bishop Juan Gerardi and at least a dozen priests were also assassinated by that nation's military regime (also U.S.-backed). All of these crimes are believed to have been committed as retribution for resisting government oppression (Berryman, 2014).

During the 1990s, the concerns of the Liberation Theologists broadened to include women's rights and issues of culture and race (Berryman, 2014). In recent years, the movement's impact is being felt around the world, including the United States, where its teachings are being used to analyze the experiences of women, African-Americans, Latino-Americans, Native-Americans, Asian-Americans and LGBTQ individuals; it has also been applied to the study of environmental justice and the postcolonial era (De La Torre, 2014).

John Rawls. Often considered the most important social justice theorist of the late twentieth century, John Rawls' theory of social justice was based on the principles of Keynesian economics, a perspective that argues that boosting the buying power of the poor raises demand, which then bolsters the entire economy. As such, Bankston (2010) contends that Rawls' views constitute a "consumer orientation toward fairness" and is essentially economic in nature (p.174).

Rawls' model, which advocates for *distributive justice*, asserts that social justice should focus on the most disadvantaged members of society, and, through political action, redistribute goods, opportunities and power in their favor (Bankston, 2010). Additionally, he argues that such a system would depend on members of society to act in accordance with fundamental principles of fairness, which requires that "mutually disinterested free and equal rational agents (parties) choose principles to apply to the basic structure of their society behind a 'veil of ignorance" (Greetis, 2015, p. 227). In other words, individuals must be willing to set aside their own interests and operate as if they are unaware of the social stratum they currently occupy, acknowledging how they would wish to be treated if they occupied the lowest stratum. Optimistically, he also contends that such believes that the construction of such a system is possible in Western society, not just an unlikely goal, as in Mill's theory, because fairness as a value is deeply imbedded in democratic society (Freeman, 2006).

Thomas Pogge. Pogge, a student of John Rawls, built on Rawls' theory to create a conception of social justice that frames global poverty as the direct result of Western institutions' policies. His central argument is that, while previous theorists have focused on societies' positive duties (i.e., the duty to offer assistance) to those in poverty,

societies must also attend to negative duties, that is, to avoid harming the global poor in the first place (Sønderholm, 2012). Furthermore, Pogge asserts that citizens of affluent nations "have a particularly strong negative duty to enact and comply with just institutions, and that we violate this duty as our elected governments impose on the world's poor a manifestly unjust global institutional order, one that carries tangible responsibility for 50,000 daily poverty deaths" (Nili, 2013, p. 105). Those afore-mentioned unjust global institutional orders are exemplified by the policies of entities such as World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United Nations (UN) system, which, Pogge contends, "greatly advance the national interests of developed countries over those of developing ones" (Sønderholm, 2012, p. 369).

Nancy Fraser. During the same period that Pogge was creating his theory of social justice, Nancy Fraser, feminist philosopher, was formulating her own, one that moves beyond the traditional concept as one centering on economic issues to include feminist, neo-Marxist, critical and poststructuralist views (Blackmore, 2016). According to Fraser, social justice requires much more than the *redistribution* of wealth and access to economic opportunity; it also requires *recognition* (i.e., awareness and appreciation) of cultural differences and equitable political *representation* for members all marginalized groups (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). In this way, it is apparent that Fraser may have been more influenced by latter-day Liberation Theologists' views of social justice as encompassing elements of culture, race, sex and gender than Rawls' and Pogge's strict focus on economic class.

Fraser also contends that the quality of redistribution, recognition and representation are key to achieving social justice. Here, she argues for *parity of participation*, a norm that must satisfy two conditions: objective and intersubjective. The *objective condition* requires the "distribution of material resources must be such as to ensure participant's independence" and the presence of "voice" that prevents the construction of "social arrangements that institutionalize deprivation, exploitation and gross disparities of wealth, income and leisure time, thereby denying some people the means and opportunities to interact with others as peers' (Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 36). The intersubjective condition demands 'institutionalized patterns of cultural value [that]express equal respect of all participants and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem. This condition precludes institutionalized value patterns that systematically depreciate some categories of people and the qualities associated with them" (Fraser & Honneth 2003, p. 36).

It is also important to note that Fraser is an incrementalist when it comes to the actualization of social justice, arguing for gradual over "apocalyptic" change (Blackmore, 2016). She proposes two types of change: *affirmative* and *transformative*. *Affirmative change*, which is critical in nature, aims to "correct inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying social structures that generate them" (Fraser, 1997, p. 75) through such means as redistribution of wealth through tax codes and mainstream exposure to multiculturalism (Blackmore, 2016). *Transformative change* represents a post-structural approach, in that it seeks to deconstruct societal symbols and patterns that support injustice. This type of change would require the formulation of

policies that challenge the assumptions underlying racial, sexual and gender dominance (Fraser, 1997).

Social justice in the field of education

According to Grant and Gibson (2013), Rawls and Fraser's conceptions of social justice are the frameworks most often applied to the study of educational inequity in the current era, specifically the concepts of economic redistribution, cultural recognition and political representation). And although the common thread among social justice education theories is the demand for institutions such as schools to both unveil and transform oppressive policies and practices (Mthethwa-Sommers 2012), different theorists disagree about the relative importance of these three elements.

Redistributionists. Some social justice theorists have focused primarily on the importance of achieving economic equality as a goal of public education. For instance, Horace Mann, long considered to be the father of public schooling in the United States, envisioned a form of education that Boyles, Carusi and Attick describe as "invok[ing] notions of distributive social justice" (2009, p. 34). Indeed, Mann sought, through the creation of "common schools", to alleviate the rising economic inequality that was being driven by the population growth, urbanization and industrialization of his era by assuring that children from all ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes received an equitable education. (Kantor & Lowe, 2011).

Certain educational social justice scholars of the modern era have also embraced this economically-focused view. Iris Marion Young, Diane Ravitch, and E. D. Hirsch, Jr., for instance, have all been described by Boyles, Carusi and Attick (2009) as espousing "distributive notions of justice [which] find their strength in egalitarian ideals

where each person has an equal share" (p. 38) of educational goods and services. Young (1990), developed what she termed the *distributive paradigm*, in which she argues that once equality of distribution is achieved, the conditions of social justice are satisfied. Hirsch, creator of the Core Knowledge program, asserts that said program fulfils a social justice agenda by exposing all students to an identical curriculum (Hirsch, Kett & Trefil,1998). Ravitch (2010, 2013), has concentrated her critiques on issues of funding inequities and the commodification of education via "school choice" and "accountability" movements.

Redistributionist/representationalists and redistributionist/recognitionists. Other scholars have endorsed the value of pursuing both economic and political justice in public education. John Dewey, for example, argued that the purposes of education were to eradicate class differences (2008), as well as to create conditions wherein students would be prepared to participate fully in a democratic society (1944).

Other theorists have focused on economic and cultural issues, instead. Kenneth Howe, for instance, contends that economic redistribution cannot, by itself, create social justice; instead, such a condition "has as one of its requirements that all persons be afforded recognition and secured self-respect" (1997, p. 89).

Redistributionist/representationalist/recognitionists. Finally, some scholars, indeed most scholars of the modern era, conceptualize social justice in education as striving for equity in all three realms: economic, political and cultural. For example, Ayers, Quinn and Stovall, in the preface of their edited volume *Handbook of Social Justice in Education* (2009), express a belief that social justice in education must address redistribution, representation and recognition. They state that social justice education

rests on three principles: equity ("equal access to the most challenging and nourishing educational experiences" (p. xiv) regardless of the student's level of privilege or economic class); activism ("agency, full participation, preparing youngsters to see and understand, and, when necessary, to change all that is before them", p. xiv); and social literacy ("nourishing awareness of our own identities and our connections with others", p. xiv). Similarly, Cochran-Smith (2008), contends that teaching for social justice must incorporate "distributive justice, which locates equality and autonomy at the center of democratic societies, with current political struggles for recognition, which challenge the school and knowledge structures that reinforce the disrespect and oppression of social groups" (p. 12). North (2006), articulates this view thusly: "If the ultimate goal of social justice is the restructuring of the political economy…then social justice education must challenge the existing hierarchies of power, embracing difference [and] challenging cultural imperialism" (p. 510).

In most of these conceptualizations, we can hear the echoes of a prominent Critical theorist: Paolo Freire. Critical theory, at its core,. Although initially concerned primarily with economic power, the theory seeks to identify, critique and change power differentials that exist among groups in society evolved to incorporate all types of power (e.g., social, political, educational) that are used by the ruling class to maintain their dominant position (Crotty, 1998). This use of multiple power sources by the elites to control society is referred to as *hegemony* (Gramsci, 1971). Critical Theory as it applies to education embraces an emancipatory stance, wherein the goal of schooling should be to empower the oppressed to overcome this hegemony.

In keeping with the traditions of Critical Theory, Friere's work addresses the

economic, political and cultural aspects of social justice. This tri-partite focus can be seen in his development of the concept of emancipation through education. In his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993), he tackles not only the issue of poverty, but also of the political and cultural ways in which the effects of poverty are reinforced. He contends, for example, that the poor are dehumanized by their oppression, and that their humanization can only be acquired through their own efforts, not those of their oppressors, and that such humanization is the critical goal of a socially-just education system. As such, he argues that education is, fundamentally, a political act; therefore, schooling must engage students in such a way as to develop their abilities to challenge the political status quo. This, he argues, may be accomplished through *praxis*: the application of reflection on the conditions of injustice and action to erode those conditions (1993). Freire's emphasis on cultural recognition can be seen in his critique of what he calls the mainstream practice of education: the *banking concept*. This model, he contends, consists of an all-knowing teacher depositing knowledge that supports the oppressors' cultural beliefs on stud students' minds: "The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed, nor to see it transformed" (1993, p. 54). The cure for the banking model, he argues, is a *liberating* model, one in which open dialogue between teachers and students leads to "the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality" (1993, p. 62). In other words, teachers and students must work together to actively challenge the cultural beliefs of the oppressor. Freire's concentration on cultural recognition can also be seen in his validation of situating educational activities in the lived experience of students, ones in

which content "is constituted and organized by the students' view of the world, where their own generative themes are found" (1993, p. 90).

All of the above-mentioned concepts of humanization, praxis, and liberating education appear in Freire's concept of *critical pedagogy*, an approach to teaching based on his theories, the goal of which is the elimination of oppression through the development of *critical consciousness* (Freire, 1973).

Many other theorists, including Henry Giroux, Peter Maclaren, Joe Kincheloe, Ira Shor, and Gloria Ladson-Billings have expanded upon this concept to build a robust theory from which social justice in education may be pursued. Giroux, in particular, defines critical pedagogy as addressing "the democratic potential of engaging how experience, knowledge, and power are shaped in the classroom in different and often unequal contexts, and how teacher authority might be mobilized against dominant pedagogical practices as part of the practice of freedom" (Giroux, 2011, p. 5). Critical pedagogy first arose, like Critical Theory itself, from the Frankfurt School philosophers Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse and Benjamin, who held in common the notion that injustice and oppression shape the human world (Kincheloe, 2008). Within this paradigm, schools are sites of conflict, within which hegemony is enacted and combatted (Apple, Au & Gandin, 2009). The nature of critical pedagogy is essentially counter-hegemonic in that exposes the power imbalances that exist in educational spheres, and examines how such inequities might be challenged within those spheres (Apple, Au & Gandin, 2009). As a result, critical pedagogy is interested in the margins of society, in amplifying the voices of those who are typically silenced (Kincheloe, 2008). It also incorporates Freirian notions of praxis, wherein the ultimate goal of education should involve seeing the world

from the viewpoint of the marginalized, and taking action to subvert the reproduction of oppressing conditions (Apple, Au & Gandin, 2009). Freirian emancipation is also vital to this work, in that students are not seen as vessels to be filled, but as agents capable of understanding the sources and causes of oppression, and equal to the task of dismantling it (Giroux, 2011). The definition of what constitutes a marginalized group in critical pedagogy has evolved over time. Originally, the focus was limited to the economically disenfranchised; current conceptualizations, however, now address issues of race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender and (dis)ability and critical pedagogues are called upon to support the building of alliances among these groups, citing the power of solidarity in confronting injustice (Kincheloe, 2008).

Giroux (2011), goes on to conceptualize schools as "democratic public spheres" (p. 5), teachers as public intellectuals, and students as "potential democratic agents of individual and social change" (p. 5). In this context, then, pedagogy can be seen as a form of cultural politics (Giroux, 2011). The role of teachers in this paradigm cannot be understated: Giroux frames teachers as authorities who "might be mobilized against the dominant pedagogical practices as part of the practice of freedom" (2011, p. 5). Furthermore, he challenges teachers to impart to their students the knowledge, skills and agency to "inquire and act upon what it means to live in a substantive democracy, recognize antidemocratic forms of power and fight deeply-rooted injustices in a world founded on systemic economic, racial and gender inequality" (2011, p. 74).

This paradigm also recognizes that developing teachers into critical pedagogues is a difficult process, as they, too, were largely educated in hegemonic spaces. Kincheloe (2008) recommends teacher training that emphasizes the reframing of schooling as

having deep political implications as the first step towards “developing a social activist teacher persona” (p. 2) among educators.

Social Justice Education (SJE) is another framework built upon Freirian thought, the stated goal of which is finding “more effective ways to challenge oppressive systems and promote social justice through education” (Bell, 2007, p. 1). Although SJE was developed out of multiple theoretical traditions, including human development, organizational development, multicultural education, experiential education, and ethnic and women’s studies, it owes a great deal to Freirean pedagogy in particular: Bell (2007) argues that SJE demands that a theory of oppression be developed and applied, as necessary for ethical, effective *praxis* to be achieved in classroom-based social justice efforts. Additionally, the lived experiences of students are valued, and consciousness-raising about how hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) affects the lives of individuals and influences the workings of societal institutions is proposed as vital to laying the groundwork for social change. Freire’s influence can also be seen in SJE’s pedagogical frameworks, in that they explicitly reference his calls for cooperation among equals, a common focus on support of equity and justice, consciousness-raising about the current oppressive systems, the development of an atmosphere in which the personal experiences of the oppressed are validated, and the necessity of reflection upon experiences and actions.

Operational definition of social justice in education

Based on the review of the literature, *social justice in education* is defined, for the purposes of this study, as occurring when students who occupy a marginalized status

in racial, ethnic, religious, language, economic, sexual, gender or ability terms have economic, cultural and political equity within the context of educational institutions.

Social Justice Leadership

This researcher proposes that educational equity can be improved upon through the behaviors and attitudes of educational leaders that encourage social justice activism among teachers. Social Justice Leadership (SJL) is a model of educational leadership that is especially well-suited to the development of such behaviors and attitudes.

Educational literature is immersed in a wide variety of leadership theories. Studies show that the effectiveness of change efforts is directly related to the characteristics of leaders (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Social Justice Leadership, in particular, concerns itself with the development of leaders who "make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision" (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223). Additionally, socially-just leaders are focused on the experiences of those living on the margins of society, and on the inequitable access to educational opportunities and outcomes endemic to such marginalization (Furman, 2012). It also involves taking corrective action: "[SJL] involves identifying and undoing these oppressive and unjust practices and replacing them with more equitable, culturally appropriate ones" (Furman, 2012, p. 194). Current conceptions of Social Justice Leadership also often include the tripartite focus of social justice on economic, political and cultural equity; for instance, Gerwitz and Cribb (2002) contend that such leadership must deal with distributive, cultural and associational justice.

Social Justice Leadership, like education for social justice, owes a great deal to Critical Theory. The Freirian notion of *praxis* plays a large role in Social Justice

Leadership. Action, for instance, plays a key role in SJL: Furman (2012) asserts that leadership for social justice is "action-oriented" and "involves identifying and undoing these oppressive and unjust practices and replacing them with more equitable, culturally appropriate ones" (p. 194). Additionally, Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) contend that in order for social justice leaders to eradicate educational inequity, they must engage in "the exercise of altering these [inequitable] arrangements by actively engaging in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining, and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, and personal dimensions" (p. 162). In addition, reflection is also a requirement: Bogotch (2002) explains that there are no "right" or objective models for social justice leadership, rather that it should be viewed as a process that must be continually "reinvented and critiqued" (p. 154). Furman (2012) also describes social justice leaders as those who "engage in critical self-reflection aimed at personal awareness and growth. This self-reflection is seen as a way for leaders to identify and come to grips with their prejudices and assumptions arising from their cultural backgrounds" (p. 197).

Social reproduction theory is also a concept from Critical Theory that is addressed by SJL. In the 1970s, renowned Critical Theorists Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) first published the theory of cultural reproduction in which they assert that all social institutions, including schools, operate so as to maintain the power of those who dominate society. Members of the different social strata possess cultural capital that enhances survival within each stratum. Unfortunately, in schools, institutions that were created for the purpose of maintaining the *status quo*, the cultural capital possessed by the powerful strata is most likely to be valued and rewarded. Thus, in order to succeed

academically, students must gain access to the cultural capital of the powerful group (Sullivan, 2001). Evidence of cultural reproduction in U.S. schools can be seen in the dominance of the deficit thinking that is brought to bear on minority students; those who come to school without the experiences and skills of the dominant group are frequently viewed as "disadvantaged" rather than "differently-advantaged" (Giroux & McLaren,1989). SJL recognizes that such social reproduction exists in public schools, and that it is vital that social justice leaders confront and correct it. According to Dantley and Tillman (2010) "leadership for social justice investigates and poses solutions for issues that generate and reproduce societal inequities" (Dantley & Tillman, 2010, p. 20).

Several researchers have attempted to codify the attitudes and behaviors of social justice leaders (Capper, Theoharis & Sebastian, 2006; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; Karpinski & Lugg, 2006; McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley & Scheurich, 2008; O'Malley & Capper, 2015; Pounder, Reitzug & Young, 2002). Guerra and Nelson (2009) emphasize the necessity for leaders to change not only the behaviors, but also the beliefs that undergird educational injustice: "without addressing the underlying deficit beliefs influencing educators' behavior, providing 'high-quality' or 'research-based' professional development does little to change practice once educators return to classrooms and close their doors" (p. 354). Guiding such belief shifts requires leaders to engage in careful planning of professional development efforts. The authors present a six-step training model for these efforts, with which they report success in transforming teachers' deficit beliefs and inequitable behaviors:

- *Conduct a personal inventory*- Leaders must engage in a thorough self-assessment to determine their own readiness for the effort ahead. This self-

assessment should involve an honest evaluation by leaders about their beliefs about diversity; the depth and breadth of their knowledge about the cultures of themselves, their students, their students' families, and the wider community; their skills in facilitating uncomfortable and potentially conflict-laden discussions; their commitment to equity; and their ability and willingness to lead in the face of resistance. Leaders who judge themselves to be lacking in one or more of these areas must be willing to cede power to another leader who is better suited to the task.

- *Raise the issue*- Leaders must introduce the topic of inequity in a way that minimizes teacher defensiveness; presenting disaggregated data that cannot be linked to individual teachers is a suggested strategy. Leaders should address deficit thinking by "offering alternative explanations for inequities in the data" (p. 357).
- *Assess readiness*- Leaders should closely monitor teachers for evidence that they are effectively processing the presented data; leading teachers through cultural simulations, such as BARNGA (Thiagarajan, 1990) and BafáBafá (Shirts, 1977), is a recommended technique. Teachers who "empathize with students' experiences, don't express judgments about cultural differences, and want to learn more" (p. 358) should be recruited for intensive training; their influence may assist teachers with low readiness in making further progress.
- *Increase learning*- Leaders must provide opportunities for the advanced teachers to study the cultural identities of themselves, and the other members of the school community. A safe environment must be created where teachers

feel comfortable expressing their opinions; leaders should address deficit thinking as resting upon stereotypes, and encourage the reframing of such beliefs based on their new understandings.

- *Challenge and reframe beliefs, change practices*- As teachers develop cultural knowledge and a trusting environment has been established, leaders should engage teachers in examining their own disaggregated data. As teachers begin to identify their own inequitable practices, leaders should assist them in implementing culturally-responsive practices.
- *Build capacity and a culturally-responsive school*- Over time, new groups of teachers should be led through the previous two steps; advanced teachers can move on to examining school-wide policies and procedures. The authors contend that "after three years of this work, schools will see evidence of transformed classrooms" (p. 359), but that the work must continue, since "transforming beliefs and practices is an ongoing journey, not a destination" (p. 359).

Theoharis and Ranieri (2011) and Guerra and Nelson (2009) claim that since social justice reform efforts require deep shifts in beliefs and structures, leaders who uphold transformative ideals this and have an orientation of advocacy are essential to the success of these endeavors. Additionally, in Theoharis' (2007) qualitative study of school leaders, he found that they enacted their own resistance against educational inequity by (a) raising student achievement, (b) improving school structures, (c) recentering and enhancing staff capacity, and (d) strengthening school culture and community.

Supporting social justice in schools through leadership

Many researchers have demonstrated the vital role that school leaders play in the development and maintenance of socially-just schools. As Cribb and Gewirtz (2003) contend, 'only by analyzing examples of practices aimed at promoting social justice [can we] explore how tensions and conflicts might be overcome or accommodated in reality' (p. 22). It is therefore vital that the things that such leaders are and do so are elucidated so other leaders may follow their example.

Furman (2012) has proposed a model of SJL that describes social justice leaders as: action-oriented and transformative, committed and persistent, inclusive and democratic, relational and caring, reflective, and oriented towards a socially-just pedagogy.

- *Action-oriented and transformative*- Social justice leaders are acutely aware of institutionalized injustices and are able and willing to construct new, more equitable versions of those institutions.
- *Committed and persistent*- These leaders demonstrate dedication to the cause of eliminating injustice and perseverance in the face of resistance or setbacks.
- *Inclusive and democratic*- Socially just leaders share a belief that all members of an institution should have opportunities to engage meaningfully within that institution. Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) refer to this as "authentic participation."
- *Relational and caring*- These leaders focus on building supportive relationships within the institution through the use of "purposeful and authentic communication" (Theoharis, 2007).

- *Reflective*- Social justice leaders engage in critical self-reflection to challenge personal biases or other issues that might interfere with the ability to achieve social justice.
- *Oriented toward a socially-just pedagogy*- These leaders deliberately seek out opportunities to bring issues around social justice into the classroom for discussion and action.

According to Furman (2012), research on specific tools and strategies for increasing educational equity from a school leadership perspective is "surprisingly thin" (p. 198). Despite this, Furman has been able to identify a number used by such leaders for that purpose, including equity audits, and a variety of professional development programs for teachers. These she refers to as a "developing toolbox".

- *Equity audits*- As described by Scheurich and Skrla (2003) and Skrla et al. (2004, 2010), equity audits are tools that can be used by school leaders to identify "levels of equity and inequity in specific, delimited areas of schooling" (Skrla et al., 2010, p. 264). Examples of these audits include Frattura and Capper's (2007) "Integrated Comprehensive Services" protocol, that allows schools or districts to analyze levels of equity in student access to high-quality programs; Kose's (2007) rubric that allows leaders to assess staff awareness of socially just learning and teaching practices; and Bustamante, Nelson, and Onwuegbuzie's (2009) "School-Wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist" that assesses campus-wide values, assumptions, and norms around cultural competence. The results of such audits can then be used to create plans for change.

- *Neighborhood walks*- McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) recommend facilitating neighborhood walks so that teachers might develop connections with the community and increase their understanding of students' home environments. Henderson and Whipple (2013) call these "community walks" and suggest that leaders invite parents, students and other community members to escort teachers on a tour that "highlights the resources and challenges of the school neighborhood" and that doing so will allow faculty to "learn more from people with intimate knowledge of both the issues and the wonderful but sometimes hidden resources of the community" (p. 44).
- *Book studies*- McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) also encourage school leaders to have teachers participate in book studies that use "books that expose the ways in which Whites [sic] often view 'racial Others'" (p. 616) for the purpose of combating the racial erasure that is prevalent among many teachers who espouse a "color-blind" approach to racial issues. Specific texts for use in these studies include *The Dreamkeepers* (1997) and *Crossing Over to Canaan* (2001), by Gloria Ladson-Billings; *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking* by Richard Valencia (1997); *Other People's Children* by Lisa Delpit (1996); and *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know* by Gary Howard (1999).
- *Exposure to equitable practices in action*- Furthermore, McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) advocate for leaders to have teachers visit schools and classrooms that are successful with marginalized students. They contend that "when teachers see classrooms and schools similar to theirs being highly successful with students like theirs, it calls into question their deficit beliefs

and behaviors toward their students" (p. 626) and provides a model for equitable practices. They also recommend developing mentoring programs within schools between teachers who are struggling with equity issues and other teachers, consultants or university faculty who have expertise with implementing equitable classroom practices.

- *Diversity awareness*- Kose (2007) recommends that school leaders design professional development for teachers that focuses on raising awareness of diversity and provides techniques for building cultural capital for marginalized students.

Leadership barriers to social justice

Leaders can also, of course, behave in ways that prevent social justice efforts from occurring in their schools. Theoharis (2007), for example, identifies several leadership choices that contribute to the maintenance of educational inequity: failing to address deficit thinking patterns about marginalized groups, valuing the technical aspect of leadership over the moral and ethical aspects, and being unwilling to shoulder the challenging work of engaging in transformative leadership. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) name "equity traps" that leaders may allow to occur, which include permitting school personnel to deny the reality of racism, and failing to hold personnel accountable for the outcomes of their practices.

Of course, leaders do not work in a vacuum, and at times, factors may impinge on a leader's ability to enhance social justice that are more difficult for leaders to control. Theoharis (2007) mentions national, state and local policies that reinforce inequity, while Ryan and Rottmann (2009) identify "bureaucratic and market structures [that] work hand

in hand . . . to disrupt democratic efforts" in schools (p. 493). These factors may be more prevalent in the United States than in some other nations: Angelle, Arlestig and Norberg (2015), in their comparative study of principals in the United States and Sweden, found that although both groups shared similar values and priorities around promoting social justice in their schools, U. S. principals reported being under intense pressure to fulfil accountability mandates, a stressor not noted by the Swedish principals, and which left the former group with less latitude to address equity issues.

One of the primary goals of this study was to ascertain, through the use of one-on-one interviews with selected teachers, which of these, or any additional supports or barriers to social justice activism, are presented or faced by leaders at their respective campuses.

Social Justice Activism

The previous discussion begs this important question: how can SJLs best harness their energy to enhance educational equity? Encouraging activism in teachers may be one answer. The appropriateness of using Social Justice Leadership as a lens through which to study the development of activism can be seen in Marshall and Oliva's (2006) description of the goal of such leadership: to build leaders who are "astute activists, ready with strategies and the sense of responsibility to intervene to make schools equitable" (p. 1). Of course, in order to explore educational leaders' support of teacher activism, it is first necessary to fully conceptualize what Social Justice Activism is, and how teachers may utilize it to improve educational equity for students. This section will begin with an overview of activism, writ large, then narrow the focus to teacher activism in particular.

Historical context

Definitions. According to Saul Alinsky (1971), activism can be defined as "…the process and understanding, contextualizing and negotiating issues with, and on behalf of, a have-not community" (quoted in Forenza & Germak, 2016, p. 229).

Forenza and Germak (2016), relate activism to psychological empowerment, and describe it as being composed of four elements: sociopolitical control, cognition, behaviors and relational empowerment. They conceptualize activism and empowerment as working in tandem, with the development of empowerment increasing the tendency to engage in activism; engaging in activism then increases the perception of empowerment. In other words, psychological empowerment is key to the development and perpetuation of activist behaviors.

Similarly, Biddix (2014) conceptualizes activism as "work[ing] with others through differences to solve public problems" (p. 74). In this model, activism has three components: social agency, civic awareness and outspoken leadership. All three of these definitions share a focus on having an awareness of issues and having both the will and the ability to address these issues in a public forum; essentially, activism is *praxis* (the application of reflection on the conditions of injustice and action to erode those conditions [Freire,1993] in the traditional Freirian sense.)

It is important here to define what is meant by *social justice activism*, and to distinguish it from the broader category of *activism*. Prior to the twentieth century, actions taken to right political wrongs were generally violent, and often resulted in brutal reprisals and a swift return to the unjust *status quo*. The Peasants' Revolt of 1381, the

French Revolution of 1789-1799, and the Haiti slave revolt of 1791 are but three of many examples of violent social action (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2014).

Then, in 1906, a Cambridge-trained Indian lawyer named Mohandas Gandhi, began a campaign of nonviolent resistance against the racist policies of South Africa (Gandhi, 2007), ushering in what Ackermann and DuVall (2000) call the era of nonviolent protest. Since that time, the power of nonviolent activist movements has ended despotic regimes in many countries (e.g. India, South Africa, the U.S.S.R), secured human and civil rights for marginalized populations in many others, and made significant advances in protecting the environment and non-human species from industrial degradation (Ackermann & DuVall, 2000). That is not to say that violent social movements have disappeared; the recent rise of global extremism proves that humanity's baser instincts are still being used as tools for change. Recent research, however, indicates that nonviolent means are superior for enacting long-lasting reforms. Chenoweth and Stephan (2014), examined the impact of 323 protest movements against authoritarian regimes between 1900 and 2006, and discovered that those movements that used nonviolence were more than twice as likely to succeed in creating a more democratic system than those that employed violence.

It is also important to discuss the motivations behind activist movements. Clearly, not all activism is carried out for the purposes of securing social justice. When one considers Bell's (2007) definition of the goals of social justice as being "full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (pp. 1-2), it is obvious that certain movements, Neo-Nazi and anti-immigration movements, for example, do not fit this description, and will not create a more just and peaceful world.

These two types of activism thusly may be differentiated thusly: Social Justice Activism and activism that seeks the oppression of others.

Efficacy of social justice movements. If one examines the historical record of social justice activism more closely, it is apparent that these movements have been able to effect significant change in educational institutions.

No examination of the positive impact of social justice activism on educational equity would be complete without a look at the legacy of the NAACP. Originally founded in 1909, the group calls itself "the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization" (NAACP, 2016). After decades of diligently fighting to eradicate lynching, and ensure voting rights and equal access to public services for African-Americans, the organization turned its focus to America's racially-segregated schools. In 1939, Thurgood Marshall was chosen by the NAACP's board of directors to serve as special counsel to the organization; under his legal leadership, the organization engaged in a series of litigations that radically changed educational equity for African-American students.

Three of those court cases, *Sipuel* v. *Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma* (1948), *Sweatt* v. *Painter* (1950), and *McLaurin* v. *Oklahoma State Regents* (1950), set precedents for assuring minority students' access to historically-segregated institutions of higher education. (National Archives, n.d.).

In 1954, Marshall, again acting as legal counsel of NAACP, filed the lawsuit that would dramatically change the landscape of K-12 public education in the United States: *Brown v. Board of Education.* This suit, and its successor, *Brown II*, declared racial

segregation in public schools unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment, essentially overturning the constitutionality of the "separate but equal" doctrine (Toldson, 2014).

Although racial integration of K-12 and higher education campuses still remained a struggle for many years to come, and despite the fact that subsequent Supreme Court rulings have rolled back some of these constitutional guarantees (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014), it cannot be denied that the NAACP, a grassroots-based activist group, was able to achieve major victories in the ongoing battle for educational equity.

In the 1970s, petitions, rallies and other types of nonviolent protest were employed in the fight against the reproduction of White heterosexual patriarchal hegemony in higher education at colleges and universities across the country. Such efforts led to the development of university centers for and departments devoted to the study of the experiences of women, racial/ethnic minorities and LGBTQIA individuals (Ransby, 2015).

The divestment protests of the 1980s, which occurred at more than 100 four-year institutions of higher education in the United States (Jackson, 1989) eventually led the boards of regents of several major U.S. universities, including the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and the entire University of California system, to pull all invested monies out of companies that did business with the government of South Africa. Foreign affairs experts and South African opposition leaders, including Nelson Mandela (Maclean, 2002), contend that the combined effects of the loss of funds and the increased exposure of the horrors of apartheid were two major factors that contributed to the fall of apartheid (Rhoads, 1998).

Since the turn of the new millennium, numerous researchers have explored the connection between Social Justice Activism and improved educational equity. Several studies have documented the successful efforts of Latino parents in creating a school environment that was more responsive to student needs (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012), in securing Latino student access to more challenging curricula (Jasis, 2013), in helping to design alternative school settings (Martinez & Quartz, 2012), and in creating and supporting so-called "full service schools" (Warren, 2005).

Full service schools, sometimes referred to as "full service community schools" or "wrap-around schools" (Valli, Stefanski and Jacobson, 2016) represent a type of community-school partnership, in which schools, with financial support from state entities and foundations, utilize school facilities to offer a variety of programs to "improve community access to health and social services" (Dreyfoos, 1995, p. 147). Such programming may differ from school to school, based on an assessment of community needs, but may include: health and mental health clinics, youth development programs, housing and employment assistance, transportation, job training and child care (Dreyfoos, 1995; Kronick, 2002). Well-known examples of this type of school include those in the Comer School Development Program (CSDP) created by Dr. James P. Comer, utilized in more than 1000 campuses in the United States and abroad since 1969 (Comer, 2009); "Beacon" schools, introduced by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development in 1991, which operate in 80 campuses in New York City (NYDDYCD, 2017); and the Community Schools in Boston (CSIB) program, run by the City of Boston's Department of Human Service Programs which operates in every elementary campus in the Boston Public Schools (DHSP, 2017). Valli, et al (2016), in

their review of the literature on school-community partnerships, concluded that although such schools are difficult to create and maintain, those that do exist have positive impacts in a number of areas; academic achievement, student attendance and retention, parent satisfaction and family well-being, and school climate all showed improvement after becoming full service schools. The United States Department of Education (DOE) currently awards grant monies to full-service school programs through its Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) program.

Teacher Activism

Educational activism for social justice has been waged by members of many societal groups, from students to parents, community members, administrators, politicians, celebrities, and attorneys. The nation's public school teachers have also been engaged in social justice activism, both historically and in the current era; considering the amount of impact teachers have on their students, they may indeed represent the most powerful group to do so. The necessity of encouraging such activism among teachers is illustrated in the following quote:

> In the conservative domain of schooling, social justice activism is needed for women leaders, for prevention of sexual harassment, for Black children, for poor families, for the rights of girls and women, for language and religious minorities, for disabled students, and so on. (Marshall & Anderson, 2009, p. 5).

Historical activism. Much as the U.S. public schools movement began in the Progressive Era, so did the phenomenon of the teacher-activist. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, for instance, an African-American elementary school teacher in Mississippi and Tennessee, used her considerable writing talents to expose the racism gripping the South in the

1880s. Although she was fired by the Memphis, Tennessee school board in 1891 for writing several newspaper articles that were critical of the conditions in the so-called "colored schools" of the region, she continued her activism by becoming a full-time investigative journalist. She collaborated with some of the most celebrated social reformers of the age, including Jane Addams and W. E. B. DuBois on such issues as school segregation and lynching (Munro, 1999). Among her greatest achievements was her role in helping to found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP, 2016).

A contemporary of Wells-Barnett, Elizabeth Almira Allen was able to remain in the sphere of public education for her entire adult life, despite her fervent activism for women's suffrage, and the improvement of working conditions for teachers. Though not the prolific writer Wells-Barnett was, she did make great use of her relationships with other prominent activists, including Anna Howard Shaw, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1904 to 1915. Allen's primary means of fighting for societal change generally took the form of creating or leading professional organizations, including the Hoboken (N.J.) Teachers' Mutual Aid Society, the Alliance of New Jersey Women Teachers, and the New Jersey Teachers' Association. She is best known for raising teacher pay, and for her successful efforts to create New Jersey's tenure system, designed to protect teachers from unreasonable termination (Crocco, 1999).

The next generation of teacher activists featured Corinne Seeds. Born in 1889 in Colorado, Seeds began her teaching career in a low-income, high-minority school in Los Angeles, California. Her experiences in that challenging environment led her to continue

her formal education, earning a BA at Columbia University's Teachers College, then a strong proponent of progressive education philosophy. Upon her return to the West Coast, Seeds was recruited to teach in the teacher-training program at the University of California's Southern Branch campus. Several years later, she was appointed director of the program, subsequently named the UCLA Lab School, a position she held until her retirement 32 years later (Weiler, 1999). During her tenure, Seeds promoted a Deweyan child-centered curriculum in the program's graduates for the purpose of building public schools' ability to shape a peaceful, democratic world society (Seeds, 1942). Like Wells-Barnett, Seeds also used publishing as a means to fight for educational justice, although her writings appeared in academic education journals instead of primarily political publications. Seeds also created teaching units for the Lab School that encouraged solidarity with marginalized communities, including farmers in Soviet-controlled Ukraine, and the Japanese-Americans placed in internment camps during World War II. Her works drew the ire of conservative politicians, finally leading to her being called to testify before the California state senate's Committee on Un-American Activities. As a result, the Lab School was shuttered for several years; eventually, the parents of Lab School students successfully lobbied the University of California board of regents to have the school re-opened with Seeds at the helm once more (Weiler, 1999).

The inter-war years saw considerable teacher activism, generally in response to the era's widespread poverty and the wave of racism, antisemitism and fascism that accompanied it. Johnson and Johnson (2002) relate that while some U.S. teachers addressed these issues as they played out on an international scale (e.g., working to secure the safety of Jewish refugees fleeing Germany, or travelling to Spain to fight

against Franco's fascist government), many remained stateside, working within the context of teacher unions and collaborations with community organizations. The New York City Teachers Union played a major role in the activism of this era. Founded in 1916, AFT (American Federation of Teachers) Local 5 originally fought primarily for the goal of improving the status of teachers within society (Taylor, 2010). Over the course of the next two decades, however, the union, under the leadership of teachers who supported Communism, evolved into an organization that built alliances with other unions, minority parents, civil rights groups, civic organizations and political parties in order to fight poverty, racial discrimination and other societal barriers to student success (Taylor, 2010).

One of the more interesting members of AFT Local 5 during this period was Abel Meeropol. Born to Russian Jewish immigrants in the New York City borough of the Bronx, Meeropol, an English teacher at Bronx's DeWitt Clinton school, was involved in a number of the union's social justice activities (Baker, 2002), including its collaboration with the NAACP to eradicate the lynchings of Blacks through the promotion of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill (NAACP, 2017). Also a member of the Theater Arts Committee, an association of professional artists, he wrote numerous poems and songs critical of racism, capitalism and fascism, including the anti-Nazi appeasement song called "The Chamberlain Crawl" which lampooned then-Prime Minister of Great Britain, Neville Chamberlain (Baker, 2002). Reportedly a man sensitive to injustice of any kind, he recognized the connections that exist between all oppressed groups: in a poem entitled "I am a Jew", he wrote: "I am a Jew / How may I tell? / The Negro lynched / Reminds me well / I am a Jew" (Baker, 2002, p. 45).

The catalogue of his works is impressive in length, but he is perhaps best known for writing a celebrated anti-lynching song. Originally a poem entitled “Bitter Fruit” that was printed in the union’s newspaper *New York Teacher*, Meeropol eventually set it to music, and performed it in a number of New York City venues (Lynskey, 2011). Renamed “Strange Fruit”, the song was recorded in 1939 by legendary jazz singer Billie Holiday. The powerful lyrics are as follows:

Southern trees bear strange fruit

Blood on the leaves and blood at the root

Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze

Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees

Pastoral scene of the gallant south

The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth

Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh

Then the sudden smell of burning flesh

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck

For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck

For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop

Here is a strange and bitter crop (Meeropol, 1970)

Upon its release, the song was immediately recognized as revolutionary in nature. In October 1939, *New York Post* contributor Samuel Grafton wrote of the song: "If the anger of the exploited ever mounts high enough in the South, it now has its ‘Marseillaise’”; legendary record producer Ahmet Ertegun called it "a declaration of war... the beginning of the civil rights movement" (Lynskey, 2011).“Strange Fruit”

garnered a great deal of popular attention upon its release, rising to number 16 on the Billboard charts despite having been banned by many major radio stations (Lynskey, 2011); it has also been credited with raising public awareness on the issue of lynching, and generating greater public support for anti-lynching measures (Margolick, 2001). Since its original release, the song has been re-recorded by many artists including Nina Simone, Annie Lennox and UB40, was named "Song of the Century" by TIME magazine in 1999 (Lynskey, 2011). Meeropol's activism for social justice also took an intensely personal, life-changing form: following the 1953 executions of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg on the charge of espionage (of which Meeropol believed them to have been innocent), Meeropol and his wife adopted the couple's two young sons, Robert and Michael, despite the fact that the Meeropols and Rosenbergs were not acquainted. Michael and Robert went on to become university professors and antiwar activists (Meeropol, 2003).

The Civil Rights Era also featured a number of activist African-American teachers who, with the assistance of administrators created academic and extracurricular programs that encouraged student protest. Beginning in the 1940s and continuing through the 1960s, students, acting on lessons taught in classes and extracurricular clubs, organized and led strikes, boycotts, and demonstrations. According to Baker (2011) "The pedagogies that leading African American educators practiced, the aspirations they nurtured, and the student activism they encouraged helped make the civil rights movement possible." (p. 277). One example given by Baker (2011) is of the teachers at Charleston, South Carolina's Burke Industrial School, a segregated all-Black campus founded in 1910. Recruited from many prestigious state, Ivy-League and Historically

Black universities, these teachers provided their students with a top-notch academic education in an era when vocational training was all that Black students were expected to receive, and taught courses in African-American history that directly confronted issues of racism and white supremacy. The Civil Rights era also saw the fight for bilingual education to meet the needs of Mexican American students, which was, in large part, spearheaded by public school teachers Adalberto Guerrero, María Urquides, Henry 'Hank' Oyama and Rosita Cota in Tucson, Arizona (Trinidad, 2015). These teachers used both their involvement in professional education organizations to push for legislation (i.e., the Bilingual Education Act of 1968) and classroom pedagogy and instruction to enhance Spanish-speaking students' academic success.

Current activism. A substantial amount of current activism by America's public teachers happens in the context of teachers' unions. For instance, 2016 saw teachers' unions threaten to go on strike in Chicago (Lyderson & Brown, 2016), Toms River, New Jersey (Larsen, 2016), Cleveland, Ohio (Goldenberg, 2016) and Burlington, Vermont (Midura & Larson, 2016) in support of increased pay, benefits and improved working conditions.

Other recent, well-documented group efforts include the 2011 protests in Washington, D.C. against the No Child Left Behind Act (Chandler & Khan, 2011) and the 2016 teacher protests against the Minnesota police shooting of unarmed motorist Philando Castile (Winslow, 2016). Not all, or even most, examples of teacher activism occur within the context of teacher unions or other group events, however; the wide range of methods used by modern-day teachers in the fight for social justice will be explored below.

Methods of teacher activism. Marshall and Anderson (2009) present the following methods used by teacher activists to affect social and educational change in their classrooms, communities, and in society as a whole: pedagogy and instruction; teacher leadership; research and publication; union membership and action, professional organization membership and action, and attrition.

Perhaps the best-hidden examples of teacher activism are those that occur within the confines of a teacher's classroom. As part of a study of 52 activist educators, Marshall and Anderson found that many of them employed what they termed *curricular activism* to address issues of educational inequity in the classroom: "Within their sites, working behind the scenes mostly, they created opportunities for activism about the issue [of social justice]" (2009, p. 141). Examples of this activism included advocating for the placement of minority students in advanced classes, reviewing classroom reading materials to weed out those that presented or reinforced misinformation about marginalized groups, intervening with students to address homophobic or racist remarks, and introducing units or lessons on issues of social injustice (Marshall & Anderson, 2009).

A wealth of pedagogies currently exist that purport to enhance students' abilities to challenge systemic inequities, including social justice pedagogy (Apple, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2004); critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2011; Kincheloe, 2008), critical race pedagogy (Matias & Liou, 2015); Pollock, Deckman, Mira, & Shalaby, 2010): culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995): peace education (Harris & Morrison, 2003): feminist pedagogy (Ackerly, 2000; Malka Fisher, 2001): activist pedagogy (Preston & Aslett, 2014): queer pedagogy (Quinlivan, 2012): disability studies

pedagogy (Derby, 2016); and anti-oppressive education (Kushamiro, 2000) to name a few. Other related modern instructional actions include the practice of creating *transformative expectations* that challenge societal beliefs about minority students' inferior academic capabilities (Liou, & Rojas, 2016), the implementation of civic advocacy projects to allow students to have the opportunity to engage in political discourse and experience democratic processes on a small scale (Levy, 2011), and the use of service learning projects to build empathy for and encourage taking actions for positive societal change (Morton, 1995; Pompa, 2002).

Institutional barriers to teacher activism. Researchers have concluded that certain policies and practices, including a persistent focus on high-stakes testing, the presence of mandated curricula, inflexible schedules, classroom management requirements, resistance from other teachers and students and lack of access to certain materials presented barriers that stymied teachers' efforts in effectively teaching for social justice (Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013). In their above-mentioned study of 52 teacher activists, Marshall and Anderson (2009) identified four specific categories of institutional barriers that inhibit educational activism: the political context of public education; informal professional rules; evasion and the construction of non-events; and regional and sociocultural socialization.

Political context. The authors contend that public school teaching is a position in which teachers are supposed to either be apolitical or politically conservative (Marshall & Anderson, 2009). Historically, teachers were subject to strict limitations on their conduct, both inside and outside of the classroom, and were expected to comply with traditional religious practices (e.g., regular church attendance) and gender expectations, with female

teachers being pressured to dress in conservative “feminine” attire and avoid romantic relationships (Blount, 1996). Failure to observe these regulations was considered grounds for dismissal. Although teachers’ unions have dissolved the most egregious of these restrictions, teachers still find themselves under intense scrutiny by administrators, government entities and the public. In the modern era, the rise of the conservative movement against progressivism in public schools and increasing public mistrust of the profession has led to “tightened monitoring and accountability in educators’ work lives” (Marshall & Anderson, 2009, p. 3). Furthermore, teachers lack support for activist behavior from the profession, itself: most professional organizations for teachers “may espouse broad goals with slight nods to equity, but these goals are nonspecific and stay clear of controversial topics” (Marshall & Anderson, 2009, p. 4).

***Informal professional rules*.** The authors also contend that public schools are institutions that are largely resistant to change, and that their hierarchical and patriarchal nature discourages teachers from leading from “below”. As a result, teachers who act to increase equity for students are often seen as disloyal sowers of discontent and conflict, a characterization that can also negatively impact career advancement (Marshall & Anderson, 2009).

Evasion and the social construction of non-events. The authors also conclude that because teachers frequently face situations of educational inequity in circumstances that offer such limited support, they learn to concentrate on problems that they can control instead. As a result, teachers tend to ignore situations that undermine educational equity, classifying them as “non-events”. Furthermore, public education as an institution also ignores the societal underpinnings of such inequity, focusing on “reforms,

professional literatures, training, and staff development [that] offer packages and rhetoric, labeled as diversity training, color blindness, or equal opportunity" (Marshall & Anderson, 2009, p. 7) as an alternative to deeper considerations about the role society plays in creating and perpetuating injustice. The authors assert that addressing issues in this way serves to drive them underground and silence those who seek true and lasting change.

Educators' sociocultural and regional socialization. Finally, the authors contend that teacher aversion to activism is also linked to regional differences in politics and social norms. For example, they found that teachers working in conservative areas of the nation, such as the South and the rural Midwest met greater resistance to their activism than teachers working in more progressive parts of the country, such as the Northeast and West Coast (Marshall, 2009).

Institutional supports for teacher activism. Using the same data from the above-mentioned Marshall and Anderson (2009) study, Marshall (2009), identified institutional characteristics that support educator activism: space for teacher collaboration; job descriptions that validate activism; policies that support activism; ongoing community and staff development on issues of social justice; the fostering conversations of between educators and community groups; and protection of teachers' rights and autonomy.

Space for teacher collaboration. The author contends that most teachers work in isolation from each other, thereby have little opportunity to collaborate with other educators on ways to challenge educational inequity. She asserts that providing space for such collaborations, through such strategies as Professional Learning Communities

(PLCs) and Critical Friends Groups (CFGs) can lead to the breakdown of educator isolation and provide platforms for activist teachers to come together and work on improving educational equity (Marshall, 2009).

Policies and job descriptions. Marshall (2009) also points out the importance of policies that support educational equity for all students. She argues that when such policies exist, they legitimize teacher activism as "part of the job" for educators. For instance, the author interviewed a number of teacher activists who used the existence of Title IX regulations as a justification for fighting sexual harassment on their campuses. Others mentioned the No Child Left Behind Act's focus on raising test passing rates for ethnic minority students as a platform from which to argue for increased educational opportunity for their African American students.

Ongoing community and staff development on issues of social justice. Marshall (2009) also argues that many teachers are simply unaware of the anti-discrimination policies that exist at the federal, state and local levels. She contends that teacher training that informs them of these policies and encourages teachers to act to make certain these policies are followed is essential.

Fostering conversations between educators and community groups. Marshall (2009) goes on to promote engagement between teachers and the wider community they serve, in order to connect teachers to "real world experiences, including controversial issues and their consequences" (p. 170) and to enable them to develop a deeper understanding of the issues of injustice faced by their students.

Protection of teachers' rights and autonomy. Marshall (2009) concludes by maintaining that in order for teachers to fully engage in activist work, leaders must be

willing to defend that work in the face of backlash from conservative forces that might seek to stifle them. Indeed, she asserts that the "repertoire of leadership skills must include an ability to articulate the value of [activist] work in promoting democracy, diversity, and in meeting children's needs" (p. 173); failure to do so will result in educational activism that is "muted and cautious" (p. 173).

Providing these supports and erasing these barriers is no doubt a challenge; Marshall acknowledges that doing so "requires significant changes to current practices of schooling" (2009, p. 173). And yet, succeeding in doing so will not assure that teacher activism takes place. Teachers themselves are vital links in the educational activism chain; therefore, we must explore the teacher characteristics that also contribute to their development as activists.

Individual factors that support or impede teacher activism. In order for teachers to successfully engage in activism for social justice, there are a number of characteristics they must possess or develop, including the acceptance and valuing of social justice ideals (Goodman, 2000; Guerra & Nelson, 2009). Furthermore, teacher activists must possess certain skills, including the ability to address prejudiced views constructively (Griffin & Ouelette, 2007), and meet the needs of students who are members of oppressed groups (Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2007). Adams (2007, p. 15) goes further, proposing a set of pedagogical practices that social justice-minded educators should implement:

- Establish an equilibrium between the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process.

- Acknowledge and support the personal and individual dimensions of experience, while making connections to and illuminating the systemic dimensions of social group interactions.
- Pay explicit attention to social relations within the classroom.
- Make conscious use of reflection and experience as tools for student-centered learning.
- Reward changes in awareness, personal growth, and efforts to work toward change, understood as outcomes of the learning process.

Unfortunately, school leaders cannot assume that teachers enter the classroom with these values and skills already in place. In fact, researchers have found that many pre-service teachers are resistant to social justice education (Hatch & Groenke, 2009; Sleeter, 2008), embrace and perpetuate hegemonic attitudes about minority students (Castro 2010; Hatch & Groenke 2009; Florio-Ruane 2001; Flynn, et al, 2009; Lewison et al. 2008; Marx 2006), and frequently deny the need to address issues of social inequity in the classroom (Han, 2013). It is therefore essential that social justice education leaders understand what can be done to help teachers develop those characteristics once they enter the profession.

Clearly, the development of teacher activism is a complex process, one that is influenced by myriad institutional and personal factors, and one that requires a model of human behavior to support its comprehension; Azjen's theory of planned behavior provides such a model (Azjen, 1991).

Azjen's Theory of Planned Behavior

In order to understand how social justice activism may be promoted by teachers, the underpinnings of human behavior must be explored .Social psychologists have long attempted to create theories that predict human behavior, with mixed results. For instance, studies attempting to link attitudes and personality traits to future behavior have reached such inconsistent conclusions that some have even challenged the validity of these constructs altogether (Mischel, 1968; Wicker, 1969). In response to these critiques, some theorists have promoted the concept of *aggregation*. Simply put, "the idea behind the principle of aggregation is the assumption that any single sample of behavior reflects not only the influence of a relevant general disposition, but also the influence of various other factors unique to the particular occasion, situation, and action being observed" (Azjen, 1991, p. 180).

Azjen (1991) proposed his *theory of planned behavior* to explain the various factors that predict human action. These factors are as follows:

- *Attitudes towards the behavior in question*: refers to the degree to which the individual endorses values and goals that support the behavior.
- *Subjective norms about the behavior*: refers to the degree to which the individual believes the behavior is supported by others in her environment.
- *Perceived behavioral control over the behavior:* refers to the degree to which the individual believes she will be able to successfully complete the behavior. Azjen asserts that this perception is often influenced by the individual's access to opportunities and resources (e.g., time, money, skills), but is also the outcome of personal convictions about the individual's own ability to act

effectively in a given situation. Here, Azjen draws a parallel between this concept and Bandura's concept of *self-efficacy* (1991). Additionally, perceived behavioral control can substantially diverge from actual behavioral control when the individual has little, incorrect or oversimplified information about the behavior.

- *Intention to engage in the behavior*: refers to how much of an effort an individual is planning to exert, in order to perform the behavior. This construct is, essentially, a proxy for *motivation*.

In Azjen's model, intention mediates the other factors and behavior (Figure 1). This is because of the strong empirical link between motivation and behavior: "As a general rule it is found that when behaviors pose no serious problems of control, they can be predicted from intentions with considerable accuracy" (1991, p. 186).

With regards to the three remaining factors, Azjen asserts that they are equally likely to impact intention, depending on the specific situation:

> The relative importance of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control in the prediction of intention is expected to vary across behaviors and situations. Thus, in some applications it may be found that only attitudes have a significant impact on intentions, in others that attitudes and perceived behavioral control are sufficient to account for intentions, and in still others that all three predictors make independent contributions" (Azjen, 1991, p. 188-189).

Furthermore, these three factors may also influence one another. To demonstrate this assertion, the researcher poses this scenario: one could use jogging for exercise as a behavioral example. An individual who holds strong positive attitudes about the benefits

of jogging may influence the people with whom they associate to adopt those attitudes, and vice-versa. An individual who has strong positive attitudes about jogging, and who is surrounded by others who feel the same way, may come to see these as factors that will help them succeed in their efforts. Additionally, an individual who believes strongly that she can be successful in her attempts to become a jogger may develop more positive attitudes about the behavior.

Finally, Azjen makes an important point about perceived behavioral control: that it may impact behavior without affecting intention (Azjen, 1991). This is because this factor involves objective conditions: *actual* behavioral control. For example, even if an individual values jogging, is surrounded by others who value it, and intends to engage in jogging, if she discovers that she does not have access to a safe place to jog, her perception that she is capable of jogging will likely decrease, and the behavior will become less likely to occur.

Azjen's theory has been empirically tested numerous times to predict a wide variety of behaviors, including volunteering for HIV testing (Abamecha, Godesso & Girma, 2013); recycling (Aguilar-Luzón, García-Martínez, Calvo-Salguero & Salinas, 2012); donating blood (Armitage & Conner, 2001); applying to graduate school (Ingram, Cope, Harju & Wuensch, 2000); using pirated software (Liao, Lin & Liu, 2010); using contraceptives (Peyman, N., & Oakley, D. (2009), and exercising (Plotnikoff, Lubans, Trinh & Craig, 2012), to name but a few. Of particular relevance to this study, Azjen's theory has been applied to numerous activism-related issues, including: engaging in civic and political participation (Pavlova & Silbereisen, 2015); opposing wilderness development (Read, Brown, Thorsteinsson, Morgan, & Price, 2013); and donating to

charities (Smith & McSweeney, 2010). Azjen (2015) has created a website that contains a full bibliography of the hundreds of studies conducted between 1985 and 2015 that have utilized his model.

Thus, teachers' engagement in developing social justice activism may be conceptualized as a function of: their attitudes about social justice activism; their beliefs about the degree of support for social justice activism that exists on their campuses, and their perceptions of whether their actions would be successful in leading to positive social change.

Social Justice Scale

In order to explore the factors that impact teachers' willingness to engage in classroom work that promotes educational equity, this study employed the Social Justice Scale (Torres-Harding, Siers and Olson, 2012). Using Azjen's theory of planned behavior as a framework, this instrument measures attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioral control and intentions of individuals who work in human services fields with regards to social justice activism.

The instrument consists of four subtests (one for each of Azjen's factors) along with a self-report rating of social justice behaviors and identification as an activist, for a total of 26 items. Definitions for each of the subtests is as follows:

- *Attitudes towards the behavior:* endorsement of social justice values, goals and behaviors
- *Subjective norms about the behavior*: the individual's beliefs about the amount of support for activism that exists in the individual's environment
- *Perceived behavioral control over the behavior*: the degree to which the individual believes that activist behaviors would have a positive impact

- *Intention to engage in the behavior*: the intent to engage in activism at some point in the future.

The items were generated to address many elements of social justice, including the empowerment of the disadvantaged, acting to alter current power structures, acting to assist the disadvantaged in acquiring resources, acknowledging the existence of profound societal injustice, creating a more just society, and believing in social unity towards achieving justice.

Although there are a number of instruments that measure social justice advocacy, including the Activism Orientation Scale (AOS), Social Issues Advocacy Scale (SIAS), and the Social Issues Questionnaire (SIQ), the SJS is the only one that is designed to *predict* future activist behavior (Fietzer & Ponterotto, 2015).

The SJS has been used to explore the interaction of religious beliefs and civic engagement (Kozlowski, Ferrari & Odahl (2014), the link between psychological sense of community, university mission statements and student engagement in social justice-related activities (Torres-Harding, et al, 2015), and the degree to which college students' social justice beliefs associate with anxiety and religiosity (Khan, 2016). It has also been used to study the social justice attitudes of public schoolteachers in Turkey (Cirik, 2015). The Social Justice Scale has not, however, been used to examine the attitudes and behaviors of K-12 teachers in the United States. This is one gap in the literature that this study seeks to address: how, in general, do high school teachers in several central Texas school districts score on the SJS, and what can this tell us about teacher engagement in curricular activism for social justice?

It also appears to be the case that even those teachers who are committed to

teaching for social justice run into problems when trying to enact this commitment in the classroom. The extant research has not, however, already addressed the relationships among specific institutional and individual barriers as measured by the Social Justice Scale. This is another gap that this study seeks to investigate.

Finally, the literature does not address activist teacher's perceptions of the supports and barriers to their curricular activism presented by their campus principals. This is the third gap this study intends to explore.

Summary

In conclusion, this study rests upon the following assumptions: that inequity, which is endemic to our public education system, may be lessened by the curricular activism of K-12 teachers, and that school leaders have a vital role to play in constructing climates in which such activism may flourish. Furthermore, applying the assumptions of Azjen's theory of planned behavior through the analysis of teachers' responses to the Social Justice Scale may assist leaders in understanding the complex interplay of individual and institutional factors that support said activism. Finally, studying the narratives of teachers involved in activism may allow a depth and breadth of understanding the phenomenon that a quantitative analysis alone would not. The next chapter of this dissertation explains the quantitative and qualitative procedures that will be used to explore the factors involved in the development of teachers' activism for educational equity.

III. Methods

The primary objectives of the current study are to determine the degree to which high school teachers in four Texas public school districts engage in curricular activism for educational equity, to determine the different institutional and individual factors that affect this activism, and to explore activist teachers' perceptions of how school leaders support or impede their activism. In order to conduct this study, the researcher employed an *explanatory sequential mixed methods* design, the characteristics of which will be discussed in the next section.

Mixed Methods Research

Creswell (2016), defines mixed methods research as:

> An approach to research in the social, behavioral and health sciences in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two, and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems (p. 2).

Mixed methods researchers contend that while qualitative and quantitative provide very different types of data (Lund, 2012), these types are equally valuable, and that, combined, can provide a more comprehensive picture of the problem being studied (Caruth, 2013; Creswell 2016).

Of course, mixed methods designs, like quantitative and qualitative designs, should be embedded in and guided by a theoretical framework. According to Creswell (2016), the types of frameworks most appropriate for a mixed methods approach are those of a social, behavioral, transformative or philosophical nature. This study utilizes Social Justice Leadership as a theoretical framework; SJL is a theory in the tradition of

the transformative ideals of Critical Theory, thereby meeting the stated requirements.

Mixed methods designs

Mixed methods research can be challenging because it involves integrating the two types of data into a cohesive whole. There are three basic design approaches to meeting this challenge (Creswell, 2016):

Covergent design. This model involves collecting both sets of data, then merging the two in order to compare the results; this is often done to validate one data set using the other. This design is especially useful for those who want to concurrently collect types of data in the field. This type of design requires researchers to develop numerical and text-based measures that "match" so that data may be merged.

Explanatory sequential design. This design involves using quantitative methods first, then using the qualitative data to explain the quantitative findings in greater depth. The advantage to this type of design lies in its relative simplicity: the two phases remain distinct and easily distinguishable. The major drawback involved is the time expenditure required to conduct two separate, consecutive phases.

Exploratory sequential design. This model involves using qualitative methods in order to explore a little-understood problem, then constructing and administering a quantitative instrument based on information gleaned from the qualitative data. This design's strengths are that its structure lends itself to increased rigor, and that its exploratory nature allows researchers to investigate little-understood sites and problems.

Strengths of mixed methods designs

Quantitative and qualitative methods both have advantages and disadvantages; the central benefit of using a mixed methods design is that the strengths of each type can be

used to outweigh the weaknesses of the other (Creswell, 2016; Greenwood, & Terry, 2012); for example, qualitative methods allow participants' experiences to be understood in context, but have limited generalizability, while quantitative methods provide limited understanding of context, but can produce generalizable results. Therefore, when the two types are used together in a systematic fashion, they may yield a picture that is fuller and richer that either type used alone (Caruth, 2013). Creswell (2016) asserts that this mixture of quantitative and qualitative features enables the researcher to:

- Collect two types of data: open-ended and closed-ended
- Obtain a more thorough view of the research problem
- Add details about context to quantitative data
- Explore the appropriateness of quantitative measures by investigating the participants and testing site qualitatively
- Enrich quantitative data by providing details about the impacts of experimental trials on participants

Weaknesses of mixed method designs

Since mixed methods designs utilize both quantitative and qualitative features, the researcher is faced with fulfilling the requirements for rigor required by both. Creswell (2016) asserts that for this reason, mixed methods researchers should be proficient in both types of research (Caruth, 2013; Creswell, 2016). In order to assure such rigor, Creswell (2016) suggests that novice researchers engage a team of experts in both types to assist with the study development. Additionally, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data requires special skills not required by either type of research alone. For the novice researcher, Creswell (2016) recommends working with individuals who have experience

conducting this sort of integration.

Methodology

The researcher has chosen to use an *explanatory sequential mixed methods* design for this study. A mixed methods design was chosen because there is a paucity of both quantitative and qualitative research on the topics of curricular activism, and teachers' perceptions of school leaders' support for educational equity; using mixed methods will therefore enable the researcher to contribute both kinds of data to the literature.

According to Ivankova, Creswell and Stick (2006), there are three methodological issues that arise with mixed methods designs:

Priority refers to whether the researcher gives more weight to the quantitative or qualitative elements in the study (Morgan 1998; Creswell 2003). This decision can be made at any stage in the study process.

Implementation refers to whether the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis come in sequence, one following another, or concurrently (Morgan, 1998; Creswell et al. 2003). In the sequential explanatory design, the data are collected over the period of time in two consecutive phases

Integration refers to the stage or stages in the research process where the mixing of the quantitative and qualitative methods occurs (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998; Creswell et al. 2003). This can happen in the beginning stage of the study while formulating its purpose and creating both quantitative and qualitative research questions (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003), to the intermediate stage where the findings from the first phase of the study guide data collection in the second phase (Hanson et al. 2005), to the integration of all findings at the interpretation stage. (Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie 2003).

Methods

The researcher implemented an *explanatory sequential mixed methods* design for this study. As was stated earlier, this type of design begins with a quantitative phase, then proceeds to a qualitative phase where explanations for the quantitative findings can be pursued (Figure 4).

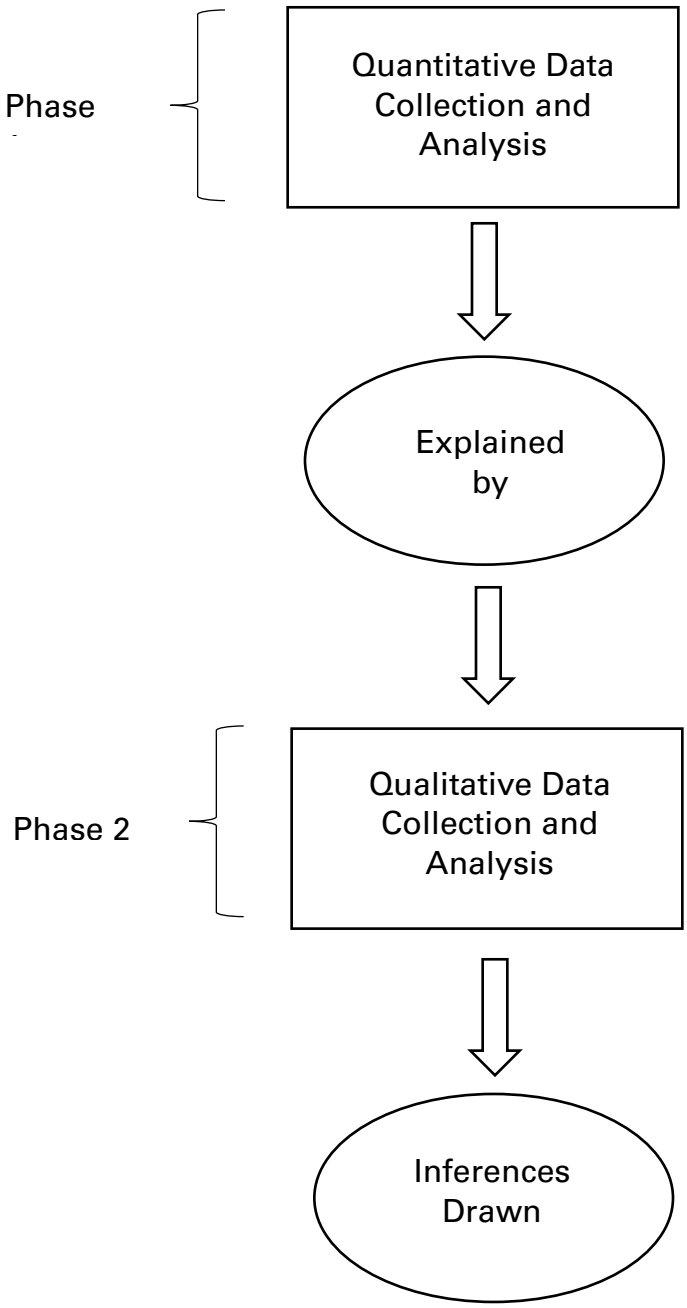


Figure 4: Explanatory sequential design model

Integration of the quantitative and qualitative elements of this study began in the early stages of the study with the formulation of quantitative, and mixed methods (Figure 5).

Question Type	Research Question	Measure
Quantitative	1. To what degree do public high school teachers in this study engage in curricular activism for educational equity?	Survey
Mixed methods	2. What factors influence this activism, and how do they interact?	Survey plus interview
Mixed methods	3.What do those teachers who report high levels of involvement in curricular activism perceive as the supports for and barriers presented by campus principals to their activism?	Survey plus interview

Figure 5: Classification of research questions

Further integration took place in the intermediate stage, when the quantitative findings were used to identify participants for the qualitative phase. Finally, the findings from both phases were integrated during the interpretation of the outcomes of the entire study: in the discussion chapter, the researcher interpreted the quantitative findings to answer the quantitative research question “To what degree do public high school teachers in this study engage in curricular activism for educational equity?”. Then the researcher discussed both the survey and interview findings that were aimed at answering the mixed-methods research questions “What factors influence this activism, and how do they interact?” and “What do those teachers who report high levels of involvement in curricular activism perceive as the supports for and barriers presented by campus

principals to their activism?" At this stage, the researcher plans to prioritize both sets of data, as both are integral to answering all three research questions.

Mixed methods data analysis

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009), mixed methods data analysis involves "the integration of statistical and thematic data analysis techniques, plus other strategies unique to [mixed methods]" (p. 8) such as *typology development*, *construct identification* and *construct validation*. *Typology development* is most commonly used with sequential designs, such as that being employed by the current study. It involves the construction of typologies (i.e., sets of substantive categories) from the first data set which are then utilized to construct a framework to which the second data set can be compared (Caracelli & Greene, 1993). In this study, quantitative data were collected and analyzed to determine their degree of fit to an *a priori* structural model (Figure 8). This first step is referred to as *construct identification*. The qualitative data were then compared to the quantitative findings in order to explain the relationships that emerged in that model. This second step is referred to as *construct validation*. (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2009).

Quantitative Phase

The first two objectives, to determine the degree to which public high school teachers engage in curricular activism for educational equity and determine the different institutional and individual factors that predict this activism, were explored using the administration of and analysis of findings from the Social Justice Scale (Torres-Harding, et al, 2012).

Instrumentation

According to the scale's developers, it "was designed to measure social justice-related values, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and intentions based on a four-factor conception of Ajzen's theory [of planned behavior]" (p.77). The developers describe the central tenet of this theory thusly: "… behavioral performance is best directly predicted by one's stated intention to act" (p. 78). The behavioral performance that the scale purports to predict is social action, defined as

political and social activism, or other social justice-related activities, such as working toward empowerment through one's career or volunteer work, by working to change policies that will serve to empower others, or by talking to others about the need to empower people from disadvantaged groups (p. 80).

For the purposes of this study, the behavioral performance in question is activism for educational equity.

The Social Justice Scale (SJS) is comprised of four subscales: Attitudes Towards Social Justice, Perceived Behavioral Control, Subjective Norms, and Intentions. The Attitudes Towards Social Justice subscale was "developed to specifically elicit endorsement of social justice values, goals and behaviors" (Torres-Harding, et al, p. 81). The Perceived Behavioral Control subscale assesses self-efficacy as it related to social justice-related goals. The Subjective Norms subscale measures the degree to which engagement in social justice-related activities is supported or discouraged in the respondent's social context. Finally, the Intentions subscale assesses the degree to which respondents plan on engaging in social justice-related activities in the future. The items are constructed on a seven-point Likert scale, with a score of one representing "strong

disagreement", a score of four representing a "neutral" response, and a score of seven representing "strong agreement" with the statement presented in each item. In order to supplement the scale, additional demographic questions were added, including a binary (yes/no) item assessing each respondents' participation in current activist behavior. Although the scale itself does not measure actual performance of activist behaviors, the developers administered an additional question to respondents asking them to report their current involvement in activism. For this study, the researcher replaced this question with one asking participants to report the frequency of their curricular activism during the preceding school year (Appendix B). This item was developed using the study's operational definition of social justice in education and Marshall's (2009) description of curricular activism. The item is written in a multiple choice format with the following response options: a. at least once per day; b. at least once per week; c. at least once per month; d. at least once per semester; e. at least once per school year; f. less than once per school year.

Population and sample population

The population being studied consists of certified public high school teachers at six campuses in the south-central Texas area. High school teachers were chosen to be the focus of this study because of one of the parameters given for "activist behaviors" in the survey: "actively and explicitly addressing issues of social, sexual, racial or economic injustice in class". The nature of this parameter is, in the researcher's opinion, more suited to a high school context, as discussions surrounding these issues may be developmentally inappropriate for a younger audience**.**

Although the campuses in this study are all public schools, they do vary in terms

of their district type (as determined by the Texas Education Agency); their enrollment policies, and the numbers of students they serve (Table 1). The Texas Education Agency (2017), categorizes public school districts into one of nine categories based on their geographic and demographic characteristics. Each of the four districts in this study fall into different categories: Cabot ISD is considered a *major suburban* district; Collins ISD is categorized as *other central city*; Ellison ISD is considered a *non-metropolitan stable* district; and Seeger ISD is categorized as *other-central-city suburban*. Four of the campuses (Vermillion, Royce, Morningside and Ellison) are comprehensive high schools with enrollment open to all students residing within each campus' attendance zone. Masterson is a stand-alone Early College high school that limits admission to district students who are selected during an application process. Seeger is a comprehensive high school that also contains an Early College program; students in this campus' attendance zone may gain admission to this program by earning an acceptable score on the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) placement exam. The campuses also vary in terms of size, with students populations ranging from 212 to 2,468 during the 2017-2018 school year. Therefore, even though the number of districts and campuses in this study is small, they represent a fair degree of variety in terms of demographic characteristics.

Sampling protocol

In order to recruit participants for this study, an online version of the questionnaire was sent via email to the population being studied, which consists of all of the certified teachers at the selected schools. These email addresses were collected from each campus' principal. In order to protect participants' confidentiality, each was assigned a code number. The list matching names and email addresses to code numbers

will be kept on a password-protected hard-drive, and will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

Table 1
District and school characteristics

District Pseudonym	District Type	Campus Pseudonym	Campus Type	Campus Size 2016-17 (Student population)
Cabot ISD	Major Suburban	Masterson HS	Early College (stand-alone)	212
Collins ISD	Other Central City	Vermillion HS	comprehensive	1981
		Morningside HS	comprehensive	1665
		Royce HS	comprehensive	2039
Ellison ISD	Non-Metropolitan Stable	Ellison HS	comprehensive	2468
Seeger ISD	Other Central City - Suburban	Seeger HS	comprehensive with an Early College school-within a school program	1949

Procedures

Prior to the start of the study, a questionnaire incorporating the 24 items from the Social Justice Scale with a question about frequency of participation in curricular activism was created using the online survey platform Survey Monkey. Each teacher received an email invitation that explained the purposes and procedures involved and that contained a consent agreement (Appendix C). At the bottom of the invitation was a link to the online questionnaire. The data was recorded on the Survey Monkey account. Those participants who were willing to participate in the qualitative portion of the study were asked to provide their names, email addresses and phone numbers at the end of the

questionnaire; that information was recorded for the purposes of recruitment for the second study phase.

Overview of the analytic method

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is the analytic approach underpinning the quantitative phase of this study. According to Kaplan (2007) SEM is a set of mathematical models, computer algorithms and statistical methods used to examine relationships among data, and to fit said data to one or more theoretical models. SEM is particularly helpful in the social sciences because it allows the researcher to examine relationships among unobserved constructs (latent variables) and measurable constructs (observable variables) (Hancock, 2015). In this study, the latent variables, Social Justice Attitudes (Att); Social Norms (Norms), Perception of Behavioral Control (PCB) and Intention to Engage in Social Justice Activism (Int) are measured using observable data in the form of 24 items on the Social Justice Scale (Appendix A). The observable variable Activist Behavior (ActBeh), was measured by the respondents' answers to item number 25 on the survey, which asks teachers to indicate the frequency of their curricular activism for educational equity (Appendix B).

Variables in the Study. The exogenous variables in this study include three of the four subscales of the SJS: Social Justice Attitudes (Att); Social Norms (Norms), and Perception of Behavioral Control (PCB).Endogenous variables include the moderator variable Intention to Engage in Social Justice Activism (Int), and Frequency of Engagement in Curricular Activism (ActBeh). Curricular Activism in the context of this study is defined as "within-classroom efforts to make certain that marginalized students receive an education that meets their needs and gives them access to the same educational

opportunities as their non-marginalized peers."

Data analysis. This phase of the study used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to measure the nature of the relationships among the variables, specifically, to determine the degree of interaction among the different subscales and the overall score on the SJS, and between the overall score and respondents' reported frequency of engagement in activist behavior for educational equity (Figure 6). According to Suhr (2006), CFA is a statistical technique used to verify the factor structure of a set of observed variables. CFA allows the researcher to test the hypothesis that a relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs exists. The researcher uses knowledge of the theory, empirical research, or both, postulates the pattern of relationships a priori and then tests the hypothesis statistically" (p. 1). As this part of the study seeks to investigate the degree to which the already-existing Social Justice Scale applies to a different population, the use of CFA is appropriate.

The data collected in this portion of the study was analyzed using IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, n.d.) and Analysis of Moment Structures (Amos) structural equation modeling software. In general, SPSS allows researchers to document, manage and analyze data obtained from quantitative social science research. In addition, the specialized Amos software allows for the specification, estimation, assessment and presentation of models to show hypothesized relationships among variables.

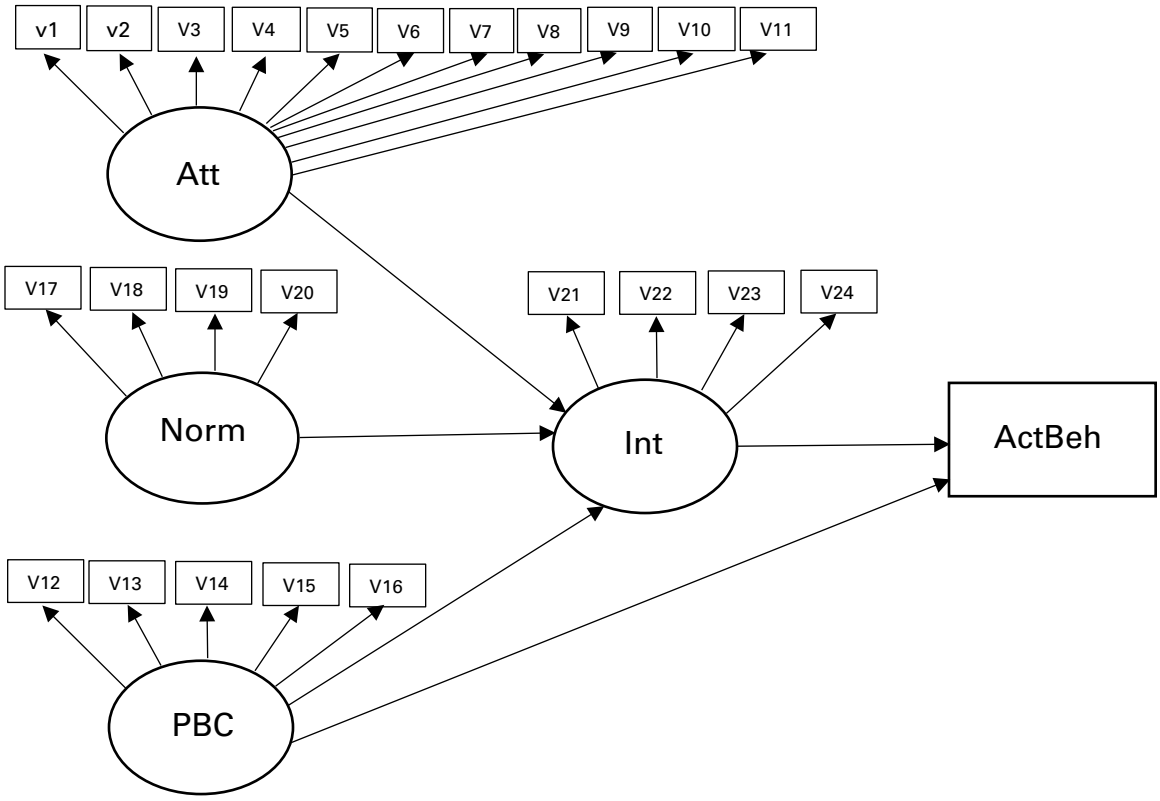


Figure 6: Phase One measurement model

Qualitative Phase

The second and third objectives were achieved through the use of qualitative methods to analyze data from semi-structured interviews with 14 teachers selected from the original respondent pool. Qualitative inquiry in the social sciences emerged in resistance to the positivist paradigm underlying quantitative methods (St. Pierre, 2016). Positivism adopts a stance in which one reality exists, and that said reality is stable, observable and measurable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Critics contend that while this objectivist

ontological view may work well in the “hard sciences”, it breaks down when applied to the study of the “soft sciences” (e.g. human behavior) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructivism, on the other hand, eschews positivism’s assertion that reality can be objectively defined (Crotty, 1998). Instead, it contends that reality is contingent upon context, and, thus, may exist in multiple forms (Crotty, 1998). This researcher aligns herself with the constructivists, who deny that knowledge may be obtained in isolation from its context; instead knowledge is co-constructed between an individual and her environment. As a result, a researcher wishing to gain knowledge about a given problem must work with subjects to co-construct meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Those who embrace a constructivist epistemology view qualitative methods as a means of constructing knowledge with the individual(s) being studied.

Critical Theory, the lens through which this study is constructed, is a paradigm in the constructivist tradition. Critical Theory assumes that reality is not uniform, that it is shaped by “social, political, economic, ethnic and gender factors” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110), and that society is fundamentally unjust in its current form (Crotty, 1998). Its ultimate goal lies not only in deconstructing phenomena so that the influence of these factors may be seen, but also in reconstructing society in such a way that justice may prevail. Since reality is co-constructed, Critical Theorists contend that in order to understand and change society for the better, researchers must engage in dialogic/dialectical modes of investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), through which the researcher and the subject may negotiate the “reality” of the phenomenon being studied.

Rigor in qualitative research

Qualitative research is, of course, concerned with producing studies that are high

quality. Miles, Huberman & Saldaña (2014) offer five criteria that qualitative studies should aspire to:

- Objectivity/ Confirmability: this standard requires the study to have "relative neutrality and reasonable freedom from unacknowledged researcher bias" (p. 311) Studies meeting this standard will have these characteristics:
    - Methods and procedures are described in detail, to the extent that the steps could be followed by an outside auditor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)
    - The sequence of data collection and analysis is explicitly presented
    - Conclusions are linked to displayed data
    - The researcher acknowledges the personal values, assumptions and biases that may have been evoked by the study, and how they may have affected the findings
    - Alternative hypotheses or conclusions are considered
    - Study data is saved and made available to others for review purposes
- Reliability/ Dependability / Auditability: This standard refers to the study's consistency and stability over time and across different types of studies and researchers. It asks the question "Have things been done with reasonable care?" (p. 312). Research meeting this standard will have these qualities:
    - Research questions have clarity, and "match" with the methods being used.
    - The researcher's connection to the research site have been described in detail.

- The findings demonstrate consistency across sources of data in terms of the participants, the contexts, and the timing of the data collection. (participants, contexts, times).
- Theoretical and analytic constructs are explained in detail.
- Data collection occurred across the range of settings, times, participants, etc., as necessitated by the research questions.
- All researchers involved in data collection use comparable protocols.
- Checks among different coders show adequate agreement.
- Data quality checks for bias or deceit are conducted.
- If multiple observers are used, their accounts will converge.
- Peer or colleague review procedures are in place.

- Internal validity/Credibility/Authenticity – This standard refers to the "truth value" (p. 312) of the research. It asks if the researcher has created an authentic representation of the phenomenon being studied. Studies with this quality have these characteristics:
  - Descriptions are meaningful, context-specific, and "thick" (Geertz, 1973).
  - The account makes sense, seems plausible, and enables the reader to experience a vicarious connection with the data.
  - Data triangulation takes place and produces conclusions that fit together. If the conclusions do not fit together convincingly, procedures for reconciling the inconsistencies are explained.

- The collected data connect closely with the themes derived from the theoretical framework.
- Findings have clarity, hang together in a cogent manner and are related in a systematic fashion.
- Procedures for confirming findings are laid out and followed.
- Areas of uncertainty in the findings have been identified.
- Evidence disproving the hypotheses has been sought, and if found, explained.
- Alternative conclusions have been actively considered.
- When feasible, findings have been replicated using different data.
- Conclusions are considered accurate by the participants. If not, a reasonable explanation is supplied.
- The accuracy of any predictions made is addressed.

- External validity/transferability/fittingness- This standard asks the degree to which the research findings can be generalized to other contexts. This standard requires that:
  - The characteristics of the original sample are described in enough detail to permit comparisons with other samples.
  - The limits on sample selection are delineated and the effects on generalizability are noted.
  - The sampling is sufficiently diverse so that application to other contexts is possible.

    - Readers are given sufficient “thick description” to make assessment of the applicability of findings to their own settings possible.
    - A variety of readers report convergence between the findings and their own experiences.
    - The findings can be linked to prior theory.
    - The processes and outcomes outlined in the conclusions can be applied to comparable settings.
    - The transferability of theories to other contexts is explained.
    - The report provides suggestions for further testing.
    - Findings have been replicated in other studies when feasible.
- Utilization/application/action orientation -Finally, a quality study lays out how the findings may be used to help the participants and readers. In these studies:
    - Ethical concerns and dilemmas are explicitly discussed.
    - The findings are readily accessible (both in physical and intellectual terms) to potential users.
    - The findings are intellectually useful to the reader, potentially providing ideas for future research.
    - The knowledge offered is worth the reader’s time and energy.
    - When the knowledge is used by a reader, actions that spring from it helps solve a problem local to the reader.
    - Use of the findings by others result in an increased sense of power or control over their own conditions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

- Use of the findings by others results in the development of new capacities.

Ethical concerns in qualitative research

Glesne (2016) presents the following ethical principles that all qualitative researchers should follow:

- *The principle of respect* – this principle assumes that research participants should be made fully aware of the conditions of participation. This principle is met by informing participants of the purposes, procedures and reporting methods involved in the study. It also requires that participation must be voluntary, that they cannot be punished in any way for refusing to participate, and that participants are made aware of those facts.
- *The principle of beneficence* – Here, researchers must maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of participation, and must inform participants of said risks and benefits. Furthermore, researchers must protect the privacy of participants, and must make participants aware of the procedures that will be followed to do so.
- *The principle of justice* – This principle requires the *protection of vulnerable populations* (e.g., children, prisoners, the developmentally disabled) to assure that their best interests are served in research environments. Additionally, *reciprocity* (i.e., "repaying" participants and/or their communities for their participation) is considered vital, so that the time, energy and knowledge expended by participants is acknowledged. Reciprocity may be achieved through monetary payments, services rendered to their communities, or the

opportunity to have their viewpoints shared with the larger world. Finally, the principle of justice demands that participants be given power over the way they are represented in the study. Often, *representation* may be accomplished by allowing the participants to view and give feedback on how their behaviors, attitudes and other attributes are characterized before the study is finalized.

Methodology

The qualitative phase of this study used data gleaned from semi-structured interviews (Appendix D) with teachers who reported engagement in curricular activism; the interviews were transcribed, and their texts analyzed using a narrative approach. Narrative theory first emerged as a way of examining works of literature; its earliest incarnation appears in Aristotle's studies of the tragedies of Ancient Greece (Reissman, 2008). *Narratology* (the study of narratives) plays a prominent role in many disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, health science, social work and linguistics (Reissman, 2008). Connelly and Clanidin (1988) assert the appropriateness of narrative inquiry to the field of education, in that narratology "brings theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived (p. 242).

Current conceptions of narratives extend beyond written literary works to include spoken, written and visual materials of all types, in an "almost infinite diversity of forms" (Barthes & Duisit, p. 237). Mishler (1986) categorizes interviews as narratives, in that they serve as instruments for story-making and storytelling, both by the interviewee and the interviewer. He posits that both parties are vital to the construction of meaning, in that

the respondent must interpret the interviewer's questions, and the interviewer must interpret the respondent's answers. In this way, the interview may, if conducted correctly, serve as the dialectic so essential to Critical Theory.

Narrative qualitative methods seek to answer questions about the human condition based on the stories people tell about their experiences. Narrative theorists contend that these stories represent one of the key means by which human thought is constructed and conceptualized, and as such, provide the basis upon which social knowledge and understanding rests (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002; McKeough,1992a, 1992b). In other words, "the narrative mode makes sense of the social world by interpreting human actions and intentions, organizes everyday experience and seeks plausibility and internal consistency that is lifelike. In a word, narrative thought serves the vital human function of meaning-making" (Genereux & McKeough, 2007, p. 850). A number of scholars have also proposed that narrative inquiry is especially suited to understanding the experiences that teachers encounter in their classrooms and schools (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Florio-Ruane, 2001; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Matheson & Pohan, 2007, Murray Orr & Olsen, 2007).

According to Lieblic, Tuval-Maschiach and Zilber (1998) and Eisner (1988), narrative research has been used by researchers with a variety of epistemological stances, from the two "extremes" of positivism to post-structuralism, to every stance in between. As a researcher who primarily identifies with Critical Theory, the narrative elements of this study was approached with this is mind: "… stories, when properly used, may provide researchers with a key to discovering and understanding [reality] – both in its 'real' and 'historical' core, and as a narrative construction" (p. 8).

Narrative inquiry can be used in purely qualitative studies, or in mixed methods research, where a "…combined strategy of using objective surveys for a larger sample and narrative methods for a smaller group to provide more in-depth understanding" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zibler, 1998, p. 3) is utilized. It is this mixed-methods approach that was used in this study: the quantitative survey was used to collect data on a large number of participants, and also to identify participants for the qualitative interviews. The interviews were used to elicit rich, contextual data on the lived experiences of teacher-activists.

According to Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zibler (1998), narrative analysis generally takes one of four forms: holistic-content, holistic-form, categorical-form and categorical-content. As the categorical-content form was utilized for this study, the discussion was limited to its description. Categorical-content analysis (also known as content or thematic analysis) entails "…breaking the text into relatively small units of content and submitting them to either descriptive or statistical treatment" (p. 112).

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zibler (1998) go on to lay out four steps in the content analysis process:

1. *Selection of the subtext*: In this step, the researcher must decide which portions of the text to analyze based on the research questions or hypotheses. In some cases, including the study being proposed here, the researcher conducts semi-structured interviews, in which questions are asked that lead the interviewee to address issues of highest relevance to the research, instead of eliciting a complete life story. In keeping with the purposes of directive interviewing, all of the interview text was treated as data to be analyzed.

2. *Definition of the content categories*: Categories (i.e. themes) may be chosen either , as pre-defined by a theory (*a priori*), or *a posteriori*, as determined following a thorough investigation of the text. *A priori* approaches are generally used when there is a well-tested concept at play, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, or Bandura's self-efficacy theory. *A posteriori* approaches are more appropriate when the research questions or hypotheses are under-researched or still under construction. This study used an *a priori* approach, with themes based on the literature surrounding teacher activism and Social Justice Leadership.

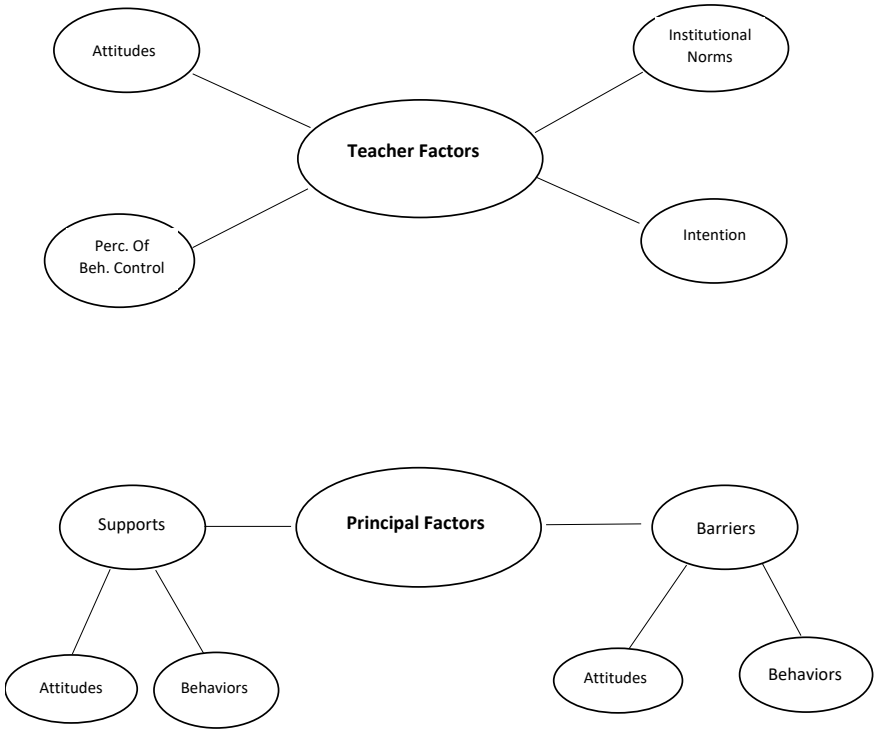


Figure 7: A priori categories for interview data

Coding is the process by which many qualitative researchers explore and content as it relates to themes. According to Saldaña, (2009), a code "is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3.). Grbich (2007) asserts that coding is a process that allows data to be "segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation" (p. 21). A wide variety of coding methods exist, and one critical task for the researcher is to choose the method(s) that best for the research purpose, the methodology and data; such decisions may be made before the research begins, or after data has been collected (Saldaña, 2009).

3. *Sorting the material into categories*: Here, the coded data must be placed into the generated themes. This step may be conducted by a single researcher, or in conjunction with experts who may or may not be engaged in the research project.
4. *Drawing conclusions from the findings*: Some researchers approach this step from a quantitative perspective (i.e., by counting or tabulating responses and subjecting them to statistical calculations), while others do so qualitatively, such that "…the contents in each category can be used descriptively to formulate a picture in the content universe" (p. 114). To assist with the process of drawing conclusions based on the data, Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) offer 13 tactics, all of which assist in build systematic

"safeguards against self-delusion" (p. 265) into the process of analysis. These were utilized in the analysis of narrative data in this study.

Categorical analysis is not without its potential pitfalls. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zibler (1998) contend that “focusing on a ‘categorical’ rather than a ‘holistic’ perspective means extracting parts of the life story out of the whole and disregarding contextual factors” (p. 126). The authors recommend that when this method of analysis is used, researchers should take care to consider the context in which each narrative occurs. This thought is echoed in Bakhtin (1981) when he cautions that narrative analysis must involve the “dialogical listening” to three voices: the storyteller, the theoretical framework, and the researcher’s reflexive monitoring of her own interpretations. In other words, the researcher must maintain self-awareness of the context of her meaning-making.

Methods

This portion of the study utilized semi-structured interviews of teacher activists. Interviewing is a technique widely used in qualitative research, existing on a continuum between structured and unstructured, depending upon the degree to which the researcher adheres to a strict set of questions *(*Edwards & Holland, 2013) . Semi-structured interviews occupy a middle ground: while providing a set of guideline questions based on a framework of themes, it is also flexible, in that allows new ideas to be explored as a result of how the interviewee responds (Newton, 2010). Galletta (2012) emphasizes the dual function of this type of interviewing technique, saying it “creates openings for a narrative to unfold, while also including questions informed by theory” (p.2), thereby offering “great potential to attend to the complexity of a story in need of

contextualization" (p.9). Banfield (2004) asserts that the collaborative nature of the semi-structured interview makes its use compatible with emancipatory models such as Critical Theory. The use of semi-structured interviews does pose some challenges: Denscombe (2007) discusses the *interviewer effect*, in which "the *sex*, the *age*, and the *ethnic origins* of the interviewer have a bearing on the amount of information people are willing to divulge and their honesty about what they reveal" (p.184). Furthermore, an interviewee's responses may be influenced by her perceptions of what the researcher wishes to hear Gomm (2004). Newton (2010) recommends meeting these challenges by clarifying the purpose of the interview prior to beginning, and seeking to put the participant at ease. Additionally, there are specific skills this technique requires: structuring clearly-conceptualized questions (Cohen et al., 2007); listening attentively (Clough, 2007); pausing, probing or prompting appropriately (Ritchie & Lewis, p.141); and encouraging the interviewee to talk freely (i.e., "make it easy for interviewees to respond" (Clough, 2007, p.134). Also vital are the interpersonal skills of developing rapport and trust with the interviewee (Opie, 2004).

The initial set of interview questions were based upon the study's purpose, and are constructed in such a way as to encourage a narrative response (i.e., asking the interviewee to tell a story about a time when they enacted curricular activism in the classroom) (Appendix D) The interview questions seek to collect details about the types of activist behaviors the interviewee engages in, about specific instances when these efforts were successful and unsuccessful, the factors believed to have played a role in those outcomes, perceptions of school leaders' attitudes and behaviors towards these efforts, and recommendations for ways these leaders could improve their practices in this

regard. The researcher clarified the purpose of the interview prior to beginning, and sought to put interviewees at ease by building rapport and trust. During the interview, the researcher listened attentively to interviewees' responses, paused, probed and prompted as appropriate, and asked follow-up questions that addressed interviewees' responses and assured that the themes in the framework were fully addressed.

Data was analyzed using narrative content analysis, following these steps:

1. *Selection of the subtext*: In this step, the researcher must decide which portions of the text to analyze based on the research questions or hypotheses. In this case, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, in which questions are asked that lead the interviewee to address issues of highest relevance to the research, instead of eliciting a complete life story. Therefore, all of the interview text was treated as data to be analyzed.

2. *Definition of the content categories*: This study uses an *a priori* approach, with themes based on the literature surrounding teacher activism and Social Justice Leadership (Appendix E).

3. *Sorting the material into categories*: Responses were audiotaped and transcribed. Interview data was managed using MAXQDA software in order to organize and code data. MAXQDA is computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software created by the German company VERBI Software. Following transcription, the interview data was coded using Saldaña's (2009) two-cycle method. Saldaña's method is based on the premise that research is essentially cyclical, rather than linear, and that coding data twice allows for the progressive refinement of analysis. Furthermore, his is a pragmatic stance, one that allows

researchers to choose “the right tool for the right job” (p. 2), allowing the researcher to select the coding strategies that are the best match for the research questions and findings. Structural coding was implemented for the first coding cycle, and pattern coding for the second. Structural coding involves the use of conceptual phrases related to the research question(s) as the coding categories (MacQueen, McLellan-Limal, Bartholow & Milstein, 2008). Pattern coding, on the other hand, entails the creation of “…explanatory or inferential codes…that identify an emergent theme, configuration or explanation” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69). If, after obtaining the data, the researcher finds that these types of coding are inappropriate, the flexibility of Saldaña’s model allows for the selection of coding types that are better-suited for the study’s purposes. In the case of this study, the researcher found that structural and pattern coding were appropriate choices, given the collected data.

4. *Drawing conclusions from the findings*: The researcher used Miles, Huberman and Saldaña’s (2014) 13 tactics, all of which assist in build systematic "safeguards against self-delusion" (p. 265) into the process of analysis. The processes through which the tactics are used will be discussed in Chapter 4. Additionally, quantitative data was integrated at this stage to assist in answering the questions “What factors influence curricular activism, and how do those factors interact?” and “What do those teachers who report high levels of involvement in curricular activism perceive as the supports for and barriers presented by campus principals to their activism?”

Setting

Interviews were conducted with teachers from four of the six high schools included in the quantitative phase. It should be noted that the researcher has personal ties to one of these schools, having taught there for three years. As a result, the researcher is personally acquainted with the current principal and many of the teachers at this school. The researcher does not occupy a position of power in this school. She does, however, have trusting relationships with several of the individuals on campus; Opie (2004) mentions that building trusting relationships with interviewees is important to successful interviewing. Thus, when conducting the research and analyzing the data from that school, the researcher considered the influence her personal relationships may have on the outcomes from that school.

Selection of participants

Interviewees were chosen using the following procedure: all participants who indicated in the online survey that they would be willing to be interviewed, and who indicated on survey question 25 that they engaged in curricular activism at least once per day were contacted by the researcher via email to request an interview. It should be noted that the researcher did not screen potential interviewees along demographic lines (i.e., according to race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) This decision was made because the degree of involvement in curricular activism is more closely tied to the research questions than issues of identity. Twenty-seven respondents stated that they engaged in curricular activism at this frequency, and 9 of those indicated their willingness to be interviewed. Five of those individuals actually participated in the interview. Once those individuals who consented to the interview had been interviewed, the researcher reached out to those

participants who indicated their willingness to be interviewed on the survey, and who stated that they had engaged in curricular activism at least once per week. Fifty-seven respondents stated that they engaged in curricular activism at this frequency, and 18 of those indicated their willingness to be interviewed. Eight of those individuals actually participated in the interview. Finally, the researcher reached out to those who were willing to be interviewed, and who stated that they engaged in curricular activism at least once per month. Forty-four respondents stated that they engaged in curricular activism at this frequency, and 9 of those indicated their willingness to be interviewed. One of those individuals actually participated in the interview Fourteen participants were interviewed in total. Even though the total number of interviewees did not reach the initial goal of 18, the researcher decided not to interview any participant reporting a lower frequency of curricular activism than once per month, the rationale being that individuals who engage in this activity less often may not be invested enough in these behaviors to contribute significant insights into the supports and barriers that impact their behavior.

Sample characteristics

Nine interviews were conducted with teachers from Seeger High School; two with teachers from Vermillion High School; two with teachers from Masterson High School; and one with a teacher from Ellison High School. No participants from Morningside or Royce High Schools agreed to be interviewed (Table 10). Interviewees represented a range of genders, racial/ethnic identities and subjects taught. Of the fourteen, eleven identified as female, three as male, four as Latino/a, two as Black, and eight as Non-Latino/a-White. Additionally, five are English teachers, three teach electives (Cosmetology, ROTC and Study/Life Skills), two teach Science, two are Special

Education teachers, one teaches Social Studies, and one teaches Math. One of the English teachers also coaches girls' athletics.

Table 10
Interviewee demographics

Interviewee Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Campus Pseudonym	Subject Taught
Minnie	F	Latina	Seeger HS	Elective
Sarah	F	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	English
Joe	M	Latino	Seeger HS	English
Alice	F	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	Science
Tammy	F	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	Science
Bryson	M	Black	Seeger HS	Elective
Luz	F	Latina	Seeger HS	Special Education
Claire	F	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	English
Walter	M	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	Social Studies
Elaine	F	Non-Latino White	Ellison HS	English
Josie	F	Black	Vermillion HS	English/Athletics
Angela	F	Latina	Vermillion HS	Special Education
Laurel	F	Non-Latino White	Masterson HS	Math
Louanne	F	Non-Latino White	Masterson HS	Elective

Strategies for rigor

As mentioned earlier, Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) lay out five standards that qualitative studies should aspire to achieve: objectivity/confirmability; reliability/dependability/auditability; internal validity/credibility/authenticity; external validity/transferability/fittingness; and utilization/application/action orientation.

- Objectivity/ confirmability:
    - Methods and procedures have been described in detail
    - The sequence of data collection and analysis has been explicitly presented

    - Study data will be saved on a password protected hard-drive and made available to others for review purposes, within the restrictions posed by the Institutional Review Board and the informed consent document.
- Reliability/ dependability / auditability:
    - Research questions have clarity, and “match” with the methods being used.
    - The researcher’s connection to the research site have been described in detail.
    - Theoretical and analytic constructs have been explained in detail.
    - Peer or colleague review procedures are in place.
- Internal validity/credibility/authenticity
    - Data triangulation occured through the integration of survey and interview data
    - Procedures for confirming findings have been identified
- External validity/transferability/fittingness
    - The characteristics of the original sample are described in enough detail to permit comparisons with other samples.
    - The limits on sample selection are delineated and the effects on generalizability are noted.
- Utilization/application/action orientation
    - Ethical concerns and dilemmas are explicitly discussed.

Strategies for addressing ethical concerns

The three ethical principles of respect, beneficence and justice were assured in the following ways:

- The *principle of respect* was fulfilled through the use of *informed and voluntary consent.* All participants were given a consent form to review, and were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the study and its potential effects on their lives. The consent form was be approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas State University and the individual school districts where the participants are employed (Appendix C).
- The *principal of beneficence* has been fulfilled by minimizing the risks of participation. The risk to participants lies in the possibility of responses or other personal information being released. In order to protect against such risk, all survey respondents were assigned a code number in order to protect their anonymity. During the qualitative phase, interviewees, campuses and districts were given pseudonyms. Additionally, care was taken to omit any personal information that could allow readers of the study to identify the individuals, campuses and districts in question. All survey-related information will be kept on a password-protected hard-drive for three years.
- The *principle of justice* has been fulfilled through reciprocity, representation, and the protection of vulnerable groups. The risks to individuals from participating in this study are low; nonetheless, they will receive benefits from contributing to the field's knowledge base about their attempts to create a more equitable society. In the quantitative phase of the study, all high school

teachers in the identified schools were invited to participate, thereby increasing the likelihood that teachers from a variety of backgrounds would be represented. The demographic characteristics of the interviewees are discussed in a later section. Although this study will not include members of traditionally vulnerable groups (e.g., children, prisoners, individuals with developmental delays or severe mental illness), the study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board to assure that all participants are protected from harm.

Key Terms

Structural equation modeling (SEM) - a set of mathematical models, computer algorithms and statistical methods that are used to examine relationships among data, and to fit said data to one or more theoretical models (Kaplan, 2007).

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)- "a statistical technique used to verify the factor structure of a set of observed variables. CFA allows the researcher to test the hypothesis that a relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs exists. The researcher uses knowledge of the theory, empirical research, or both, postulates the relationship pattern a priori and then tests the hypothesis statistically" (Suhr, 2006, p. 1)

Moderator variable- a variable that explains the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. (Cohen, Cohen, Aiken & West, 2003)

Social justice in education- a condition that exists when students who occupy a marginalized status in racial, ethnic, religious, language, economic, sexual, gender or ability terms have economic, cultural and political equity within the context of

educational institutions.

Curricular activism- a form of teacher activism that focuses on the classroom context. This type of activism may take the following forms (Marshall, 2009):

- Advocating for and supporting marginalized students
- Intervening to protect marginalized students from harassment or abuse
- Explicitly teaching about issues of social or economic injustice
- choosing classroom materials that avoid stereotypical portrayals of marginalized groups

Summary

This study utilized an explanatory mixed-methods design to determine the degree to which public high school teachers engage in curricular activism for educational equity, to explore the relationships among the different institutional and individual factors that predict this activism, and to examine activist teachers' perceptions of how school leaders support or impede their activism. The quantitative phase utilized Structural Equation Modeling to analyze teachers' responses on Social Justice Scale (Torres-Harding, et al, 2012). The qualitative phase employed narrative techniques to analyze activist teachers' responses to a semi-structured interview. Both sets of data were integrated to produce a comprehensive picture of the supports and impediments to teachers' curricular activism.

IV. FINDINGS

Introduction

The primary objectives of the current study were threefold: to determine the degree to which high school teachers in six Texas public high schools engage in curricular activism for educational equity, to determine the different institutional and individual factors that influence this activism, and to explore activist teachers' perceptions of how school leaders support or impede their activism. In order to conduct this study, the researcher analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data, integrated through an *explanatory sequential mixed methods* design. The quantitative survey was used to collect data on a large number of participants (n=172), and also to identify participants for qualitative interviews. The interviews were then used to elicit rich, contextual data on the lived experiences of teacher-activists. A mixed methods design was chosen because there is a paucity of both quantitative and qualitative research on the topics of curricular activism, and teachers' perceptions of school leaders' support for educational equity. Using mixed methods therefore enables the researcher to contribute both kinds of data to the literature. The researcher integrated the two research models at four points during the study: once in the formation of the research questions, once in the use of the quantitative findings to choose interviewees, once in the crafting of follow-up questions to the responses of individual interviewees, and finally, in the utilization of qualitative findings to provide explanations for the quantitative findings.

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. To what degree do public high school teachers in this study engage in curricular activism for educational equity?
2. What factors influence this activism, and how do they interact?

3. What do those teachers who report high levels of involvement in curricular activism perceive as the supports for and barriers presented by campus principals to their activism?

Research Question 1

The first research question ("To what degree do public high school teachers in this study engage in curricular activism for educational equity?") was answered by analyzing subjects' responses to question number 25 (Appendix B) on the Social Justice Scale.

Sampling

Originally, the researcher planned to conduct the study with teachers from 21 high schools in six districts in central and south Texas, and obtained permission from each of these districts to conduct said research. Unfortunately, many campus principals declined to participate, despite district approval. Consequently, this study was conducted at six high schools in four public districts.

The survey was sent by campus principals via email to all certified teachers at these six campuses; 512 teachers in all received the email invitations, and a total of 172 responses were received (N=172), a response rate of 33.59 percent.

Sample characteristics

Sample data consisted of responses to the 24-item Social Justice Scale (Torres-Harding, et al, 2012) with an added question about the frequency of engagement in curricular activism (Appendix B). Table 2 provides a cross tabulation of the sample by district and campus. Each campus and district was assigned a pseudonym by the researcher to protect the anonymity of participants. One campus (Masterson High School)

was included from the Cabot ISD (Independent School District); seven respondents teach at Masterson HS (High School), representing 4.07% of the total number of respondents. Three campuses from Collins ISD were included, with 93 teachers from Vermillion High School (54.02%), three at Morningside HS (1.74%), and one at Royce HS (0.58%) responding to the survey; together the Collins ISD campuses represent 97 respondents, or 56.34% of the total. Ellison HS was the sole campus responding in Ellison ISD, with 25 respondents representing 14.53% of the total. Finally, Seeger HS, the only campus responding in Seeger ISD, had 43 respondents, or 25% of the total. The fact that one campus (Vermillion HS) provided more than 50% of the data must be kept in mind when considering the implications of this study.

Table 2
Survey responses by district

District pseudonym	n (district)	% of total respondents (district)	Campus pseudonym	n (campus)	% of total respondents (campus)
Cabot ISD	7	4.07	Masterson HS	7	4.07
Collins ISD	97	56.34	Vermillion HS	93	54.02
			Morningside HS	3	1.74
			Royce HS	1	0.58
Ellison ISD	25	14.53	Ellison HS	25	14.53
Seeger ISD	43	25.00	Seeger HS	43	25.00
Total	172	99.94		172	99.94

Although the campuses in this study are all public schools, they do vary in terms of their district type (as determined by the Texas Education Agency); their enrollment policies, and the numbers of students they serve (Table 1). The Texas Education Agency (2017), categorizes public school districts into one of nine categories based on their geographic and demographic characteristics. Each of the four districts in this study fall into different categories: Cabot ISD is considered a *major suburban* district; Collins ISD

is categorized as *other central city*; Ellison ISD is considered a *non-metropolitan stable* district; and Seeger ISD is categorized as *other-central-city suburban*. Four of the campuses (Vermillion, Royce, Morningside and Ellison) are comprehensive high schools with enrollment open to all students residing within each campus' attendance zone. Masterson is a stand-alone Early College high school that limits admission to district students who are selected during an application process. Seeger is a comprehensive high school that also contains an Early College program; students in this campus' attendance zone may gain admission to this program by earning an acceptable score on the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) placement exam. The campuses also vary in terms of size, with students populations ranging from 212 to 2,468 during the 2017-2018 school year. Therefore, even though the number of districts and campuses in this study is small, they represent a fair degree of variety in terms of demographic characteristics.

Findings

In this study, curricular activism is defined as a form of teacher activism that involves teaching on topics of social justice, advocating for equitable access for marginalized students to educational opportunities, removing classroom materials that present or reinforce misinformation about marginalized groups, and intervening with students to address actions oppressive to marginalized students in the classroom setting. Frequency of engagement in said activism was measured by responses to survey item 25 (Appendix B). Analysis of these responses showed that 15.69 percent of the respondents reported practicing curricular activism at least once per day, 33.14 percent at least once per week, but less than once per day; 25.58 percent at least once per month, but less than once per week; 15.20 percent at least once per semester, but less than once per month;

3.38 percent at least once per year, but less than once per semester; and 6.98 percent less than once per year. The most common frequency (*modal value*) reported was at least once per week, but less than once per day (Table 3). As participation in this study was voluntary, it is possible that these findings were affected by *self-selection sampling bias* (i.e., those individuals who are engaged in social justice activism may have been more likely to participate in the study) and therefore cannot be said to be representative of a population larger than the sample itself.

Table 3
Responses to survey item 25 (v25)

Frequency	n	%
At least once per day	27	15.69
At least once per week	57	33.14
At least once per month	44	25.58
At least once per semester	26	15.12
At least once per year	6	3.49
Less than once per year	12	6.98
Total	172	100

Research Questions 2 and 3

The second research question ("What factors influence teachers' curricular activism, and how do they interact?") and the third ("What do those teachers who report high levels of involvement in curricular activism perceive as the supports for and barriers presented by campus principals to their activism?") were addressed using a mixed-methods approach, integrating the findings from the quantitative survey data with the findings from the qualitative interview data.

Quantitative Phase

In order to answer the second and third research questions, data was first gleaned from the Social Justice Scale and analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis within Structural Equation Modeling.

Item characteristics. The items on the online survey consisted of 24 items (v1-24) from the Social Justice Scale (Torres-Harding, et. al., 2012) with the researcher-generated item (v25) discussed in the previous section. Items 1 through 24 represent subscales that measure the three exogenous variables (Att, Norms and PBC) and the one mediating variable (Int). The Att variable refers to teachers' social justice attitudes; the Norms variable refers to teachers' perceptions of the support for social justice activism that exists in their environment; PBC refers to teachers' perceptions of behavioral control, or the degree to which the teachers believe that their social justice efforts can make an impact in their schools; and the Int variable represents teachers' intentions to engage in social justice activism in the future. The aforementioned structure of the sub scales was confirmed using confirmatory factor analysis. The items comprising the subscales are based on a seven-point Likert scale, with a score of one representing "strong disagreement", a score of four representing a "neutral" response, and a score of seven representing "strong agreement" with the statement presented in each item. Table 4 illustrates the relationship between the items and the subscale categories, and provides the text of each item. . Furthermore, the table shows the means, standard deviations and point-polyserial values for each item. The means are helpful in indicating the general social justice activism-related beliefs and attitudes of the teachers in the survey. A point polyserial correlation is used to measure the strength and direction of the association that

exists between two continuous variables, one of which is observable and the other of which is latent (Olsson, Drasgow & Dorans, 1982). Findings from the data analysis revealed that all items regress significantly on their latent variables at $p < 0.01$, indicating that the scale has construct-related validity, (i.e., that the items are actually measuring the latent variables that they are intended to measure). Information gleaned from these descriptive findings were integrated with interview findings, and will be discussed in conjunction with such following the presentation of those findings.

Data screening. Proper use of Structural Equation Modeling requires that data meet certain criteria; therefore, the first step in the application of this analytic technique involves screening the data to check for disqualifying characteristics. The screening process for each criterion is detailed below:

Positive defitniteness. This condition requires that the data covariance matrix upon which SEM operates has an inverse (is non-singular), as such an inverse is necessary to SEM's linear algebraic operations (Kline, 2016). Non-singularity is determined by examining the eigenvalues of said matrix; if all eigenvalues are positive (> 0), the matrix can be said to fulfill this condition. The AMOS program will not run successfully in the presence of a nonpositive definite covariance matrix (Arbuckle, 2012). AMOS was able to successfully analyze the data from this study; thus, the requirement of positive definiteness was met.

Extreme collinearity. Additionally, researchers should investigate whether the data shows signs of extreme collinearity, which occurs when what appear to be separate variables are actually measuring the same thing. Each variable's coefficient of multiple determination (R-squared value) for the items indicates how much each item is related to

Table 4
Scale Item Characteristics

					Total sample (N=172)	
Subtest and items	M	SD	r_{pp}	p value	skew	kurtosis
Attitudes towards Activism						
(1) I believe that it is important to make sure that all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard, especially those from traditionally ignored or marginalized groups	6.125	0.099	0.653	***	-2.461	6.563
(2) I believe that it is important to allow individuals and groups to define and describe their problems, experiences and goals in their own terms .	6.070	0.096	0.565	***	-2.282	5.985
(3) I believe that it is important to talk to others about societal systems of power, privilege, and oppression	5.762	0.107	0.453	***	-1.452	2.206
(4) I believe that it is important to try to change larger social conditions that cause individual suffering and impede well-being	5.826	0.105	0.508	***	-1.567	2.634
(5) I believe that it is important to help individuals and groups to pursue their chosen goals in life	6.110	0.095	0.714	***	-2.315	6.442
(6) I believe that it is important to promote the physical and emotional well-being of individuals an groups .	6.285	0.087	0.790	***	-2.623	8.526
(7) I believe that it is important to respect and appreciate people's diverse social identities	6.215	0.091	0.739	***	-2.348	6.647
(8) I believe that it is important to allow others to have meaningful input into decisions affecting their lives .	6.233	0.090	0.712	***	-2.396	6.660
(9) I believe that it is important to support community organizations and institutions that help individuals and group achieve their aims .	5.948	0.098	0.772	***	-1.758	3.622
(10) I believe that it is important to promote fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, obligations, and resources in our society .	5.733	0.112	0.601	***	-1.542	2.147

Table 4, Continued

Subtest and items	M	SD	r_{pp}	p value	skew	kurtosis
(11) I believe that it is important to act for social justice .	5.814	0.109	0.543	***	-1.536	2.092
Subjective Norms about Activism						
(17) Other people around me are engaged in activities that address social injustices .	4.885	0.109	0.593	***	-0.676	0.401
(18) Other people around me feel that it is important to engage in dialogue around social injustices	4.971	0.104	0.791	***	-0.859	0.546
(19) Other people around me are supportive of efforts that promote social justice .	4.997	0.106	0.681	***	-0.912	0.917
(20) Other people around me are aware of issues of social injustices and power inequalities in our society .	5.017	0.108	0.513	***	-0.806	0.384
Perceived Behavioral Control						
(12) I am confident that I can have a positive impact on others' lives .	6.198	0.089	0.742	***	-2.390	7.187
(13) I am certain that I possess an ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering .	6.087	0.087	0.867	***	-2.087	5.691
(14) If I choose to do so, I am capable of influencing others to promote fairness and equality .	5.860	0.078	0.570	***	-1.540	2.997
(15) I feel confident in my ability to talk to others about social injustices and the impact of social conditions on health and well-being .	5.535	0.094	0.410	***	-1.019	0.911
(16) I am certain that if I try, I can have a positive impact on my community	6.000	0.092	0.779	***	-2.060	5.507
Intention to Engage in Activism						
(21) In the future, I will do my best to ensure that all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard .	5.861	0.094	0.646	***	-1.820	4.337

Table 4, Continued

Subtest and items	M	SD	r_{pp}	p value	skew	kurtosis
(22) In the future, I intend to talk with others about social power inequalities, social injustices, and the impact of social forces on health and well-being .	5.337	0.083	0.560	***	-0.942	0.981
(23) In the future, I intend to engage in activities that will promote social justice	5.349	0.093	0.646	***	-0.972	1.263
(24) In the future, I intend to work collaboratively with others so that they can define their own problems and grow their own capabilities.	5.616	0.090	0.542	***	-1.382	2.578
					381.174	68.028

the overall construct. For example, higher R-square values mean that the item explains a greater amount of the latent construct. Therefore, lower R-square values indicate that the data are measuring separate constructs. Extreme collinearity can be ruled out by examining each variable's R-squared value; if each value is less than .90, the data can be said to not have extreme collinearity. As can be seen in Table 5, all of the R-squared values for this data set are less than .90, therefore the condition of non-extreme collinearity has been met.

Outliers. SEM analysis also requires that outliers in the data set are identified and addressed in keeping with the general statistical principal that outliers in any data set can distort mean values. The degree to which any given data point varies from the norm can be determined through the calculation of the Mahalanobis distance (MD), a value that represents the degree to which any one data source deviates from the centroid (central point) of the scatterplot of all data sources. According to Kline (2016), any MD value is

that is significant at the .001 level should either be discarded or subjected to mathematical transformations that control for its extreme variance. As can be seen in Appendix F, the data set in this study does contain a significant number of outliers. In order to address this problem, the data was subjected to bootstrapping, a technique that allows researchers to control variance through the application of probability principles. Bootstrapping involves running the distribution of regression paths through a randomization algorithm, and producing a corrected standard error value for the estimates. Interested readers are referred to Mooney and Duval (1993) for a comprehensive overview of bootstrapping.

Normality. SEM also requires that data sets be normally distributed, as non-normality negatively impacts SEM's ability to accurately measure the relationships among factors. Normality is generally measured using both skew and kurtosis values. Skew refers to the degree to which distributions of data points collect asymmetrically around the mean, and are represented by a standardized score in which scores falling between +3 and -3 are viewed as normal (i.e., not skewed). In the case of this study, the reported skew value was -381.17, indicating a high level of negative skew. Kurtosis refers to the degree of sharpness shown by the peak of the frequency-distribution curve, with a sharper-than-normal peak indicating positive kurtosis, and a flatter than average peak indicating negative kurtosis. The presence of kurtosis can be determined by calculating the kurtosis score, which is, like the skew value, a standardized score in which values between +3 and -3 indicate normalcy (i.e., not kurtotic). The kurtosis value for this distribution was 68.029, again indicating a high degree of kurtosis. Deviations from normality were addressed through the use of bootstrapping (see page 139 for a more

Table 5

Data collinearity

Item	R-squared value
v1	0.653
v2	0.565
v3	0.453
v4	0.508
v5	0,714
v6	0.790
v7	0.739
v8	0.712
v9	0.772
v10	0.601
v11	0.543
v12	0.742
v13	0.867
v14	0.570
v15	0.410
v16	0.779
v17	0.593
v18	0.791
v19	0.681
v20	0.513
v21	0.646
v22	0.560
v23	0.646
v24	0.542
v25	0.150

in-depth description of the bootstrapping technique).

Sample size (N). SEM was designed as a large-scale technique; with smaller sample sizes, the risk of obtaining inflated standard error estimates increases. Jackson (2013) recommends that sample sizes adhere to the N:*q* rule, which advises a 20:1 ratio between the number of cases (N) and the number of model parameters to be estimated (*q*). In this study, there are 350 distinct sample moments and 82 distinct parameters. While the N in this study does not meet the N:*q* rule, it should also be noted that although

called a rule, this ratio actually represents a guideline. In order to address the low N, the data was subjected to bootstrapping.

Degrees of freedom (df). Degrees of freedom, a value that compares the number of observations to the number of constructs being measured, essentially refers to the number of pieces of useful information provided by the data set. In simple terms, maintaining a large ratio between the number of observations and the number of parameters being measured assures a greater likelihood that there are enough pieces of information to conduct the measurements. In order to sufficiently specify math models in SEM, the model degrees of freedom (*df*) must be greater than or equal to zero. In other words, there must be at least as many observations (distinct sample moments) as there are distinct parameters to be estimated (Kline, 2016). In this study, there are 268 degrees of freedom, thus this requirement is met.

Missing data. Conducting SEM research also requires that any missing data be accounted for, as missing data can lead to bias in parameter estimates, standard errors and test statistics (Allison, 2003). The data set in this study contained 9 missing data points. In order to correct for this, the data was subjected to bootstrapping.

Assessing overall model fit. The goal of structural equation modeling is to propose a hypothetical model that "fits" a set of observed data. For this reason, evaluating this degree of fit is fundamental to structural equation modeling. Structural equation modeling allows the researcher to determine "goodness of fit" by providing comparisons between the proposed (default) model, a hypothetical model in which the fit is "perfect" (saturated model), and another hypothetical model in which the data does not fit at all (independence model). A covariance matrix constructed of the observed data is then

compared to one containing the data that would be expected if the proposed model was a perfect fit. In this way, goodness of fit statistics are essentially ratios based on those comparisons; generally agreed-upon standards then allow the researcher to determine the degree to which the default model is statistically different from the independence model, and thus, a defensibly better explanation of the data than one in which the data do not fit the model at all. Importantly, a model should be accepted or rejected based on multiple measures, as each measure views the model from a different perspective (Bollen, 1989; Garson, 2009). The "goodness of fit" statistics for this study are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Model fit indices

	χ^2	*df*	*p*	CMIN/*df*	CFI	RMSEA
Default model	923.81	268.00	0.00	3.45	0.83	0.12
Saturated model		0.00			1.00	
Independence model (null model)		300.00	0.00	14.04	0.00	0.28

χ2, df, p, and CMIN/df. These first four statistics are derived from a chi-square (χ^2) statistic, and, as such, they are evaluated as a related group. The chi-square investigates whether distributions of variables differ from one another by examining the variability between the frequencies that would be expected if no difference existed and the observed frequencies. If a chi-square statistic is observed to be significant ($p<.05$), this indicates that the observed data differs from what one would expect if the proposed model was accurate, and that the model should be rejected. In this case, $\chi^2= 923.758$ with $df= 267$ and $p=.000$. It should also be noted, however, that chi-square-based fit statistics tend to produce Type II (false-negative) errors when the data are skewed (Kline, 2016),

as they are in the case of this study. Thus, referring to other goodness of fit measures is essential to accurately determining fit.

CMIN/df. The fourth column, CMIN/*df* (relative chi-square) may be helpful in determining fit with some sets of data. According to Marsh and Hocevar (1985), the cut-off points for acceptable levels of fit range between two (2) and five (5). The proposed model produces a relative chi-square of 3.60, thus falling in the acceptable range.

CFI. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is among those least affected by sample size. The CFI is calculated by comparing the hypothesized model to the independence model. CFI values range vary from zero to one with one indicating perfect "fit" (i.e., 100% of the covariation in the data can be attributed to the model (Byrne, 2001)). The recommended criteria for the CFI statistic to be greater than or equal to 0.9. (Garson, 2009). While the obtained CFI of 0.832 falls below this criterion, it nonetheless implies a relatively robust fit, indicating that 83.2% of the covariation in the data can be accounted for by the model.

RMSEA. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is a population-based measure of fit that concentrates on the amount of error observed in the proposed model relative to the theoretical model (Price, Tulsky, Millis, & Weiss, 2002). The index is biased towards models with greater numbers of estimated parameters (model complexity), and is expressed as a "badness of fit" measure, wherein a score of 0 indicates perfect fit between the proposed model and the collected data (Kline, 2016). There is general agreement among SEM researchers that an RMSEA value of .08 or less indicates reasonable model fit, and a value of .05 or less suggests good fit. Close adherence to this standard is less vital when the study involved is exploratory in nature,

as is true of the current study. The RMSEA values produced by this model indicate relatively good model fit at 0.12.

Although the statistics presented above do not consistently indicate an acceptable level of model fit, CMIN/*df*, CFI, and RMSEA all fall within acceptable levels of tolerance. The chi-square value (χ^2) should be considered with caution due to its high level of sensitivity to data normality.

It is also true, however, that the data do not fit the model as well as one would like: this indicates that there are elements to the model that may not accurately represent the phenomenon being studied. This suboptimal fit will be studied through the analysis of the data through SEM.

Data Analysis. According to Kaplan (2007) SEM is a set of mathematical models, computer algorithms and statistical methods used to examine relationships among data, and to fit said data to one or more theoretical models. SEM is particularly helpful in the social sciences because it allows the researcher to examine relationships among unobserved constructs (latent variables) and measurable constructs (observable variables) (Hancock, 2015). In this study, the latent variables, Social Justice Attitudes (Att), Social Justice Norms (Norms), Perception of Behavioral Control (PBC), and Intention to Engage in Social Justice Activism (Int) were measured using observable data in the form of responses to 24 items on the Social Justice Scale (Appendix A). The observable variable Activist Behavior (ActBeh), was measured by the respondents' answers to item number 25 on the survey, which asks teachers to indicate the frequency of their curricular activism for educational equity (Appendix B).

The data in this study were analyzed using IBM SPSS AMOS 22.0 (IBM Corporation, 2013). The proposed model is depicted in Figure 8.

The data for the latent variable Intention to Engage in Activism Behaviors (Int) were regressed on the latent variables Attitudes towards Social Justice Activism (Att), Social Justice Norms (Norms) and Perception of Behavioral Control (PBC). Additionally, the observed variable Engagement in Activism Behavior (ActBeh) was regressed on Intention to Engage in Activism Behaviors (Int), and Perception of Behavioral Control (PBC).

The direct effects include those from Att, Norms and PBC on the mediator variable Int, PBC on ActBeh, Int on ActBeh, and from each of the survey items on their respective latent variables (Att, Norms, PBC, and Int).

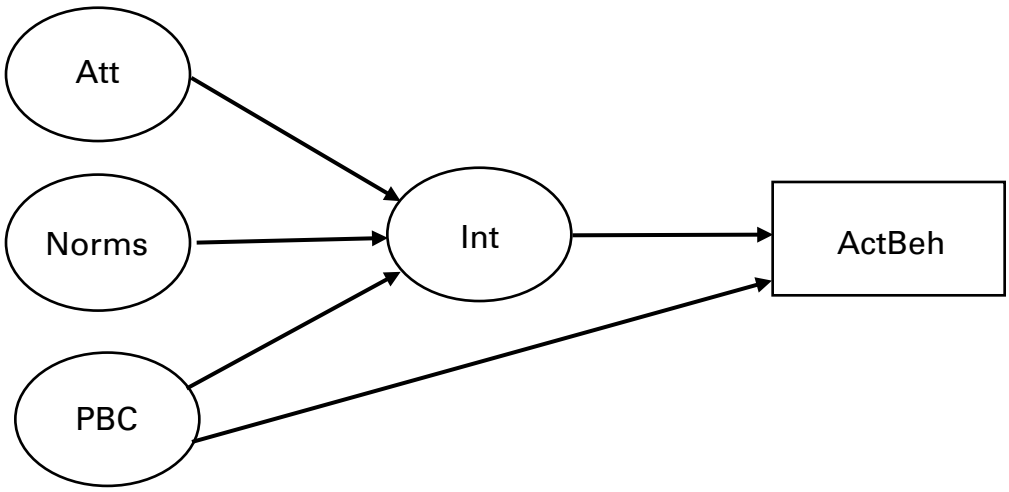


Figure 8: Proposed model

Finally, there are three indirect effects, one from each exogenous variable (Att, Norms, PBC) through the mediator variable (Int) to the endogenous variable (ActBeh).

Direct effects. The hypothesis for this model is that teachers who report positive attitudes towards social justice activism, who are surrounded by other co-workers who have positive attitudes towards said activism, and who have a higher degree of belief in their own ability to make a positive impact through their behaviors will demonstrate greater intention to engage in activism in the future. Furthermore, this model proposes that those teachers who report higher levels of intention to engage in such activism behaviors actually engage in those behaviors on a more frequent basis. Additionally, the model hypothesizes that those individuals who feel they have greater control over the outcome of their actions will engage more frequently in activism behaviors.

The direct effects obtained for this model can be seen in Table 7, wherein the standardized regression of different variables are listed in the second column (Standardized Estimate). As can be seen, the variable (Att) regressed on the variable (Int) at a value of 0.743, a result that was significant at <.01. (Norms) regressed on (Int) at a value of 0.472, which was also significant at <.01. Therefore, the model hypothesis that both teacher attitudes toward social justice activism and social norms around such activism are positively correlated with teachers' intentions to engage in curricular activism was supported. Additionally, the variable Int regressed on ActBeh at a value of 0.387, a significant result at the <.01 level, thus supporting the hypothesis that teachers' intentions to engage in social justice activism are correlated with their reported frequency of engagement in curricular activism.

Table 7

Direct Effects

	Unstandardized estimate	Standardized estimate	Standard error (SE)	Estimated standard error	p value	95% lower bound	95% upper bound
Direct effect on Intent to Engage in Activist Behavior (Int)							
Int<---Att	0.616	0.743	0.059	0.100	***	0.395	0.834
Int<---Norms	0.373	0.472	0.051	0.116	***	0.225	0.563
Int<---PBC	0.065	0.076	0.045	0.138	0.136	-0.124	0.279
Direct effects Intention to engage in activist behavior (Int) on Activist Behavior (ActBeh)							
ActBeh<---Int	0.563	0.387	0.103	0.003	***	0.274	0.807
Direct effects of Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) on Activist Behavior (ActBeh)							
ActBeh<---PBC	0.032	0.025	0.146	0.005	0.737	-0.326	0.306
Direct effects of scale items on latent variables							
Int<---v14	0.612	0.519	0.138	0.004	***	0.27	0.703
Norms<---v15	0.405	0.362	0.112	0.004	***	0.22	0.664

(PBC) regressed on (Int) at a value of 0.076; this result was not significant with a p=0.136; and PBC regressed on ActBeh at a value of 0.025, a non-significant result with a p=0.737. Therefore, neither of the hypotheses involving perceptions of behavioral control (i.e., that teachers' beliefs about their ability to affect change in their environment are correlated with their intentions to engage in curricular activism, and that these beliefs are directly correlated with frequency of engagement in such activism) were supported. A graphic representation of these direct effects can be seen in Figure 9.

Direct effects that were not predicted by the model also emerged from data analysis. For instance, scale item 14 (v14) regressed on the Intention variable (Int) at a value of 0.519, which is significant at the <0.01 level, indicating that the concept(s)

included in the item were correlated with teachers' intentions to engage in social justice activism in the future

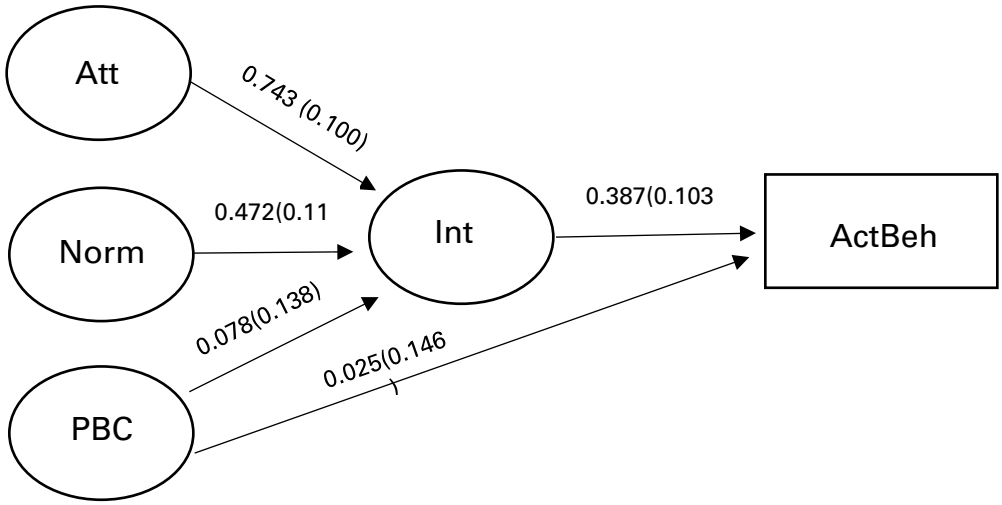


Figure 9: Direct effects: factors

Additionally, scale item 15 (v15) regressed on the Norms variable at a value of 0.362, which is also significant at the <0.01 level, indicating that the concept(s) included in the item were correlated with teachers' perceptions of the social norms surrounding activism that exist in their environment. A graphic representation of these unpredicted direct effects can be seen in Figure 10. These findings were integrated with those from the interviews, and will be discussed following the presentation of those findings.

Indirect Effects. Table 8 provides the indirect effects of each independent (exogeneous) variable on the endogenous variable ActBeh through the mediating variable, Intention to Engage in Activism Behaviors (Int). As can be seen, Social Justice Attitudes (Att)s' effect on Engagement in Activism Behavior (ActBeh) appears to be

mediated by Intention to Engage in Activism Behaviors (Int), with a regression value of 0.36, with is significant at the <0.01 level. Social Norms around Activism (Norms)'

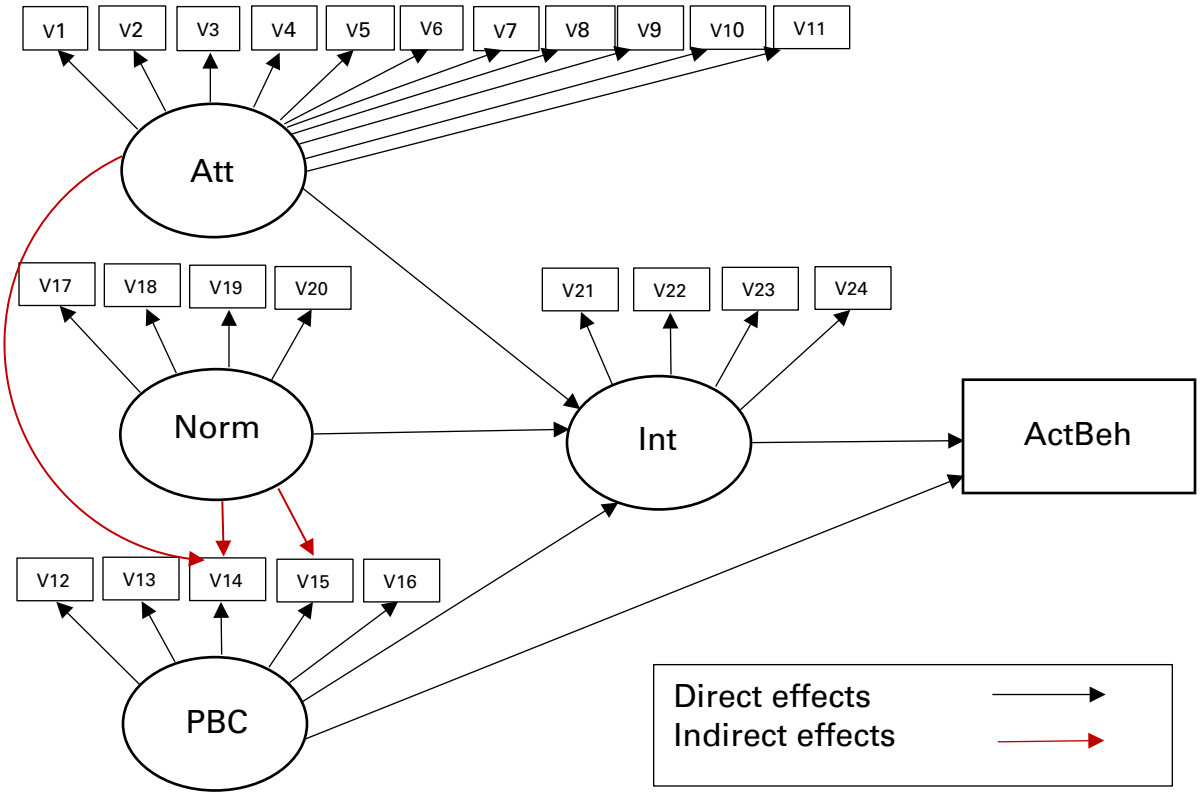


Figure 10: Direct and indirect effects of individual scale items

effect on ActBeh was also significantly mediated at the <0.01 level, with a regression value of 0.218. Int did not appear to mediate the effects of Perception of Behavioral Control (PBC) on ActBeh, however, as its regression value of 0.039 was only significant at the 0.58 level. A graphic representation of these relationships can be seen in Figure 11.

In other words, it appears that the hypotheses that the intention to engage in activism behaviors has an influence on the degree to which teachers'

social justice attitudes and the attitudes of people in their environment predict their actual engagement in these behaviors is supported. The hypothesis that the intention to engage in activism has an influence on the degree to which teachers' beliefs in their ability to effect change in their environment predict their engagement in such activism, however, is not supported. Indirect effects not predicted by the model were also discovered, all involving the regression of scale number 14 (v14) on the latent variables Att, Norms and PBC.

Table 8

Indirect effects

	Unstandardized estimate	Standardized estimate	Standard error	Estimated standard error	p value	95% lower bound	95% upper bound
Indirect effects on Activist Behavior (ActBeh)							
Att	0.36	0.288	0.125	0.090	***	0.134	0.427
Norms	0.218	0.183	0.080	0.062	***	0.090	0.299
PBC	0.039	0.03	0.072	0.052	0.508	-0.043	0.128
Indirect effects of Scale Item 14 on Latent Variables							
Att	0.377	0.386	0.124	0.125	***	0.186	0.600
Norms	0.228	0.245	0.083	0.086	***	0.128	0.410
PBC	0.04	0.039	0.064	0.060	0.561	-0.073	0.129

For instance, scale item 14 (v14) regressed on the Norms variable at a value of 0.228, which is significant at the <0.01 level, indicating that the concept(s) included in the item were positively correlated with teachers' perceptions of the social norms surrounding activism that exist in their environment. V14 also regressed on the Attitudes variable at a value of 0.377, which is also significant at the <0.01 level, indicating that the concept(s) included in the item were correlated with teachers' attitudes about social justice. V14 also regressed on the PBC variable, but this relationship was not

significant, with a p = 0.561. These findings were integrated with the interview findings, and will be discussed following the presentation of those findings.

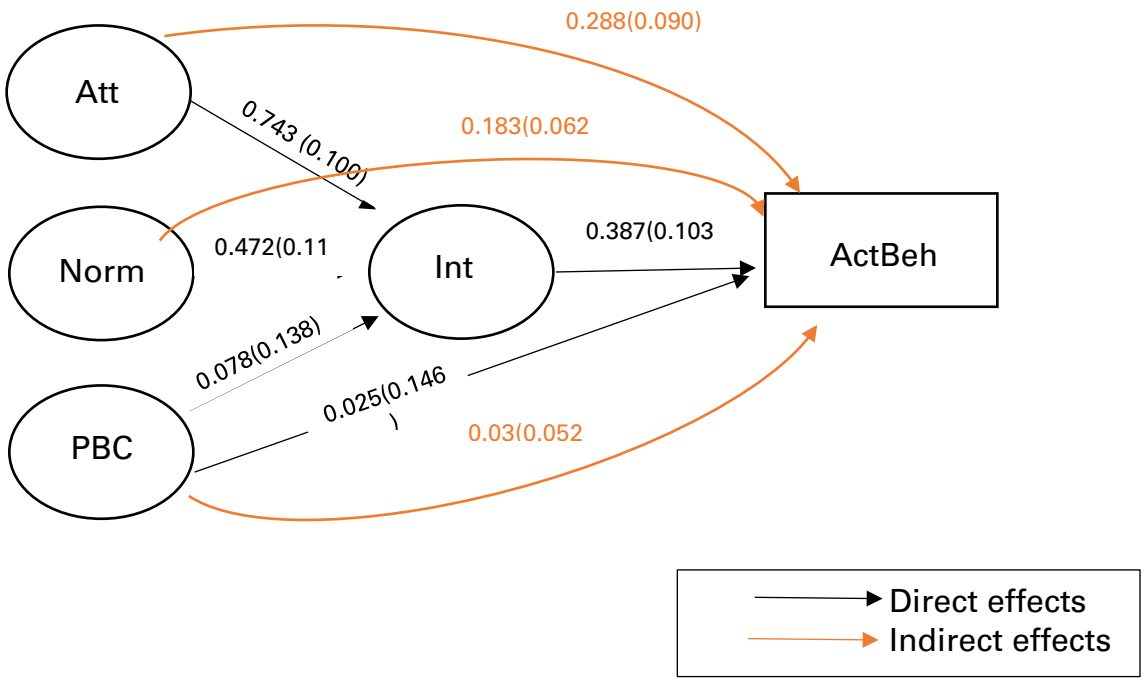


Figure 11: Indirect and direct effects

Model Findings. The total effects of the proposed model are provided in Table 9 which is in the form of a matrix that gives the standardized regression weights of each variables upon all of the others. It appears from the analysis that certain factors did not significantly interact as expected, and that this may have contributed to the suboptimal fit of the data to the proposed model. Figure 12 provides a schematic interpretation of these expected and unexpected findings.

Table 9

Standardized Total Effects

	Att	Norms	PBC	Int
Int	0.743	0.472	0.078	0.000
ActBeh	0.288	0.183	0.030	0.387
v1	0.808	0.000	0.000	0.000
v2	0.752	0.000	0.000	0.000
v3	0.673	0.000	0.000	0.000
v4	0.712	0.000	0.000	0.000
v5	0.845	0.000	0.000	0.000
v6	0.889	0.000	0.000	0.000
v7	0.860	0.000	0.000	0.000
v8	0.844	0.000	0.000	0.000
v9	0.879	0.000	0.000	0.000
v10	0.775	0.000	0.000	0.000
v11	0.737	0.000	0.000	0.000
v12	0.000	0.000	0.862	0.000
v13	0.000	0.000	0.931	0.000
v14	0.386	0.245	0.550	0.519
v15	0.000	0.362	0.528	0.000
v16	0.000	0.000	0.882	0.000
v17	0.000	0.770	0.000	0.000
v18	0.000	0.889	0.000	0.000
v19	0.000	0.825	0.000	0.000
v20	0.000	0.716	0.000	0.000
v21	0.597	0.379	0.062	0.804
v22	0.556	0.353	0.058	0.749
v23	0.597	0.379	0.062	0.803
v24	0.547	0.347	0.057	0.736

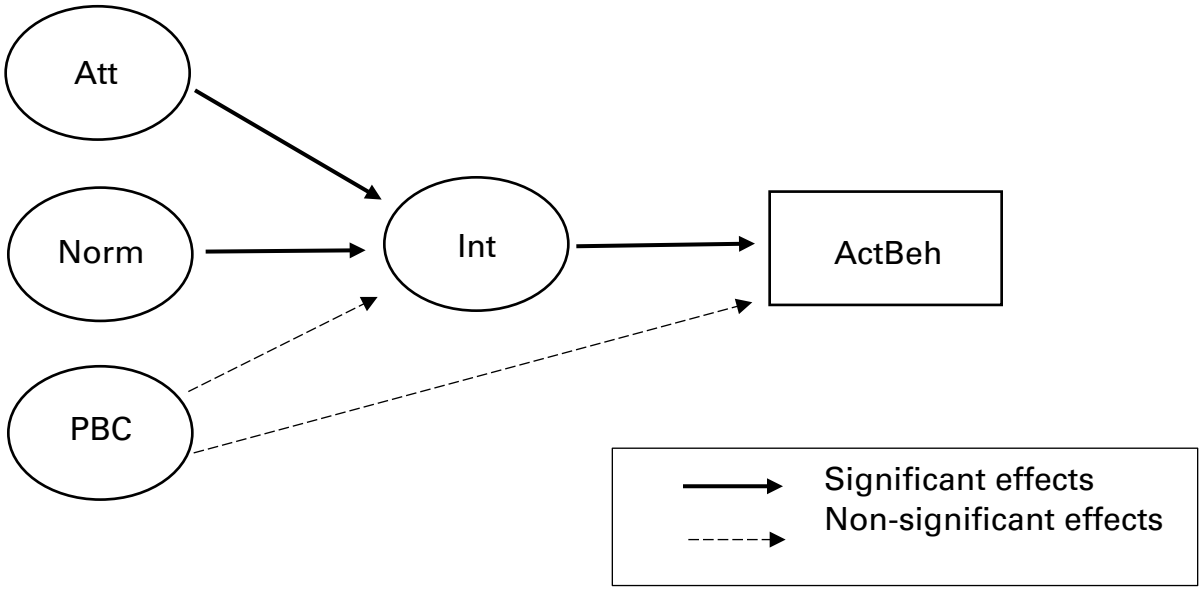


Figure 12: Significant and insignificant effects: factors

The findings suggest that teachers in this study who reported higher levels of agreement with social justice values and who work with others who have similar attitudes are more likely to intend to engage in activism that supports those values in the future. Additionally, it appears that the intention to engage in activism mediates the effects of teachers' social justice attitudes and the social norms surrounding activism on their history of engaging in activism behaviors. Unexpectedly, the Perception of Behavioral Control variable did not have the predicted impact on the Intention or Activism Behavior variables. Therefore, it can be said that, according to these findings, teachers' beliefs about their ability to effect change in their environment did not impact their intention to engage in activism nor did they impact the frequency with which they have already engaged in activist efforts in the past. Furthermore, although most of the scale items were

found to regress on latent variables in the predicted manner, two items, v14 and v15, interacted with some of the latent variables in unexpected ways. All of the findings described in this section were integrated with those from the interviews, and will be elaborated upon in conjunction with such following the presentation of the findings.

Qualitative phase

Findings from answers given in semi-structured interviews with selected survey participants were integrated with the quantitative findings to provide greater depth and breadth of understanding of the factors influencing teachers' curricular activism.

Sampling. Initially, the researcher intended to interview the one willing individual from each campus who reported the most frequent engagement in curricular activism. However, because fewer campuses agreed to participate in the project than was originally planned, the researcher changed the protocol for choosing interviewees in an attempt to reach the planned number of interviews (18). Interviewees were chosen using the following procedure: every participant who indicated in the online survey that they would be willing to be interviewed, and who indicated on survey question 25 that they engaged in curricular activism at least once per day were contacted by the researcher via email to request an interview. Twenty-seven respondents stated that they engaged in curricular activism at this frequency, and nine of those indicated their willingness to be interviewed. Five of those individuals actually participated in the interview. Once those individuals who consented to the interview had been interviewed, the researcher reached out to those participants who indicated their willingness to be interviewed on the survey, and who stated that they had engaged in curricular activism at least once per week. Fifty-

seven respondents stated that they engaged in curricular activism at this frequency, and 18 of those indicated their willingness to be interviewed. Eight of those individuals actually participated in the interview. Finally, the researcher reached out to those who were willing to be interviewed, and who stated that they engaged in curricular activism at least once per month. Forty-four respondents stated that they engaged in curricular activism at this frequency, and nine of those indicated their willingness to be interviewed. One of those individuals actually participated in the interview Fourteen participants were interviewed in total. Even though the total number of interviewees did not reach the initial goal of 18, the researcher decided not to interview any participant reporting a lower frequency of curricular activism than once per month, the rationale being that individuals who engage in this activity less often may not be invested enough in these behaviors to contribute significant insights into the supports and barriers that impact their behavior.

Sample characteristics. Nine interviews were conducted with teachers from Seeger High School; two with teachers from Vermillion High School; two with teachers from Masterson High School; and one with a teacher from Ellison High School. No participants from Morningside or Royce High Schools agreed to be interviewed (Table 10). Interviewees represented a range of genders, racial/ethnic identities and subjects taught. Of the fourteen, eleven identified as female, three as male, four as Latino/a, two as Black, and eight as Non-Latino/a-White. Additionally, five are English teachers, three teach electives (Cosmetology, ROTC and Study/Life Skills), two teach Science, two are Special Education teachers, one teaches Social Studies, and one teaches Math. One of the English teachers also coaches girls' athletics.

Table 10
Interviewee demographics

Interviewee Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Campus Pseudonym	Subject Taught
Minnie	F	Latina	Seeger HS	Elective (Cosmetology)
Sarah	F	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	English
Joe	M	Latino	Seeger HS	English
Alice	F	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	Science
Tammy	F	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	Science
Bryson	M	Black	Seeger HS	Elective (ROTC)
Luz	F	Latina	Seeger HS	Special Education
Claire	F	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	English
Walter	M	Non-Latino White	Seeger HS	Social Studies
Elaine	F	Non-Latino White	Ellison HS	English
Josie	F	Black	Vermillion HS	English/Athletics
Angela	F	Latina	Vermillion HS	Special Education
Laurel	F	Non-Latino White	Masterson HS	Math
Louanne	F	Non-Latino White	Masterson HS	Elective (Study/Life Skills)

One interviewee, Tammy, despite having reported engaging in curricular activism at least once per week, responded to interview questions in such a way as to make it unclear whether she truly understood the concept of "social justice" as it was defined by the study. As a result, her responses will be reported separately at the end of the chapter as a non-exemplar of curricular activism.

Analysis of interview data. The initial set of interview questions were based upon the study's purpose, and are constructed in such a way as to encourage a narrative response (i.e., asking the interviewee to tell stories about specific instances when they enacted curricular activism in the classroom) (Appendix D). Additionally, the researcher asked follow-up questions that were designed to address the particular findings that emerged from the quantitative findings. For example, the data indicated that campus norms supporting Social Justice Activism were lower than the researcher expected. Thus, the researcher added follow-up questions that probed teachers' experiences with their

school peers. Narrative inquiry can be used in purely qualitative studies, or in mixed methods research, where a "…combined strategy of using objective surveys for a larger sample and narrative methods for a smaller group to provide more in-depth understanding" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zibler, 1998, p. 3) is utilized. It is the latter strategy that was employed in this study.

The researcher clarified the purpose of the interview prior to beginning, and sought to put interviewees at ease by building rapport. During the interview, the researcher listened attentively to interviewees' responses, paused, probed and prompted as appropriate, and asked follow-up questions that addressed interviewees' responses and assured that the themes in the framework were fully addressed.

Data was analyzed using narrative content analysis, following these steps:

Selection of the subtext. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, in which questions were asked that led the interviewee to address issues of highest relevance to the research, instead of eliciting a complete life story. Therefore, all of the interview text was selected as data to be analyzed.

Definition of the content categories. This study used an *a priori* approach, with themes based on the literature surrounding teacher activism and Social Justice Leadership (Appendix E).

Sorting the material into categories. Responses were audiotaped and transcribed. Interview data was managed using MAXQDA software in order to organize and code data. Following transcription, the interview data was coded using Saldaña's (2009) two-cycle method, allowing for the progressive refinement of analysis. Structural coding was implemented for the first coding cycle, and pattern coding for the second.

***Drawing conclusions from the findings*.** The researcher used Miles, Huberman and Saldaña's (2014) 13 tactics, all of which assist in building systematic "safeguards against self-delusion" (p. 265) into the process of analysis. Additionally, quantitative data was integrated at this stage to assist in answering the second and third research questions, as follows: quantitative findings were used to provide basic structures explaining the phenomenon being observed in the form of the schematic models illustrating the direct, indirect and total effects (figures 10, 11, 12 and 13). The qualitative findings were then used to provide greater clarity and depth to these observed interactions.

Interview findings. Responses to interview questions were first categorized according to their applicability to the five factors proposed by the quantitative model (structural coding phase). Afterwards, responses were subjected to a second phase of coding (pattern coding) to create "…explanatory or inferential codes…that identify an emergent theme, configuration or explanation" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69). Both the structural codes and the pattern codes are elucidated below:

Varied definitions of "marginalized students". Survey item 25, which asked teachers to report the frequency of their curricular activism behaviors, provided a very wide definition of marginalization (i.e., "For the purposes of this study, marginalized students include members of the following groups: racial/ethnic minorities, religious minorities, English Language learners, women/girls, low-income, the disabled or LGBT [Lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender])". It is therefore not surprising that the teachers interviewed defined marginalized in a variety of ways. Table 11 shows the different student groups that the teachers referred to in their descriptions of their curricular activism.

Table 11

Definition of "marginalized groups" as mentioned in teachers' descriptions of curricular activism

Interviewee	Definition of marginalized groups
Minnie	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES, English language learner, LGBT
Sarah	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES, English language learner, LGBT
Joe	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES
Alice	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES
Byron	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES, religious minority
Luz	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES, disability
Claire	Low SES
Walter	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES
Elaine	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES, LGBT
Jackie	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES
Angela	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES, disability
Lauren	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES, disability, LGBT
LouAnne	Racial/ethnic minority, low SES, LGBT
Tammy	Racial/ethnic majority, no disability

Based on this table, it can be seen that 13 of the 14 interviewees spoke of using their curricular activism to try to benefit students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds; twelve referred to doing the same for students who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups; five mentioned LGBT students; three referred to students with disabilities; two spoke of students who are English Language learners; one referred to undocumented immigrant students, and one mentioned religious minority students.

Activism Behaviors. According to the analysis of survey responses to item 25, 74.41% of the respondents reported engaging in curricular activism at least once per month in the past school year. All of the interviewees chosen were drawn from that data pool. In the interview, teachers were asked to describe they type(s) of curricular activism they engaged in, and to give examples of how those activities played out in practice. Descriptive statistics for these responses are seen in Table 12.

Table 12
Reported type of curricular engagement per interviewee

Type of curricular activism	Advocate for/support	Intervene to stop harassment	Direct teach about issues of social injustice	Choose curriculum materials
Interviewee				
Minnie	X	X		
Sarah	X		X	
Joe	X			
Alice	X	X		X
Tammy	X	X		
Byron	X		X	
Luz	X			
Claire	X			
Walter	X	X	X	
Elaine	X	X	X	
Jackie	X		X	
Angela	X	X		
Laurel	X			
Louanne	X	X		X
Total	14	7	5	3
% of Total	100	50	36	21

Advocating for and supporting marginalized students. By looking at this table, it can be seen that ‘advocating for and supporting marginalized students” was the most-commonly reported type of curricular activism, with 100% of the interviewees reporting engaging in this type. These efforts were divided into the following categories: meeting the special needs of marginalized students; providing advanced academic opportunities; and creating a positive classroom climate.

- *Meeting the special needs of marginalized students*- Several of the interviewees spoke of their efforts to assure that their marginalized students had access to resources that would support academic growth. Luz, a Special Education teacher from Seeger High School, reported repeatedly seeking assistance in obtaining a hearing aid for one of her students until a school

counselor succeeded in obtaining one free of charge. Angela, a Special Education teacher from Vermillion High School similarly "fought" with her district's special education department to secure magnification equipment for a visually-impaired student. Other teachers spent their own funds to provide tools and supplies: Joe, an English teacher at Seeger High School described purchasing eyeglasses for one student, regularly bringing breakfast to school for several others whose hunger was interfering with learning, and purchasing school supplies for those students who could not afford to. Three other teachers also told of buying school supplies for their economically-disadvantaged students. One, Lauren, a Math teacher from Masterson High School, explained, "You need a pencil? I got a pencil right here for you. A notebook? A poster board? They're right here. It's not about what they [students] can bring to the table. I'm not going to let a lack of supplies keep my kids from learning."

Teachers also spoke of their efforts to meet marginalized students' academic needs within their own classrooms by using strategies that support individual learning styles and abilities. Byron, an ROTC teacher at Seeger High School, explained, "I ensure that every lesson that I teach is comprehended at [each students'] level and I engage them as I go through the room." Alice, an English teacher at Seeger High School described tailoring lessons and discussions "to accommodate for the lack of information" that some students have about certain content. LeeAnne, a study skills teacher at Masterson High School spoke about providing "low risk, authentic" learning

experiences that allow students who “struggle” to be successful. Joe proposed that, in order to combat the content bias that exists in curricula against marginalized students, it is necessary to reframe content to make it “relevant” to such students’ lives; in order to achieve this goal, he designed a unit on poetry that involved having the students analyze rap songs and then make connections to the standard poetry selections that were in the curriculum. These efforts were often described by teachers as “difficult” and “frustrating”; Luz spoke of often waking up in the night “trying to think up new strategies to use”. Several interviewees (Lauren, Alice, Luz, Joe and Walter) also described offering intensive after- or before-school tutoring to assist struggling students.

Interviewees also shared their experiences enlisting the assistance of other teachers in meeting students’ needs. Minnie, a Cosmetology teacher at Seeger High School, described finding an English teacher who was willing to tutor one of her English language-learners, stating, “I am a networking queen. Whenever some of my students need help in an area, I get them to the teachers who can help them with what they need.” Sarah, an English teacher at Seeger High School, approached a male teacher on campus, asking him to serve as a disengaged student’s mentor. Both Lauren and Luz told of confronting teachers who were unsupportive of such students: Lauren spoke of approaching teachers who had “given up” on difficult students, reminding them of these students’ specific challenges, and encouraging them to “keep trying”; Luz described putting personal relationships with teachers who were failing to follow special education modifications at risk, stating, “I can be a

real pain in the butt about that…I just want what's best for these kids, and if I have to stand up and speak against my friends who are my co-workers, it's got to be done."

Additionally, two teachers described creating campus organizations for marginalized students. LouAnne developed a "Future Merit Scholar" organization for prospective first-generation college students, and Elaine attempted to form a gay-straight student alliance (which was, unfortunately, vetoed by the district's central office).

- *Providing opportunities for advanced academic and occupational success.* The teachers interviewed in this study also strove to give marginalized students greater access to higher education and career options. Five teachers (Joe, Byron, Alice, Claire and LouAnne) specifically discussed encouraging marginalized students to attend college and providing individualized advice on choosing majors, filling out college application forms and finding scholarships. Claire, for instance, explained, "I see it as part of my job to make sure my [marginalized] kids get the same opportunities to go to college as anyone else." LouAnne described designing a study/life skills course she teaches so that she can lead students through the process of exploring their career interests, and developing plans for identifying degree programs that would further their career goals. These same five teachers also spoke of offering career counseling, with Joe and LouAnne going so far as to secure internships for one or more students in their chosen fields. Joe, for instance, used his personal contacts to locate a welding internship for a student who

was on the verge of dropping out: “He was just done, he didn’t want to be here anymore. And I made a deal with him: if he stayed, I would help him get into the career he wanted. I kept my word, and so did he. He graduated, and now he’s making more money as a welder than I am as a teacher!” LouAnne also hosts an annual campus career fair, where students were required to conduct and present research on a prospective career to their peers. In addition to presenting their research, students were also responsible for planning the event, which included inviting members of the community, securing donations of refreshments, advertising the event on campus, and organizing event parking and event security. She describes this activity as an opportunity for the students to develop leadership and collaboration skills that will serve them well after graduation, and one that “helps them to showcase all of their abilities, all of their knowledge, their strengths. They are always excited, and I mean every student. Even the ones who usually take a back seat, on this night, they always bring it. I haven’t been disappointed once.” Alice, who is particularly interested in encouraging her marginalized students to enter STEM fields, discussed the importance of such career counseling: “I’ve seen some of my kids just so beat down by the people around them, that I just want them to understand that they are capable.” She also spoke of one particular lesson she teaches where she asks students to look at scientific data and brainstorm ways that NASA scientists might make use of them. She explains, “And I’ll always have kids say ‘Miss, why are you asking us to do this? Do you really think any of us will work for NASA someday?’ And I say, ‘Well, if

you're asking me if any of you *will*, I don't know, because very few people actually do. But if you're asking me if I think you're capable? Then, yes. Absolutely.' And then I tell them what you would have to do, college-wise, to be able to work for NASA. And every year, I'll get one or two kids who tell me that's what they'd like to do someday [work for NASA] . So, that makes me feel proud."

- *Creating a positive classroom climate.* The interviewees also spoke extensively about supporting marginalized students through the creation of a positive classroom climate. The primary desire voiced by these teachers was to construct a classroom community in which marginalized students feel safe, valued and heard. One of the ways in which such an environment was provided was by intervening to stop harassment and bullying, which will be discussed in the next section. Teachers also endeavored to create such "safe spaces" by expressing messages of support: Jackie, an English teacher and athletics coach at Vermillion High School shared: "I make sure those [marginalized] students know that they can come to me about anything…just anything". Luz reported telling her special needs students: "You are the reason I have a job. You are the reason I am here. So, please, let me help you". Claire stated, "I tell my kids who are struggling, 'Hey, I care about you, so let's care together about your academics." LouAnne shared, "I think one of the most important things for me, for my students, is I want them to feel safe and welcome in my class…I want them to feel comfortable, at home."

Additionally, teachers spoke of validating marginalized students' identities as a means of creating a classroom climate in which students would do the same. Notably, five teachers (Sarah, Lauren, LouAnne, Elaine, Minnie) spoke of accommodating gender-diverse students' desires to be called by names and pronouns that aligned with their identified gender. Elaine elaborated by saying, "I think when the kids see me [use the preferred names and pronouns], it sends a clear message that I respect that kid, and expect the other kids to do so also."

The interviewees also reported giving marginalized students a clear message of belief in their academic abilities. Joe, for example, had recently organized a debate between his "lower level" English class and another teacher's Pre-AP English class, an event that his students were "fired up" about. He elaborated, "They're ready to go and that's what I want from them. I want them to accept that challenge and to feel like just because you don't come from that socio-economic class does not mean that you are not better." Alice spoke about a conversation she had with many marginalized students in her career: "When I came here [Seeger High School], I had a lot of students who were from low socio-economic backgrounds and who were from minority groups. And they're telling me 'I'm not going to college.' And I would say, 'Well, let me tell you some things about yourself. You're incredibly bright. You are the kind of kid who's going to be bored in a minimum wage job.' So, I just started saying to them 'What can I do to help you know that you can be successful?'

Finally, several interviewees discussed the importance of sharing their own experiences as members of marginalized groups as a way of building trust, challenging negative messages about their own abilities and offering a concrete example of someone with their challenges who had been successful. Jackie, for instance, stated "As an African-American teacher, when students that are also African-American, or in other ways disenfranchised, come to me, I'm able to give them some insight to combat the negative stereotypes that are placed on them by the school system. So, when they are troubled about that [stereotypes], they know they can come to me." Byron shared that he was able to positively influence his marginalized students because of his upbringing in a troubled home: "I tell my [ROTC] cadets that my father was abusive, that my mother was an alcoholic…they can ask me anything about my past and I'll tell them. I got kicked out of school, got put in jail. So they can identify with me. I tell them 'Everybody has a sad story. But you don't have to be where you came from. You have choices.'

*Intervening to stop harassment or bullying of marginalized students***.** This type of curricular activism was the next-most commonly employed by the interviewees, with seven of the fourteen (50%) reporting doing so at least once per month. These efforts can be subcategorized as follows: setting clear expectations for classroom behavior, and taking steps to address such harassment and bullying as it occurs.

- *Setting clear expectations for classroom behavior*. Two of the interviewees described creating classroom behavior contracts for this purpose. Minnie, for example, shared what she calls the "Just Love Handbook", a document she

gives her students at the beginning of each semester. According to Minnie, the purpose of this document is to create a standard of non-judgment and respect among her students, and includes such expectations as: “Treat everyone with respect, including yourself”; “This is a judgment-free zone! Just because it’s different doesn’t make it wrong”; and “Encourage others and be helpful.” Minnie described spending the first week of every semester explaining, discussing and having students role play what those expectations look like in practice. Elaine also begins each school year providing strict anti-harassment guidelines for her students: “We always do a classroom contract, and though they [students] get to create most of the rules, there’s one that is non-negotiable. They are not to use any sort of slurs, or use the words ‘gay’ or ‘retarded’ as insults. I let them know from the get-go that I will not accept that under any circumstances.”

- *Addressing harassment and bullying as it occurs.* Each of the seven interviewees who reported involvement in this type of curricular activism claimed to confront episodes of harassment or bullying immediately, by speaking to the offending student directly, and by responding to repetitions of said acts with the application of increasingly serious consequences. LouAnne explained, “When I see [harassment] happen, I stop whatever I’m doing and I address it publicly. ‘You will not do that in my class. Period.’ Usually that stops it. But if it doesn’t, I go immediately to the administration. I don’t let it end with me.” Elaine stated, “The first time a kid does it [uses “gay” or “retarded” as an insult], I remind them, ‘Hey, that’s not respectful language,

> we don't do that in here.' And they'll go, 'Oh, yeah. Sorry, Miss,' and we can move on. But sometimes the kid who wants to argue, "But, Miss…gay just means happy,' and we'll have to have a longer conversation. Normally that's enough for them. Every once in a while, I'll have a kid who just insists they're joking, and I explain to them that it hurts my feelings, because I have family members who are gay. That seems to open their eyes, because once I do that, I never hear that kid say it again."

Directly teaching about issues of social, racial or economic injustice in class. Five of the 14 interviewees (36%) reported engaging in this kind of curricular activism at least once per month. These teachers described teaching topics that addressed historical events (the Civil Rights Movement, British colonialism in India), current events (the immigration debate, the "War on Terror"), and lessons designed to help students recognize and analyze negative stereotypes that appear in works of literature and popular media. It should be noted that in all cases, these topics were not required by the teachers' subject or grade level curriculum; instead, interviewees reported choosing these topics for the specific purpose of addressing issues of injustice with students. Indeed, two teachers credited the flexibility of their subject grade level curriculum for allowing them to create lessons about injustice that met curricular requirements. For example, Elaine said, "So, we're lucky because in our grade we don't have to teach a set of works of literature like some other grades do. We focus on skills, instead. So, that gives us a lot of latitude to pick the topics we want."

Choosing classroom materials that avoid stereotypical portrayals of marginalized groups. This was the least-commonly reported type of curricular activism, with three of

the fourteen interviewees (21%) claiming to have engaged in such at least once per month. Alice, for instance, described choosing case studies of violent crimes for her forensic sciences class very carefully, saying, “I noticed that in a lot of these studies, [racial minorities] are usually the ‘perps’ and the victims. And those are things that I don’t want to be reinforcing.” LouAnne reported choosing an alternative textbook for a life skills course because “a lot of the examples in the book made me really uncomfortable, because they had minority kids, poor kids, doing negative things a lot. Like drug use, pregnancy…stuff like that. And I felt if it made me uncomfortable, it might make some of my kids uncomfortable, too.” Elaine, who openly identified herself to the researcher as bisexual, described creating a section in her classroom library devoted to books about LGBT youth, “really awesome books that kind of give a perspective that’s not heard a lot, honest and true-to-life. The kind of books I wish I’d had when I was that age.”

Attitudes towards Social Justice Activism. Based on the analysis of the survey data, teacher attitudes towards Social Justice Activism were the strongest predictor of intention to engage in curricular activism. These attitudes can be categorized in the following manner:

Commitment to marginalized students. Each of the interviewees expressed a desire to work with marginalized students and a willingness to devote energy and time to helping them achieve their full academic potential. Two of the teachers described choosing to take their teaching positions specifically because it gave them the opportunity to work with marginalized students. LouAnne stated, “One of the main reasons why I chose to come [to this school] is because it was specifically targeting populations of

students who are under-represented in colleges." Joe explained that despite the fact that he has been given opportunities to teach "other demographics of kids", he has always decided to remain in positions where he can serve "low SES kids". Other teachers spoke of their desire to remain at their current campuses, despite the challenges many of the students present. Sarah, whose current campus serves many low-income and racial/ethnic minority students, drives nearly two-and-a-half hours a day to commute roundtrip from her home in a middle-class suburb. She explained, "My mom is also a teacher, and she works in [a district near Sarah's home that serves primarily higher-income, non-Latino White students]. She's always trying to get me to apply there, but I don't want to. I just feel like those kids don't need me as much as my kids here do." Alice shared, "I don't live [in the town where her campus is located], but I don't want to leave [this school]. The kids here are awesome…it's so diverse here…I really appreciate that!" Three other interviewees, each of whom teaches in an Early College High School program, expressed a desire to teach more marginalized students than they currently do. Claire stated, "I think we have a good program here. I'd love to see it expand to reach even more students, especially the ones that wouldn't be able to go to college otherwise." When LouAnne's Early College campus moved away from its original focus on recruiting at-risk students, she said she was "extremely concerned. I couldn't see why we were turning our backs on those kids, the ones that didn't have the same opportunities. This school could impact those kids' lives forever. This is where they need to be!"

The interviewees acknowledged that working with marginalized students was often "frustrating" and "really hard work", requiring extra effort and "long hours" to help the students excel, but indicated that they were willing to make those sacrifices.

Furthermore, most of the teachers insisted persistence in the face of those challenges was key to overcoming them. For instance, Joe said, "You know, you just have to keep trying and hoping [these students] will succeed. Part of the problem is that everybody has given up on them in the past. I refuse to do that." LouAnne offered a suggestion that she said might help more marginalized students realize their full potential: "I would like to see more teachers have the mindset of 'I'm going to have to work harder. We're all going to have to work harder, but we are not going to give up, not on a single one of them.'"

Empathy for marginalized students. Many of the interviewees also voiced feelings of compassion for, and solidarity with, marginalized students. Luz explained, "When I started [in Special Education], I saw right away that those kids weren't treated the same. Teachers just…weren't even bothering to try to teach them. I felt really bad, because those kids didn't ask to be learning disabled. That first day I cried all the way home because I take it to heart." LouAnne described her feelings for students from groups who are underrepresented in higher education thusly: "It's those kids that I'm really passionate about. The ones that don't have an easy path. The ones that struggle. Why aren't we doing more to help those kids succeed, instead of writing them off?"

Furthermore, many of these teachers reported being members of marginalized groups, themselves, and credited their experiences for motivating them to work with those students. Jackie shared, "I'm an African-American woman. I get where these [racial/ethnic minority] students are coming from. I can give them a different perspective from the one most teachers can give." Alice said, "I'm from a low socio-economic background myself. I was considered 'at-risk'. So I want to encourage those [low socio-economic students who want to attend college] and say 'I did it. You can do it, too.'"

Several teachers who are not members of marginalized groups contended that their status as middle class "White women" impaired their ability to reach some of their marginalized students. Sarah, for instance, said "What do I know about hardship? I mean, I had the typical rosy middle-class White girl upbringing. I have those things, and I think some of the kids write me off because what do I know? They think I can't possibly understand what they're going through." Claire said, "Being a White female in education, I'm in the majority, and so [marginalized students] kind of put me in that category too. And breaking down that barrier can be tough at first."

The importance of sharing a common background of oppression was also expressed in several teachers' statements that teaching staff should be more demographically representative of the students on campus. For example, Joe shared, "If I had a magic wand, I'd make sure we had more Hispanic teachers. This school is 68% Hispanic, but only 8% of our teachers are. That's a real problem, in my opinion." Byron stated, "Certainly someone with experience that identifies with the demographics of the school they teach in would make a big difference. But those people don't have the same opportunities to become teachers. And part of why I'm here is to reach those kids and give them those opportunities."

Valuing relationships with marginalized students. Every interviewee expressed both the desire and ability to build relationships with their marginalized students, either as a means of ensuring student success or as a source of personal gratification. These relationships were achieved by spending one-on-one time with the students, sharing personal experiences as a way of building trust, and finding out what matters to individual students. Angela described her success in helping a visually-impaired student

as being the result of “taking time to meet with him away from the other kids at least once a day. If I hadn’t done that, I don’t think he would’ve trusted me enough to tell me why he was struggling.” Elaine explained that she believes she has created a “safe space” for her LGBT students because she opened up to them about having LGBT individuals in her family. Sarah described assigning misbehaving students to lunch detention with her, so that they would have to come spend time and “bond” with her. She said, “I use those opportunities to really get to know them, find out what’s going on at home, what drives them, what do they like and dislike. Once I know those things, I can teach any kid anything”. Sarah shared a story about making a breakthrough with one of her “troubled” students through her classroom pet rats: “So, we did a lesson on character foils in fiction, and I used the rats as examples. One of my kids, “Miguel”, who had not done any work all year, came up to me after class and started talking to me about his pet hamsters. We had a nice conversation about them, he showed me pictures and stuff. Now, when I ask him to write in class, he actually does it! It’s so weird…sometimes it’s just these little things, but if you take the time to find them, it can really make a difference.” Joe repeatedly referred to his students as his “family” and said that those relationships “are the things I live for. That’s what makes all this worth it.” Similarly, Minnie shared the following about her gender-diverse student: “He never wants to leave my class. I love it. It makes my heart sparkle like you don’t even know…because that’s what I aspire to. To have every kid feel that way is my goal.”

The interviewees also perceived the times when they had been unable to build relationships with certain students as an impediment to teaching them, and as a source of personal anguish. Alice described trying to reach out to a student who was being bullied,

only to be rebuffed by saying, “That really upset me, because I really try to build rapport with every student. And I just couldn’t get through to him that I cared. Those kids I worry about, the ones that nobody reaches, because those are the ones that fall through the cracks.” Elaine tearfully expressed her regret for being unable to organize a gay/straight students’ alliance because “the kids were so disappointed. It just hurt so bad. I felt I had let them down. And now I worry they won’t trust me the way they did before. It sucks.”

Viewing marginalized students as assets. The interviewees also tended to view marginalized students as making contributions to society, other students and to the teachers, themselves. For example, Byron shared, “I see diversity as our greatest social asset. It’s the key to our success and our survival.” When speaking about a gender-diverse student, Minnie said, “I admire him in so many different ways. He’s trying to break the barriers and make other kids understand that they don’t have to fit in a box.” Several teachers acknowledged that working with marginalized students helps them grow, both as education professionals, and as human beings. Joe, for instance, described the struggle of creating lessons that his marginalized students find meaningful: “I just keep going back to the drawing board every night. I have to stay on top of my game with these kids. I have to keep learning, myself.” Lauren shared, “Somedays I say I’ve learned more from these [marginalized] kids than they’ve learned from me. There were so many things I didn’t realize about society, about people in general. They have helped me evolve as a person.”

Valuing democratic principles. The interviewees also evinced beliefs in democratic ideals, including inclusivity and self-determination. Many of the teachers indicated a desire to grant marginalized students equal access to the social, emotional and

academic opportunities afforded by public education. LouAnne, for example, spoke of challenging teachers who wanted to limit the enrollment of at-risk students at her campus: "When teachers would say 'Why do those [marginalized] kids need to come here?' my response was, "Because they have the *right* to be here, that's why!'" Other teachers spoke of the need to make all students feel welcome in their classrooms, regardless of their marginalized status. Lauren described defending a gender-diverse student from another teacher who disapproved of his feminine clothing choices by saying, "That's who this student is. He should have the right to be himself, and not have to hide who he is." Alice spoke about intervening to stop classroom talk that was disparaging to immigrants by declaring to the class, "We're not going to say things in here that make people feel like they don't belong. Everybody belongs here." Perhaps the most poignant expression of this welcoming attitude was visible on Luz's classroom wall, in the form of a poem written about Luz's classroom by a former student (Appendix E). The poem reads, in part:

> There's a place you can go if you ever need help,
>
> If you need someone to talk to, you can just be yourself.
>
> A place where it doesn't matter about your looks or your race,
>
> There's always someone to help you with a smile on their face.

Additionally, several interviewees expressed anger over their perception that marginalized students at their schools are subjected to educational inequity. Luz, for example, asserted that many teachers fail to follow special education modifications, "cheating them" out of academic opportunities. Sarah described a common situation in which students with special needs are "just passed along from grade to grade. Nobody

has bothered to make sure they were getting what they needed to succeed. They've just been lied to over and over again." Joe opined, "Teachers just give up on these [marginalized] kids. They've been given up on so many times, they lose faith in themselves."

The interviewees also pointed out that marginalized students are subjected to harsher discipline than their non-marginalized peers. Sarah shared the following example: "I've seen one [marginalized] student get sent to [in-school suspension] for having a nose ring, and the next day, seen that same administrator talking to one of the so-called 'good kids' with a nose ring, and nothing happens to them. The kids see that, too, and they know it's unfair." Joe also told a story about one of his students that he was trying to mentor, but was stymied by the administration frequently sending the student to in-school suspension: "He's been sent [to in-school suspension] repeatedly for just the silliest reasons, didn't have a pencil, wasn't prepared for class, had his cell phone out in class, was talking out of turn. I need that kid to be here in class!" He went on to explain that he believes this student was singled out by teachers and administrators for disproportionately severe discipline because of his reputation as a "difficult kid": "I feel like a lot of the teachers and admins are just looking for this kid to mess up or what he's doing wrong." Byron advocated for a discipline strategy that ensures equality: "There need to be hard-line standards that apply to everybody, whether it's the city councilman's kid or the kid whose dad works in a meat market. No matter your GPA, if you cross certain lines, you're out."

The interviewees' commitment to self-determination was apparent in their statements of support for student and teacher agency. Minnie, for instance, shared that

one of her priorities in the classroom is helping her students learn to advocate for themselves. She told the story of encouraging a student to stand up to her boss who was scheduling her for late hours on school nights: “I told her, ‘Why do you think you need to work so late? Baby, you have a choice. The day you realize that with every single step you take you have a choice, that is the day you will ultimately be free.” Minnie blamed the student’s reluctance to advocate for herself on a pervasive pressure to conform: “Let’s face it, one of our biggest problems in education is that it operates like a dictatorship. People don’t feel like they have choices, when they really do.” Elaine, on the other hand, told about a student of hers who had come to her, told her he was transgender, and asked to be called by his preferred pronouns. She said, “I’d never had a kid do that before, and I thought, wow, how awesome! I cannot imagine being brave enough at that age to stand up for myself like that! It would be so great if every kid felt like they could do that!”

Teacher agency was also highly valued by the interviewees. Joe, for instance, stated that he appreciated his campus principal’s attempts to “empower” teachers to “become leaders”. Several teachers (Sarah, Joe, Elaine, LouAnne, Walter) reported that they appreciated the autonomy granted them by their school leaders, either in terms of planning lessons and activities or choosing classroom materials, and credited this autonomy with giving them the freedom to better support their marginalized students. Conversely, Alice complained that her principal restricted her autonomy by requiring every teacher on her subject team to embrace a certain teaching model (“flipped classroom”) , and that doing so impeded her ability to meet all students’ needs: “I just don’t like that teaching style. It seems to me that if we don’t expect all kids to learn the same, we shouldn’t expect all teachers to teach the same. It’s just a matter of respecting

me as a teacher." Similarly, Minnie expressed dismay that her campus and district administrators did not seem to value her opinions as a professional educator. She told a story of asking repeatedly asking for classroom supplies, saying: " I just could not get anyone to listen to me until it reached a crisis point. I mean…goddamn it, just listen to me! This is not my first rodeo!"

Social norms about curricular activism. Survey data indicated that teachers' decisions to engage in curricular activism are influenced by the attitudes and behaviors of others in their school environment; interview responses gave further clarity to this relationship. It is clear from analyzing interview data that the teachers interviewed see other teachers on their campuses as sources of support for and as impediments to their efforts in the service of educational equity. Unfortunately, interviewees were twice as likely to see their peers as impediments than as supports.

Impediments. Four interviewees stated that their campus peers undermined their efforts to assure educational equity by being unwilling to expend the necessary time and energy to meet their marginalized students' needs. Luz, for instance, stated that her special education students suffered academically because teachers "don't want to work hard enough to follow [the students'] [modifications] and accomodations. They don't like being pushed in that way." LouAnne explained that many teachers on her campus fought her efforts to recruit more "at-risk" students to their school because "they weren't comfortable teaching those populations. They know those kids are more difficult to teach, and they'd just rather not have to make their own lives harder." Alice shared her perception that many teachers are more interested in embracing teaching strategies that lighten their own workloads than in those that actually work for students, saying, " [the

teachers] say ‘yeah, this program is great!’ It’s great because they don’t have to do anything. I don’t want to be that teacher that says ‘okay, guys, you’re on your own, here.’” Joe explained that “Finding teachers who are willing to take on the challenge of teaching those [marginalized] students is one of the areas where we struggle the most. A lot of teachers just aren’t willing to do that.”

Interviewees also described some of their peers as being disengaged from their students, marginalized students in particular. Minnie explained that while teachers should be “figuring out how to get through to those kids, find out what their strengths are, applaud them and get them up there,” the reality is that “you can’t get there when you can’t even get a teacher off her bloody cell phone.” Joe stated that many teachers seem disconnected from the values on which public education is based: “I’ve had student teacher supervisors tell me how impressed they are with my commitment to these kids, my passion for the job. My reaction is, isn’t this something we should all be doing? If not, why are we here? You know, the job doesn’t pay that well. There’s got to be something more that wakes you up in the morning, that gets you through the long days, the [state standardized] testing and all that stuff. I just think a lot of teachers have forgotten why they became teachers in the first place.” Similarly, several teachers stated their belief that teachers are too willing to “give up” on challenging students, with Lauren explaining, “I think that, over time, teachers get so frustrated that they just ‘turn off’. They forget that these kids are people, too. They are individuals, with different wants, different needs. They forget that these kids are deserving of dignity and respect.”

Furthermore, interviewees tended to view their peers as harboring low expectations for marginalized students, and that this has led to these students not

receiving the support and structure they need to be successful. Sarah explained that one of her primary barriers to assisting her marginalized students is

> …they've just been passed along. Year after year. They've been told that if they don't pass their exams, they won't go to the next grade level, but they get passed up anyway, even if they're not ready for the next grade. Then, they get to me, and I try to hold them to a high standard, and they don't believe a word I say. They've heard it all before, and it wasn't true. They've been flat-out lied to for so long, they don't trust me, or anyone in education.

Similarly, Minnie said, "These kids are used to just getting by. They're not used to being challenged. They've never been held accountable. And this is true of all kids, not just the ones that struggle, but it's hardest for those kids who are gonna have to work harder to succeed." Lauren shared, "A lot of times, some of my co-workers just assume that if a kid is struggling, it means they can't be reached, that they're just not smart enough." The interviewees seemed particularly concerned that marginalized students were not being held sufficiently accountable by other teachers for failing to follow school or class expectations. Alice explained,

> I'll have kids that miss my class at least once a week, and then I find out they were hanging out in Mrs. So-and-so's class instead. And I'll talk to Mrs. So-and-so, and she'll say, 'Well, the kid has problems'. Okay, I get that. But come on. When you allow that kid to miss my class over and over, how are you helping him? How can I help him get a good education if he's not even here?

Sarah elaborated, “So, we have teachers who try to mentor kids, and, like that’s good, but it can be a double-edged sword, because then some don’t hold that kid to the same standards of behavior or performance as the others. I think that sends the wrong message, frankly.”

Finally, some of the interviewees described their peers as holding distinctly negative attitudes about marginalized groups. Jackie, for instance, told of a situation in which a “sexist” teacher consistently undermined his female students, even subjecting one to sexual harassment, and other male teachers who refused to condemn this behavior because they belonged to the “Good Ol’ Boys’ Club”. Lauren described having to intervene with a fellow teacher who expressed transphobic attitudes towards a gender-diverse student. Alice told of teachers who told female students that they were “not suited” to careers in the sciences, and those who spoke disparagingly of immigrants in front of immigrant students.

Supports. Yet, despite the barriers posed by their peers, the interviewees also described ways in which other teachers had supported them in their efforts to achieve educational equity for their marginalized students; most of these supports occurred in the contexts of planning teams and informal teacher partnerships. Both Elaine and Sarah described situations in which their grade-level subject teams decided to introduce issues of social, racial or economic injustice into the curriculum. As Elaine explained, “Yeah, so, [the team] decided to talk about the Voting Rights Act because political voice for everyone is something we’re all passionate about.” Sarah described her team deciding to teach about stereotypes in literature so that,

> When our kids go out into the world, hopefully they can look at a news story or a book, or on Twitter or whatever and say 'Hold on. This is a little biased. What's going on, here?' We want our kids to be able to look past obvious labels and see the bigger picture."

Teachers also spoke of being able to rely on trusted peers for support in meeting students' needs. Both Minnie and Sarah talked about having close teacher allies who were willing to provide tutoring or mentoring to students that they, themselves, were having difficulty reaching. Sarah happened to be Minnie's main ally, stating, "I have this one girl who really struggles in English, and so I send her to [Sarah] and she helps her with those English concepts that I don't have expertise in." Sarah, on the other hand, relies on her co-teacher "Mark", whom she describes as often sacrificing his planning period to come to her classroom and give one-on-one support to a student with significant academic and social impairments. Sarah said, "[Mark] is my other half; we are like two sides of the same coin. He would take the time to come in [my classroom] two or three times a week. One, because he's my friend, and two, because he wanted to see both me and [the student] succeed."

Other teachers mentioned the value of having like-minded teachers upon whom they could rely for emotional support. Alice described a time immediately following the election of Donald Trump to the presidency:

> It was so disconcerting. Everything seems to be going down the toilet. And these other teachers and I, we were like this little liberal island in a sea of red, we would eat lunch together, and they really kept me sane. Like, no, I am not the crazy one,

here. What [Trump] is saying and doing is wrong, and we have to stay strong, here."

Lauren told of feeling bolstered in her efforts to advocate for gender-diverse students on her campus because of the fact that "most of the teachers here are really open-minded, so I feel pretty safe challenging other people when they say negative things. If that wasn't the case, I might not have the courage to speak out like I do."

Perceived behavioral control. Unexpectedly, the analysis of survey data did not confirm the predicted links between teachers' beliefs in their ability to affect positive change in their schools and either their intentions to engage in social justice activism, or the actual frequency of their past engagement in curricular activism. The perception of behavioral control factor is presupposed by this study to be contingent on two subfactors: teachers' beliefs surrounding their own agency, and their access to resources that assist them in being successful curricular activists. The original study proposal hypothesized that campus leaders were integral to the creation of both subfactors. The third research question (What do those teachers who report high levels of involvement in curricular activism perceive as the supports for and barriers presented by campus principals to their activism?) was answered using the integration of quantitative findings with those gleaned from the interview data. In the proposed model, the supports and barriers in question are conceptualized as contributing to teachers' perception of behavioral control in the sense that principals exert a great deal of control over the two factors that influence PCB: teachers' sense of agency, and their access to resources that may increase their ability to successfully work for educational equity. The model hypothesized that PCB would affect the frequency of activism behaviors (ActBeh) both directly, and indirectly with the

intention to engage in activism behaviors as a mediator. Analysis of the model did not support these hypothesized relationships, however. The researcher will discuss possible explanations for this result following the presentation of the qualitative findings.

Leader attributes. Interviewees mentioned a variety of campus leader attitudes and behaviors that they stated impacted their curricular activism, both in positive and negative ways.

- *Attitudes.* Interviewees' description of their campus principals revealed some common themes of values which, if held, were beneficial, and if not held, were detrimental to their work as curricular activists.
    - *Commitment to social justice values.* Several teachers described their campus principals as ascribing to social justice values. Adjectives used to describe these values included "progressive", "socially aware" and "anti-racist/anti-sexist". Conversely, interviewees described being hindered by administrators who were "misogynists" or who held deficit views about marginalized students. Minnie, for instance, described her frustration in working under a principal who "didn't want to listen to [her] because [she is] a woman. There's this boys' club [in the administration] and I do not belong to that club." LouAnne shared trying to convince her former principal to allow more 'at-risk' students into their school, only to find that "he really didn't see why those kids needed to be in our school. I really think he felt they wouldn't be able to hack it here."

- *Caring.* The interviewees also expressed their opinion that empathy for students and teachers alike was a defining characteristic of supportive principals. Lauren, for instance, described her campus principal as "really caring," elaborating that "she just wants what's best for the kids. She understands the challenges they face and want to do whatever it takes to help them." Luz explained that her campus principal "understands how hard some of these kids are to work with. He always tries to remind us of that, and keeps us grounded in that way." Jackie, on the contrary, described a former principal as "not really giving a crap" about the challenges posed by certain students, saying, "Well, the attitude was that if you asked for help, it was because you just weren't doing your job properly. He didn't seem to understand if teachers were struggling."
- *Integrity.* Teachers also described supportive principals as having integrity, while unsupportive principals were lacking in such. Joe stated that he admires his campus principal because "he talks about being transformational, but he also does what he can to achieve that transformation. He puts his money where his mouth is." Similarly, Angela explained that her principal is "very respected" among teaching staff because "when she says she's going to deal with something, she does it. We see that she means what she says." Conversely, Minnie stated that her principal "can be frustrating to deal

with, because he talks a good game, but there's not always that follow-through. He talks the talk, but he doesn't always walk the walk."

- *Focus on student learning.* The interviewees also mentioned that principal support often comes from the attitude of putting student learning above other considerations. Lauren, for instance, said, that her current principal "doesn't get caught up in ridiculous stuff that has nothing to do with learning, like dress codes and such", also noting that, in her experience, dress codes seemed to target students of color, girls and gender-diverse students. Sarah shared that her principal has the following "mantra": "How is this [lesson, activity, decision] going to help your kids to get where we want them to be?" adding, "That's what he cares about first and foremost – are we giving the kids what they need to be successful in school?" On the flip side, principals who were "overly" concerned with factors only tangentially-related to student learning (e.g., dress codes, minor discipline infractions) were seen as detrimental to the cause of educational equity.
- *Focus on teacher improvement.* The teachers in this study also explained that principals who create conditions in which teachers, themselves, and learn and grow were conducive to educational equity. Jackie shared that her principal "recognizes we [teachers] are going to make mistakes. But she also expects us to learn from those mistakes. And that forces us to improve our practice as teachers." Byron stated that his principal "expects [teachers] to get better over time. It's a

growth mindset, for sure." Conversely, teachers took a dim view of principals who seemed to be complacent about teachers who consistently failed to reach their marginalized students. As Walter shared, "I wish [my principal] did more to weed out those teachers who aren't doing their jobs properly, especially if they've been given opportunities to improve." Similarly, Alice stated,

> I can't for the life of me understand how some of our teachers are still here. I mean, you're going to insult your [marginalized] kids openly, in class? Really? Come on. Either you force those teachers to understand that that's wrong, or you get rid of them. That's what I would do, anyway.

- *Behaviors.* Additionally, interviewees mentioned a cluster of campus leader behaviors that they stated impacted their curricular activism, both in positive and negative ways.
    - *Advocacy:* Several teachers described their principals as being supportive by openly advocating for marginalized students within the confines of their campuses. Walter, for instance, explained that his principal sends out a weekly newsletter to the campus reminding teachers of the barriers facing low-income students, and encouraging them to practice with this knowledge in mind (Appendix F). Elaine shared that her principal had sent a powerful message of support to her LGBT students when a transgender teacher was not prohibited from openly transitioning during the school year. Elaine elaborated, "This

teacher literally started out the year presenting as a woman, and by Christmas, was presenting as a man. He even changed his name from 'Ms.' to 'Mr.' We teachers were made aware via email that this was going to happen, and our principal made it clear that she was fully aware and supportive of his decision." Luz described her principal "going to bat" for her special education students by intervening with teachers who were failing to follow students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs). More often, however, teachers expressed disappointment that their principals failed to advocate for these students with district administration, parents or the community at large. LouAnne, for instance, described her principal as being unwilling to advocate with district administration in favor of recruiting more 'at-risk" students into their campus. Elaine shared her experience of having the gay-straight student alliance she attempted to form scrapped after her principal declined to advocate for it with district administration. Additionally, Elaine described her campus principal as pre-emptively quashing many decisions that might offend parents, recommending that campus leaders should "not intentionally shy away from actions that help your marginalized students just because you're worried about what parents *might* say. Do it, and *if* the parents react badly, deal with it then."

- *Hiring:* Principals' hiring practices were also named as sources of support or as impediments to educational equity. Both Jackie and

Angela recounted being interviewed by a principal who specifically asked about their attitudes and level of commitment to working with marginalized students. Most teachers, however, found their principals' hiring practices to be lacking in terms of assuring representation of teachers from the same demographic groups as their students or in terms of their attitudes towards or experience with marginalized students. Joe, Luz, Alice and Byron all recommended that their principals hire more teachers from underrepresented groups; both Luz and LouAnne recommended that principals actively recruit teachers whose values match those that the principal wishes to promote on campus. Sarah shared her disappointment when her principal hired a football coach and then assigned him to teach the resource English class "because they just needed to put him somewhere when he wasn't coaching". This hiring decision, Sarah explained, showed her that her principal "values athletics" over academic support for marginalized students.

- *Scheduling:* Teachers also mentioned specific scheduling decisions made by their campus principals that either supported or impeded their curricular activism, with the allowance of extra planning time being seen as particularly beneficial. Sarah, for instance, mentioned having two "off-periods" per day, and stated that this allowed her teacher ally to devote time to mentoring a particularly "difficult" student. Alice described the value of having common planning periods with her

grade-level team so they could “brainstorm” activities to engage their marginalized students. On the negative side, several teachers named certain scheduling decisions as detrimental to their efforts towards educational equity. Two teachers mentioned the placement of “too many” high-needs students in one class, one mentioned having four different courses to teach at once as interfering with her ability to effectively analyze data on student progress, and two more explained that certain exemplary teachers were routinely given the highest-need students, leading to teacher burnout. As Sarah explained:

> We used to have this amazing teacher. African-American woman. And boy, did she connect with those kids! It was something to witness. But they kept piling the hardest kids on her year after year, and eventually she just gave out and left for another district. It was a huge loss for our campus.

- *Communication:* The act of communicating openly with teachers and students was also seen as a factor. Several teachers praised their principals for their clear communication of social justice values to staff. Walter, for example, provided three principal newsletters that specifically addressed social justice issues (Appendix F). Most of the remarks made about communication, however, were negative. Joe noted that a lack of clear information about the challenges faced by specific students interfered with teachers’ ability to meet those

students' needs. Sarah spoke of her frustration at being "kept in the dark" about the hiring of a new resource English teacher, saying

> I knew they were supposed to have hired someone, and I kept asking who it was. And for two months, nobody would tell me anything. I mean, nobody new was showing up to team meetings, or anything. We [on the team] are all supposed to be working together to help all of the kids, you know? But none of us [on the English team] knew what was going on.

Angela also described a situation in which her district had made certain policy changes that impacted her work as a Special Education teacher, but in which those decisions were not relayed to her by campus leadership in a timely fashion. "Basically," she said, "I had to re-do months of paperwork, and that took time that I could have been spending pulling students in for one on one time." Additionally, a number of teachers spoke of not being informed of the outcome of disciplinary referrals. Alice explained,

> I had a student who was being bullied in one of my classes, so I wrote [a disciplinary referral] up and sent it to the office. But I have no earthly idea what came of it. Was the bully talked to? Sent to I.S.S. [In-school suspension]? Was the victim talked to? Counseled? I have no clue.

Sarah also described having a student who had been placed on an alternative campus for a serious infraction returned to her classroom

with no notice. She stated, “I needed to plan out how to reintroduce [that student] into the class. But instead, they just plopped him in here with no warning. That was a bad surprise, for sure.”

- *Teacher accountability:* A few of the interviewees praised their principals’ efforts to hold teachers accountable for improving their practice as an asset for all students, but especially marginalized students. Angela, for instance, described her principal as consistently monitoring teacher performance and creating improvement plans for teachers who were not meeting her standards. Most of the teachers, however, spoke of a lack of teacher accountability on their campuses. Lauren, for example, expressed the opinion that marginalized students would be better served if her campus principal started “weeding out” teachers who were not willing to work with all “types” of students. Alice shared that although campus principal frequently speaks about meeting marginalized students’ needs, she doesn’t see “any real follow-through” to make certain that teachers are implementing strategies that meet those needs.
- *Creating administrative support systems:* A few teachers mentioned specific administrative support positions that helped them advocate for their marginalized students. Luz and Angela described Special Education campus administrators who assisted them in obtaining adaptive equipment and other services for their students. Angela also reported that in her current position she herself functioned in a quasi-

administrative capacity, serving as both a teacher and as a case manager for her students. According to her, this position allowed her greater access to administrative records and extra time to meet with the students on her caseload. Claire spoke of an assistant principal who had been placed in charge of the Early College program at her school, who served as a mentor and advisor for students in the program.

- *Teacher agency.* As was previously noted, the teachers in this part of the study value agency, and a number of them felt that their campus leaders allowed them the freedom to create lessons and choose materials that support their marginalized students. Several teachers described their principals as allowing them to make decisions about their own teaching by adopting a policy of low micro-management, while others described being forced to submit to a lock-step approach to curriculum and teaching styles, as has been discussed earlier in the chapter. Both groups viewed the freedom to control their own classrooms as an asset that did or would assist them in working towards educational equity for their marginalized students. It is important to note here, however, that this agency represents a lack of oversight inside the classroom, rather than the provision of opportunities to be agentic in the extra-classroom context. At the same time, teacher agency outside of the classroom was described as "practically non-existent" by every teacher, except one, Joe. Additionally, most of the teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by

certain factors that they perceived as being outside of the control of them and their campus leadership; these factors included student characteristics, family and community characteristics, district priorities, and state and federal accountability pressures.

- *Student characteristics*: Many of the interviewees spoke of not being able to connect with certain marginalized students because those students had severe cognitive or emotional deficits. Luz described such a student who has "brain damage" and becomes "frustrated" and "aggressive" when Luz attempts to work with her to complete assignments. Lauren told of a student with severe anxiety issues who refuses to speak to her, or anyone else, at school. Alice reported having a student who was being bullied, but who responded to her attempts to intervene with "extreme hostility" because "he seems to have a pretty low opinion of females, this kid, and I don't think he appreciated a woman trying to help him with anything." Furthermore, several of the interviewees described feeling stymied by what they perceived as students' lack of investment in their education. Sarah described not being able to help certain students who, she felt, "just didn't have an interest in bettering themselves." She went on to express that she could be more successful in helping marginalized students who "believe in education a little more, who see what it can do for them".

Similarly, Joe shared his dismay that “a lot of the kids here don’t want to break out of the ghetto, so to speak. They’re okay with [not succeeding academically or economically]”. Alice also reported having “kids who say they’re not going to college, because they don’t see any value in it”.

- *Family characteristics*: Many of the teachers reported that their marginalized students often suffered from instability in their home lives, and that those conditions impaired teachers’ ability to help students reach their full potential. Such instability took the form of one or more absent parents, domestic violence, substance abuse or other illegal activity in the home, lack of discipline in the home, poor parenting skills, failure or inability to monitor student academic performance, and physical, emotional or social deprivations caused by poverty.
- *District priorities*: Interviewees also expressed frustration with district policies or attitudes that they believed undermined the social justice efforts of themselves or their campus leadership. Many of these issues revolved around scheduling or job descriptions, with several teachers explaining that longer school days and increased work responsibilities interfered with their ability to find the time to build relationships and work one-on-one with students. Angela, for instance, shared her opinion that a shorter school day would give her the

opportunity to “bring kids in after school for tutoring”. Other teachers questioned whether district administrators even valued educational equity. For example, Joe explained that even though he believes his campus principal wants to support marginalized students, “central [office] has other ideas. A lot of [decisions that would help in this regard] are out of his control.” LouAnne described a situation in which her district superintendent openly referred to her campus’ effort to recruit more ‘at-risk’ students a “skunk project”. Jackie shared her belief that “good ol’ boys’ in her district’s administration do not want to listen to female teachers who complain about sexual harassment or misogyny occurring on campuses. Other teachers described district administrators as comfortable with the status quo: Lauren stated, “I think that as long as our [standardized test scores] are good, they’re happy. They don’t want to hear about [educational inequity]…it’s not on their radar. Their mantra is ‘don’t rock the boat’”.

- *State/federal agency pressures*- Teachers also viewed state and federal policies as hinderances to their Social Justice Activism, particularly in terms of accountability pressures and funding. Byron shared that his campus is “forced to focus on numbers and scores instead of on kids.” Lauren stated her belief that standardized testing “hurts our kids”, and that the focus on

such is troublesome because “we have no choice in the matter. We have to [administer these tests] whether we think it hurts [the students] or not.” Furthermore, Alice explained that graduation rate requirements hinder teachers’ ability to hold students to a high academic standards:

> If a kid just isn’t getting the subject matter, we aren’t allowed to give them a failing grade because they might not graduate on time and it will ‘ding’ our grad rate rating. So, we just push them on through instead of helping them learn the material. It just winds up hurting the kid.”

Underfunding of districts also came up as a source of concern for these teachers, because lack of money prevents schools from hiring enough staff to meet the needs of all students. Luz explained, “We need more warm bodies. Period. We are severely understaffed. But if the funds aren’t there, what are we supposed to do about it?”

- *Access to opportunities and resources that support curricular activism* .Overall, interviewees in this study reported a lack of access to opportunities and resources that support their attempts to improve educational equity for marginalized students. While one teacher (LouAnne) described belonging to a campus-supported “improvement community network” that allows teachers from Early College high schools to collaborate with schools across the country that are

successful models of equity-focused programming, none of the other teachers reported having access to professional development that adequately addresses equity issues. In those instances where such professional development was provided, teachers described them as lacking in specificity. For instance, Alice shared,

> We have [professional development] where they'll talk about "these kids need more support", but I feel like they never tell us how. So, they'll say, "we need to do more scaffolding," and I'm like, 'well, okay, but how does scaffolding for this group of students look different from the scaffolding we already do?" And they don't seem to be able to explain that.

Sarah spoke of having been asked to present a session to her campus on developing positive relationships with marginalized students, only to have it scrapped at the last minute because "central office brought in some consultants to teach us about anchor charts instead." The two Special Education teachers interviewed both explained that their efforts to help their special needs students are hampered by the fact that most teachers lack adequate training about how to meet those students' needs. Luz explained, " Teachers don't get adequately prepared for [working with special needs students] before they get their own classrooms. I wish that more teachers would learn about special education students, and that the administration could figure out some kind of training that would help them understand."

In sum, teachers' feelings of agency, although strong, are primarily limited to the classroom context. Furthermore, although interviewees often described their principals' attitudes and behaviors as supportive of their curricular activism, they felt that both they, and their principals, were stymied by factors and entities outside of the campus context. Finally, interviewees described an overall lack of resources and opportunities that could further their curricular activism.

Teacher recommendations for improvement. At the end of each interview, teachers were asked to make specific recommendations that they saw as important to improving educational equity on their campuses. This question was asked in an attempt to elucidate what teachers see as the biggest current impediment to their practice as activists for educational equity. Interestingly, although some recommendations were focused on students, parents and school districts, the vast majority of the recommendations centered around decisions that are or could be made by their campus principals.

Parental factors. One teacher, Byron, who believes that the biggest barrier facing his marginalized students is behavior problems that lead to their removal from the regular school environment, stated that it would be easier for him to help these students reach their full academic potential if parents "raised their children with certain behavior standards and held them to those standards".

Student factors. Two teachers, Sarah and Alice, named student attitudes that they believe need to change. Sarah stated, "I wish these kids could really just appreciate education more, to see how it can change their lives for the better". Alice shared that she wished more students "took ownership of their own education. I can't make them learn. I can help them, but that desire seems to be missing."

Principal factors. Most of the recommendations revolved around specific actions or attitude changes that could be enacted by campus principals.

- *Hiring and firing:* The most commonly-cited recommendation made by teachers in this study had to do with the personnel decisions made by their principals, with four teachers (Byron, Joe, Luz and Alice) calling for the hiring of more teachers from underrepresented groups, and one teacher (Joe) calling for the hiring of more teachers who have experience with marginalized students. Two other teachers (Lauren and LouAnne) recommended that teachers who are unwilling to accept or work with marginalized students be fired or transferred to other campuses.
- *Programming:* The second-most cited recommendation revolved around the creation or the dismantling of campus programs. Three teachers (Claire, Lauren and LouAnne) recommended the expansion of their campuses' Early College high school programs to include more marginalized students. Two teachers (Sarah and Alice) advocated for the creation of structured mentoring programs for their marginalized students. Byron called for the dismantling of the credit recovery and alternative school programs which he described as "a latchkey education" provided to students with whom teachers and administrators are tired of working.
- *Advocacy:* Three teachers suggested that their campus principals should take more frequent action to support both their marginalized students and their teacher activists. Minnie, for instance, who criticized her principal as not following through on his promises to support marginalized students, stated

that she wished her principal was “more inclined to act, as opposed to just talking”. Elaine recommended that her principal be more willing to “stand up to parents and district administrators who stand in the way” of teachers’ social justice efforts. Walter suggested that his principal could do a better job of assuring that his messages about social justice “trickled down” to the students on campus, saying, “ Mr. --- does a good job of spreading that message to teachers, but I don’t think the kids hear it, and it’s important that they understand how he feels. They need to hear he’s on their side.”

- *Community involvement:* Three teachers (Alice, Luz and Angela) endorsed engaging extra-campus entities on a regular basis, with Alice supporting the recruitment of community members to lead support groups for marginalized students interested in specific careers; Luz recommending the recruitment of community members to serve as tutors, and Angela advocating for more frequent opportunities for parent-teacher conferences, and for providing nightly “family dinners” on campus to encourage greater parent involvement in their children’s school lives.
- *Scheduling:* Two teachers mentioned specific scheduling changes that their principals could make that would help them have enough time to meet the needs of their marginalized students. Claire stated that she “just need(s) more time in general. Maybe if we just had built-in periods every day where students who are struggling could come in for extra help, it might be beneficial.” Angela also advocated for the creation of more “off-periods” that teachers could use to mentor and tutor specific students.

- *Attitude change*: Two teachers recommended that their principals change specific attitudes that they saw as unhelpful to the cause of educational equity. Minnie said, “I really need them to make a paradigm shift, for them to believe that change is possible, and to look for innovative ways to make that change happen.” Alice stated that she wished her principal would “take a step back and think about some of his negative stereotypes. He needs to see each kid as an individual, not just as a member of one group or another.”
- *Professional development:* Two teachers (Luz and Joe) endorsed the implementation of professional development designed to help teachers identify and address the needs of their Special Education students. Interestingly, this was the only marginalized group that teachers advocated training around.
- *Instructional supervision:* Finally, two teachers (Luz and Alice) recommended that their principals engage in instructional supervision of a more rigorous quality and on a more frequent regular basis. As Alice explained, “They tell us what they want to see in our lesson plans, but they don’t really come around and check. They just kind of take the teachers’ word for it. I just think they need to spend more time watching teachers and giving them constructive feedback.”

  District factors: Two teachers recommended that their districts take specific actions to help their teachers work for educational equity. Claire, for example, said, “They [district administrators] need to give us more money to hire more teachers and administrators. There just aren’t enough of us to realistically

meet every child's needs." Lauren suggested that her district "form a district-wide task force to talk to the teachers about the problems they're dealing with, and to come up with solutions for those problems."

The non-exemplar. Tammy, one of the fourteen teachers interviewed in this study, represents what could be considered the antithesis of what a true curricular activist should be. Her responses to interview questions are included in this document to provide a non-exemplar of the phenomenon being studied, as well as to point out potential problems with the use of the Social Justice Scale as applied to teachers. Furthermore, her responses provide both divergent and convergent data with the other interviews.

Tammy is a middle-aged non-Latina White woman who teaches at Seeger High School. In keeping with the sample selection procedure, Tammy was chosen to participate in an interview because she indicated on item 25 of the survey that she engaged in curricular activism at least once per week, and agreed to be interviewed. Her interview responses will be discussed in terms of how they diverged from and converged with the other interviewees'.

Divergent data. Tammy responded quite differently from the other interviewees to many questions, but perhaps the most glaring dissimilarity came from her descriptions of her curricular activism in practice. First, while all of the other interviewees reported enacting said activism on behalf of racial, ethnic, economic, sexual, gender, religious or ability minority students, Tammy referred to actively working for the students she called the "normal, White kids", whom she sees as marginalized on a campus that is "devoted to just helping the 'colored' kids, and the kids who aren't very smart." Her fundamental misunderstanding of the definition of social justice allowed her to behave in ways that

were in direct opposition to the aims of curricular activism, yet still allow her to consider herself a curricular activist. For example, Tammy described intervening to stop the harassment of non-Latino White students on campus, stating that the racial slurs she usually heard were “more White derogatory directed” and that she herself had been called a “stupid little White girl” several times since the beginning of the school year. She stated that she was more likely to intervene in cases such as these because “when [the students] call each other ‘nigger’, they mean it in a friendly way. Like, ‘Yo, my nigger! What’s up?’”. This misunderstanding of the concept of social justice which is concerned with achieving equity for people who have traditionally been prevented from having full access to social, economic and political powers not limited to Tammy; in fact, one survey respondent submitted this comment along with her survey:

> "Social justice" is a communist rally cry used by some of the world's worst murderers. Maybe research needs to be geared towards promoting the value of the individual such as evangelicals, Trump supporters, tea party activists, and unborn children.

It is possible that the lack of a common understanding about the construct of social justice among teachers could have impacted survey and interview responses in ways that were not anticipated by the researcher.

Tammy also differed from the other interviewees in terms of how she reported addressing harassment. While the other teachers described having classroom standards designed to prevent such actions, and reacting to infractions in calm, yet firm ways, Tammy spoke of reacting in what could be considered a verbally abusive manner, especially since, by her own admission, these comments were usually directed at

racial/ethnic minority students. When asked to describe how she would intervene to address these “anti-White” slurs, she responded:

> I’m really good at putting [the offending students] on the spot. I’ll say, “Why did you say that? Do you think you sound smart when you say that? When you say that, it makes you sound really stupid.” I mean, if you’re going to be a dumbass in my class, I’m going to call you out on it.

Tammy also described advocating and supporting her “marginalized” students, but again, those students were essentially members of non-marginalized groups. For instance, she spoke of defending her “normal” kids from the inappropriate behaviors of a student with mental health challenges by “fighting tooth and nail to get him removed from my class.”

Tammy’s attitudes towards marginalized students were strikingly different from those of the other interviewees. She consistently described specific students from these groups as “troublemakers”, “coddled”, and prone to using profanity and racial slurs. At the same time, she seemed to lack insight into what these statements reflected about her own attitudes, stating, “I just don’t see color. At all. That’s just not an issue for me. I just see levels of stupidity, that’s it.”

Unlike several of the other interviewees, Tammy did not mention having any teacher allies upon whom she could count for support. In fact, she did not speak of other teachers at all, except to mention that the teaching cluster she belonged to was “treated like the red-headed stepchild” of the campus.

Again, unlike most of the interviewees in this study, Tammy did not report getting any gratification from the act of helping who she saw as “marginalized” students. Instead,

she often spoke of her efforts as “annoying” and “useless”. When asked to share a story about a time when her curricular activism had a positive impact for a student, she responded, “Well…hmm…sorry. Can’t help you out there. We don’t have many success stories [on this campus].” She also spoke of the current school year as “the most terrible, horrible year I’ve ever had. I don’t know that I’ll even come back next year.”

Convergent data. In some ways, Tammy’s responses did agree with the other interviewees’, mainly in terms of how she viewed her campus leadership’s support or lack thereof. Like many of the other teachers, Tammy said her principal “meant well” and “tries to do his best” to help her serve her students, but that he was “hamstrung” by district administrators who “don’t understand the challenges we face [on this campus]”. She also exhibited empathy for her principal saying, “Oh, God. I could not do his job. No way. He has to deal with too much B.S. I’d get in so much trouble, if that was me…I swear, I’d be the ‘Trump principal’”. Her statements were also in alignment with the other teachers who spoke of a lack of professional development designed to help teachers meet the needs of all students, and those who claimed that instructional supervision was inadequate.

Conclusions. This researcher believes that this non-exemplar of curricular activism reveals some important things that would have remained invisible without its inclusion. First, it demonstrates the importance of social justice attitudes to the practice of curricular activism. Since Tammy harbored oppressive attitudes towards her marginalized students, it is not surprising that she then treated them in oppressive ways. Second, it reveals the necessity of providing instruction to teachers around the systematic oppression that regularly occurs in our society. That Tammy could view non-disabled,

non-Latino White students as the most marginalized group of students at her school shows a remarkable level of ignorance in this regard, and this ignorance allowed her to rationalize her oppressive behaviors as socially just. Third, it calls into question the appropriateness of using the Social Justice Scale on populations that lack a common understanding of the concept of social justice.

Integrated explanation of model findings

Interview findings were integrated with those from the survey to provide a deeper, contextual understanding of the patterns that emerged among the factors influencing teachers' curricular activism. In this section, the model findings that appeared in the SEM analysis will be discussed in light of the supporting qualitative data.

Attitudes, intentions and activism behaviors. The quantitative findings supported the hypothesis that teachers' attitudes towards Social Justice Activism are positively correlated with both the intention to engage in Social Justice Activism and with the frequency of actual engagement in curricular activism. In fact, the correlations between attitudes and intentions and attitudes and actual engagement were the strongest two relationships in the model. The strength of these relationships is also apparent in the interview data, as teachers expressed intense positive beliefs about social justice and about the marginalized students in their classrooms, as well as the potent gratification they received from fighting for both. It is also important to note that teacher attitudes and intentions represent the only "internal" factors of the five measured by the model, thus the only factors that teachers could potentially completely control. This distinction becomes more salient as the other factors are discussed below.

Norms, intentions and activism behaviors. The quantitative findings supported the hypothesis that the degree to which others in the school environment supported Social Justice Activism correlated with teachers' intentions to engage in Social Justice Activism and with the frequency of their own engagement in curricular activism. These findings are supported by interviewed teachers' descriptions of robust alliances with like-minded teachers that provided these activist teachers with both material and emotional support in their activism endeavors. It should also be pointed out, however, that the correlations among these three factors were, although significant, weaker than those involving respondent attitudes. An explanation for this can be found in the interview data: although interviewees spoke in glowing terms of the above-mentioned teacher allies, they also admitted that these alliances were the exception, not the rule; indeed, interviewees most often spoke of their fellow teachers as being unsupportive of their activism. As a result, interviewees could not rely on others in their environment to provide motivation to the same degree that they could rely on themselves. Quantitative support for this notion can also be seen in the mean values of the items in the Norms subscale; these means represent the four lowest mean values among all of the items, indicating that respondents perceived the attitudes of the people around them, as a whole, as the least-helpful factor in motivating or supporting their curricular activism.

The observation above might also help explain two unpredicted effects that emerged from the quantitative data, namely the regression of scale items 14 (v14) and 15(v15) onto the Norms construct. These items, both included in the PBC subscale, read as follows:

- V14: “If I choose to do so, I am capable of influencing others to promote fairness and equality.”
- V15: “I feel confident in my ability to talk to others about social injustices and the impact of social conditions on health and well-being.”

Of all of the PBC items, v14 and v15 are the only ones that directly measure the respondent’s perceived ability to engage others on topics of social injustice. The unexpected correlations of these items to the Norms subscale indicate that respondents were making connections between their own sense of control over their environments and the social justice inclinations of their work peers. These two items also had the two lowest means in the subscale, again underscoring respondents’ lack of faith in their peers, in general, to support activism for social justice.

Unlike respondent attitudes, social norms are external factors, ones not as easily controlled by activist teachers, and ones not as reliably positive towards their efforts. However, the fact that the correlations involving norms are still significant, despite the presence of many unsupportive individuals in the environment does underscore the vital role that teacher allies play in motivating teacher activists to persist in their activism.

Perception of behavioral control, intentions and activism behaviors. Despite the fact that respondents indicated feeling fairly strongly about their ability to control their environment, this perception neither increased their motivation to engage, nor their actual engagement in, curricular activism. This rather perplexing result may indicate a qualitative difference between the work environments of teachers and those of the other human services professionals who have been the subjects of the vast majority of studies involving the Social Justice Scale. Much research points to the work lives of teachers as

being particularly “siloed”: Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2016) suggest that the separation of teachers from their co-workers is a common feature in modern public schools, and can be linked back to one-room schoolhouses in which the “teacher was responsible for everything that transpired within its four walls” (p. 24). This history of the profession, they argue, is still alive and well today in the minds of many teachers who essentially view their own classrooms as schools unto themselves. As a result, teachers are, as a group, highly independent, perceiving themselves as almost solely responsible for their immediate work surroundings, or at least viewing such as a virtue. Indeed, interview data tended to support this idea, with several interviewees describing their classrooms as their own responsibilities, and expressing the belief that they must be almost completely self-sufficient if they want to succeed in their activism. Joe perhaps summed up this perspective best when he said, “ This classroom is my world, and if I want to get something done with my [students] I know it’s up to me.” This sense of inter-classroom power and responsibility manifests itself in interviewees’ nearly universal statements in support of teacher agency. At the same time, however, the PBC factor items do include elements from outside of the classroom, elements over which interviewees admit they feel little power. Thus, although teachers do report having agency within their own classrooms, that agency is seriously diminished in extra-classroom contexts. Although teachers’ sense of inter-classroom agency has served to motivate the teachers in this study to continue engaging in curricular activism, this paradigm also results in teacher isolation, a phenomenon that has been linked to teacher burnout (Chang, 2009). Further proof that the teachers in this study are experiencing

isolation can be seen in the fact that they report receiving little in the way of supportive resources and opportunities from external sources, especially from campus leadership.

Total model. In sum, the integration of data in this model indicates that the teacher activists in this study are experiencing the effects of teacher isolation, relying primarily on themselves and a (very) few trusted teacher allies to motivate and support their curricular activism. Despite this isolation, however, teachers still expressed the desire to receive more support from external sources, their campus principals, in particular. Efforts to reduce teacher isolation, therefore, may provide a key to increasing curricular activism among social justice-minded teachers. Of course, teacher attitudes still remained the strongest predictor of curricular activism, pointing to the vital necessity of increasing the numbers of teachers who embrace these attitudes. Finally, the powerful effects of teacher allies must be mentioned, as these individuals provided critical external support to teacher activists.

Summary

The quantitative findings indicate that 74% of the 172 teachers who completed the online survey engaged in curricular activism at least once per month during the last year. Interview findings showed that the interviewees engaged in all four types of curricular activism, but that advocating/supporting marginalized students was the most commonly performed type.

Integration of SEM and interview findings suggest that teachers' social justice attitudes were the most significant factor influencing their intentions to engage in Social Justice Activism and the frequency of their actual engagement in curricular activism. These attitudes included a cluster of positive beliefs about marginalized populations and

another around democratic ideals, such as inclusivity, equality and self-determination. Input from a non-exemplar showcases the necessity of cultivating social justice attitudes among teachers, as failure to do so may lead to decidedly oppressive behaviors.

This integration also indicates that social norms around social justice activism play a role in motivating teachers to engage in curricular activism, although this factor appears to be less potent than those of teacher attitudes. Interviewees described other teachers on their campuses as largely unhelpful towards their efforts, but indicated that teacher allies, where they do exist, are a powerful source of motivation and support.

Teachers also mentioned specific principals' attitudes and behaviors that supported or hindered their curricular activism, while also asserting that both they and their principals faced significant barriers to social justice activism that were largely outside of their collective control. Furthermore, teachers recommended concrete actions from their principals that they believed would dismantle some of the barriers.

The data also imply that teachers' beliefs about the amount of control they have over their work environments do not affect their motivation to engage, or the actual frequency of their engagement in curricular activism. This unexpected outcome may be the result of the siloed nature of teachers' work environments.

In Chapter 5, the researcher will examine the limitations and scope of the study, discuss the findings in the context of the literature on Social Justice Leadership and teacher activism, will explore the implications of these conclusions on leadership development for teachers and principals, and will make recommendations for future research on this topic.

V. DISCUSSION

Introduction

At the present time, educational inequity is rife in our nation's public schools. Students who are members of marginalized communities are frequently denied equal access to the educational opportunities enjoyed by their non-marginalized peers (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Ascher & Fruchter, 2001;Darling-Hammond 2004; Archbald & Farley-Ripple, 2016; Mangiante, 2011;Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014; Palardy, Rumberger & Butler, 2015; Vasquez Heilig, & Jellison Holme, 2013; Zarate and Pachon (2006). The impact of such inequity can be seen in the lower rates of educational achievement and the higher rates of poverty and unemployment that exist in these marginalized groups (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014; Carnavale, Rose & Cheah, 2011; Haskings, 2015; Nichols, Mitchell, & Lindner, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Social Justice Activism has long been undertaken as a means of combating societal inequities. A number of forms of teacher activism for educational equity have been identified, including *curricular activism*, which has been defined as situations where teachers "within their sites, working behind the scenes mostly, [they] created opportunities for activism about the issue" (Marshall, 2009, p. 141). Such activism, however, is not commonplace among American public school teachers (Castro 2010; Han, 2013; Hatch & Groenke 2009; Florio-Ruane 2001; Flynn, et al, 2009; Lewison et al. 2008; Marx 2006). Individual and institutional factors are theorized to influence a teacher's decision to enact action for educational equity in the classroom; school leaders, especially campus principals, can have an enormous impact on these factors, offering

supports for, or presenting barriers to teacher activism (Kose, 2007; Moolenaar, et al, 2010; Rivera-McCutchen & Watson, 2014; Theoharis & Ranieri, 2011).

This mixed methods study used an explanatory sequential design to determine the degree to which public high school teachers engage in curricular activism for educational equity, to explore the interactions of the different institutional and individual factors that predict this activism, and to examine activist teachers' perceptions of how school leaders support or impede their activism. Data collection for this study was conducted in two stages: the first, quantitative, stage collected data from 172 certified teachers from six different high schools in central and south-central Texas. The second, qualitative, stage collected data from 14 teacher activists from four of those high schools.

Quantitative data consisted of teachers' responses to a customized version of the Social Justice Scale, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling. The descriptive statistics were used to answer the first research question. The findings were then used to select 14 activist teachers for participation in one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The responses to the interview questions, which centered around teachers' experiences with curricular activism, were explored using narrative analytical techniques. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated in order to answer the second and third research questions.

This research was undertaken with the aim of providing information to assist teachers, school leaders, school districts, and teacher-preparation and leadership-preparation programs in creating policies and practices that support teachers in this vital endeavor for educational equity. A summary of findings, the degree to which they corroborate or contradict earlier studies, implications for practice and recommendations

for future research will be discussed below.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

The first research question ("To what degree do teachers in this study engage in curricular activism?") was answered by analyzing the responses to item 25 on the online survey. Among the 172 teachers who responded to this survey, 15.69 % reported practicing curricular activism at least once per day, 33.14 % at least once per week, but less than once per day; 25.58 % at least once per month, but less than once per week; 15.20 % at least once per semester, but less than once per month; 3.38 % at least once per year, but less than once per semester; and 6.98 % less than once per year. The most common frequency (*modal value*) reported was at least once per week, but less than once per day.

As there have been no previous studies exploring the frequency of curricular activism, it is not possible to compare these findings to others; taken on its face, it does appear that the respondents do engage in this type of teacher activism regularly. Given one of the premises of this study, that teacher activism could be a powerful force for educational equity, these findings are encouraging, especially considering other studies that argued that many teachers frequently deny the need to address issues of social inequity in the classroom (Han, 2013). It should be noted, however, that the interviewees also mentioned many barriers that interfered with their ability to enact said activism, and that most reported that their efforts often failed to result in positive outcomes for their marginalized students. Thus, curricular activism, *per se*, in the absence of support structures, may not be enough to secure educational equity in our nation's public schools.

It should also be noted that, given the fact that participation in this study was voluntary, it is possible that the findings were affected by *self-selection sampling bias* (i.e., those individuals who are engaged in Social Justice Activism may have been more likely to participate in the study) and therefore cannot be said to be representative of a population larger than the sample itself.

Research Question 2

The second research question (What factors influence this curricular activism, and how do they interact?) was answered through the integration of analyzed survey and interview responses. Several findings emerged from this integration:

Description of curricular activism in practice. Curricular activism is a term coined by Marshall to refer to teacher activism that takes place within the confines of the classroom (2009). Marshall describes four types of curricular activism activities, which were adopted by the researcher as defined categories; these will be discussed below. In order to explain what curricular activism looks like in practice, interviewees were asked to describe specific instances in which they enacted this activism in their classrooms. The findings are presented in Table 13, along with references to the literature. Citations are color-coded to indicate the specific body of educational literature from which they emerged. The teachers described engaging certain types of curricular activism more often than other types, with ‘advocating for and supporting marginalized students” reported by 100% of the interviewees, followed by “intervening to stop harassment or bullying of marginalized students” (50%) , “directly teaching about issues of social, racial or economic injustice in class” (36%), and finally, “choosing classroom materials that avoid stereotypical portrayals of marginalized groups” (21%). As there are no previous studies

that have attempted to quantify curricular activism in practice, it is not possible to compare these findings to others. These descriptions can, however, provide a basic understanding of how teachers enact this kind of activism, thereby serving as a basis for further study.

According to the interviewees, their support of and advocacy for marginalized students took three forms, the need for which are echoed in the literature about teacher activism for social justice. Meeting the needs of marginalized students, for instance, points back to Hardiman, Jackson and Griffin's (2007) call for teacher activists to meet the needs of students who are members of oppressed groups. Providing advanced academic opportunities speaks to the recommendation to create *transformative expectations* that challenge societal beliefs about minority students' inferior academic capabilities (Liou, & Rojas, 2016). Finally, creating a positive classroom climate in which marginalized students feel safe, valued and heard responds to the fact that low income and racial/ethnic minority students often report negative school climates in terms of the quality of student/student and staff/student relationships (Jain, Cohen, Huang, Hanson, & Austin, 2015). Similarly, the themes that emerged from the descriptions of teachers' efforts to stop harassment and bullying of marginalized students can be tied to needs outlined in the literature. First, the fact that seven of the 14 interviewees reported engaging in this behavior regularly is encouraging, given that marginalized students are more likely to be the victims of bullying, harassment and other forms of violence in schools than their non-marginalized peers (Lleras, 2008). Second, these teachers' habits of setting clear expectations for classroom behavior, and taking steps to address such harassment and bullying as it occurs speaks to Griffin and Ouelette's call for activist

teachers to address prejudiced views constructively (2007).

Table 13
Curricular activism in practice

Type	Finding	Reference	Literature source
supporting and advocating for marginalized students	Meeting the needs of marginalized students	Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2007	SJL
	Providing advanced academic opportunities to marginalized students	Liou, & Rojas, 2016	SJ Pedagogy
	creating a positive classroom climate for marginalized students	Jain, Cohen, Huang, Hanson, & Austin, 2015	Ed Leadership
intervening to stop harassment and bullying of marginalized students	setting clear expectations for classroom behavior	Griffin & Ouelette, 2007	SJL
	taking steps to address such harassment and bullying as it occurs		
teaching about issues of social, racial or economic injustice in class	supported by teacher collaborations	Marshall, 2009	Teacher Activism

Interviewees' efforts to directly teach about issues of social, racial or economic injustice in class speak again to Griffin and Ouelette's (2007) call to address prejudiced views constructively. This study found that these efforts were accomplished by teacher allies who made the group decision to inject such issues into lessons, thereby

corroborating Marshall's contention that providing space for such collaborations, provide platforms for activist teachers to come together and work on improving educational equity (2009). Additionally, teachers described their efforts in this regard as buttressed by their principals' support of their pedagogical agency. This is yet another finding that validates Marshall's assertion that the protection of teachers' autonomy is essential for ongoing teacher activism (2009). Furthermore, it was found that these efforts were facilitated by curricula that focus on skills, allowing teachers the freedom to choose supporting content that address social justice issues. This finding was unexpected, as this factor did not appear in any of the reviewed literature on teacher activism or SJL, and will be discussed in both the implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

Finally, choosing materials that avoid stereotypical portrayals of marginalized groups was, according to the interviewed teachers, made possible by the same respect for pedagogical agency described in the last paragraph. It should also be noted that the teachers reported being solely responsible for locating these alternative materials, thereby indicating that these principals are not providing the resources critical to teacher activism, the provision if which is considered vital to the support of these activists (Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013).

Therefore, the data from these interviews show that these activist teachers often behaved in ways that address the special circumstances faced by marginalized students and meet some of the definitions from the literature about what teacher activism should look like in practice. It should be remembered that the interviewees in this study came from a restricted number of campuses (six) and that nine of the 14 (64%) came from one

campus; it is therefore not advisable to generalize these findings to a population larger than the sample itself.

Effects of attitudes. The findings (see Table 14) supported the hypothesis that teachers' attitudes towards Social Justice Activism are positively correlated with both intention to engage in Social Justice Activism and with the frequency of actual engagement in curricular activism. Furthermore, interview findings showed certain themes among the attitudes (i.e., a cluster of positive beliefs about marginalized populations and another around democratic ideals, such as inclusivity, equality and self-determination). These findings support the conclusions of earlier studies that argue that in order for teachers to successfully engage in activism for social justice, they must exhibit the acceptance and valuing of social justice ideals (Goodman, 2000; Guerra & Nelson, 2009). It is also the case, however, that despite these attitudes, many of the interviewed teachers also exhibited some deficit thinking about marginalized students and their families. This phenomenon, especially when considered alongside the patent antipathy towards marginalized populations shown by the non-exemplar interviewee, Tammy, points to the need for better education for teachers around the societal causes of marginalization and the tenets of social justice as a concept.

Effects of social norms. This study also indicates that social norms around social justice activism play a role in motivating teachers to engage in curricular activism, although this factor appears to be less potent than those of teacher attitudes. Interviewees described other teachers on their campuses as largely unhelpful towards their efforts, but indicated that teacher allies, where they do exist, are a powerful source of motivation and

Table 14

Teacher Supports

Source	Factor	Finding	References	Literature source
Individual	Attitudes	attitudes that support social justice	Goodman, 2000;Guerra & Nelson, 2009	SJL
	Skills	address prejudiced views constructively	Griffin & Ouelette, 2007	SJL
		meet marginalized students' needs	Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2007	SJL
Institutional	Norms	teacher allies	Marshall, 2009	Teacher Activism
	Prinicipal attitudes	commitment to social justice	Furman, 2012	SJL
		caring/empathy	Furman, 2012	SJL
		focusing on student learning	Hatt, 2009	Ed Inequity
		integrity/trust	Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon 2016; Allen & Glickman, 1998	Ed Leadership
		focusing on teacher improvement	Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2016)	Ed Leadership
	Principal behaviors	advocating for marginalized students	Furman, 2012;Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002	SJL
		hiring with marginalized students in mind	Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995;Pabou, Anderson & Kbarem, 2011	SJ Pedagogy
			Goodman, 2000; Guerra & Nelson, 2009	SJL
		scheduling with marginalized students in mind	Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013	Teacher Activism
		effective communication	Holland, 2006	Teacher Activism
		enforcing teacher accountability	McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004	SJL
		providing administrative support staff	Marshall, 2009	Teacher Activism
		supporting teacher agency in the classroom	Marshall, 2009	Teacher Activism
	State/Fed mandates	Special Education laws	Marshall, 2009	Teacher Activism

support. The general lack of support for curricular activism is in accordance with studies showing that many pre-service teachers are resistant to social justice education (Hatch & Groenke, 2009; Sleeter, 2008), embrace and perpetuate hegemonic attitudes about minority students (Castro 2010; Hatch & Groenke 2009; Florio-Ruane 2001; Flynn, et al, 2009; Lewison et al. 2008; Marx, 2006), and frequently deny the need to address issues of social inequity in the classroom (Han, 2013). On the other hand, testimonials about powerful teacher-allies support Marshall's contention that providing space for teacher collaborations can provide platforms for activist teachers to come together and work on improving educational equity (2009).

Effects of perceived behavioral control. The data also imply that teachers' beliefs about the amount of control they have over their work environments (perceived behavioral control) do not affect their motivation to engage, or the actual frequency of their engagement in curricular activism. This finding was unexpected, and did not mesh with the assumptions of Azjen's theory of planned behavior (1991) or with the findings from previous studies utilizing the Social Justice Scale (Cirik, 2015; Khan, 2016; Kozlowski, Ferrari & Odahl, 2014; Torres-Harding, et al, 2015; Torres-Harding, Siers and Olson, 2012). The perception of behavioral control was assumed by this study to be the function of two factors: teachers' feelings of agency, and the resources and opportunities supporting teacher activism provided by their campus principals. While the interviewees reported high degrees of agency within their own classrooms, they contended that this power was almost non-existent outside of such. This phenomenon points to a unique feature of school work environments: the "siloing" of teachers into largely independent and isolated work spaces (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2016).

Further proof that the teachers in this study are experiencing isolation can be seen in the fact that they report receiving little in the way of supportive resources and opportunities from external sources, especially from campus leadership. These findings lead to two conclusions: first, that the Social Justice Scale may not be appropriate for use with teachers considering the unique nature of teachers' work environments; and second, that this isolation may be limiting the effectiveness of activism efforts. The first conclusion will be addressed in the recommendations for future research, and the second in the implications for practice. Furthermore, while teachers did describe their campus principals as being generally supportive of their activism, they described these leaders as being prevented from giving material support by forces beyond their control. This finding will be addressed fully in the section about the barriers facing social justice leaders.

One perplexing finding from this study was the failure of teachers' perceptions of behavioral control to significantly influence their intentions to engage in social justice activism, and the frequency of their actual engagement in curricular activism. The question must be asked: "Are activist teachers truly not discouraged from engaging in activism by a lack of belief in their ability to affect change in their environments?" The answer to this quandary may be found in the unique working conditions faced by these teachers, an environment in which teachers are largely isolated from their peers and leaders. The perception of behavioral control is essentially a measure of external supports and barriers, elements upon which teachers report having little power. It may be that these teachers know they cannot control these elements, and, therefore, do not rely upon them for support and motivation, relying instead upon themselves and their trusted teacher allies. Further support for this assertion may be found in teachers' descriptions of

the outcomes of their activism: most recounted that their successes occurred within the confines of their classrooms (e.g., students completing work, evincing positive attitudes to the teacher about education), while their failures generally occurred outside of their classrooms (e.g., students getting in trouble in other locales, being “led astray” by family or neighborhood friends). Thus, it could be that teachers see that they do have power to positively influence their students as long as the students are in their classrooms, but when the students leave, that impact diminishes significantly. This phenomenon also points to the potential drawbacks of using the Social Justice Scale with teaching populations, whose work environments are qualitatively different from the human services workers this scale was originally designed to study; indeed, it may be necessary to interpret findings from this scale with an understanding of the teaching context in mind.

Supports for curricular activism. The interviewees spoke of supports for their activism that are congruent with the supports for such mentioned in the literature. Apart from the supports provided by campus leaders, which are discussed in a following section, these participants spoke of the invaluable assistance given to them by a small number of teacher allies. As mentioned previously, opportunities to collaborate with co-teachers have been recommended by Marshall (2009) as a powerful platform from which to enact activism for social justice. These teachers also frequently mentioned their marginalized students as motivating agents, in the sense that they received a great deal of personal gratification from working with them, and saw these students as providing growth opportunities for themselves and other students. Again, this support can be linked back to teachers’ social justice attitudes, which have been hypothesized as crucial to the

development of Social Justice Activism among teachers (Goodman, 2000; Guerra & Nelson, 2009). Finally, the two Special Education teachers interviewed mentioned state and federal education mandates surrounding Special Education students as providing a means through which they could demand services for their disabled students. These statements lend support to Marshall's (2009) contention that such policies may legitimize teacher activism as "part of the job" for educators.

Barriers to curricular activism. The interviewees also referred to barriers to their activism that are congruent with the supports for such mentioned in the literature, but also mentioned those that were unpredicted in such (see Table 15). Once more, many of these barriers were presented by campus leaders, and those will be discussed in a subsequent section. Apart from that, they also described the following hindering factors: unsupportive peers, inadequate teacher preparation, and district, state and federal policies. These unhelpful peers were described as being disengaged, unwilling to commit to the hard work of teaching marginalized students, or actively harboring discriminatory or deficit beliefs about these students. This finding supports the contention that resistance from other teachers stymies teachers' efforts in effectively teaching for social justice (Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013).

Teachers in this study also reported a lack of training around social justice issues, both in their teacher-preparation programs, and in terms of professional development. These curricular activists described many of their peers as lacking in awareness about the needs of marginalized students, and in the skills needed to meet those needs. Furthermore, none of these teachers reported using any of the social justice pedagogies mentioned in Chapter 2, thereby indicating that even these curricular activists have not

Table 15

Teacher barriers

Source	Factor	Finding	Reference	Literature Source
Individual	Attitudes	deficit thinking about marginalized groups	Goodman, 2000; Guerra & Nelson, 2009	SJL
	Skills	inadequate teacher training	Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2007	Teacher Activism
			Kose, 2007	SJL
Institutional	Norms	unsupportive peers	Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013	Teacher Activism
	Principal attitudes	lack of commitment to social justice values	Furman, 2012	SJL
		absence of caring/empathy	Furman, 2012	SJL
		lack of integrity	Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2016), Allen and Glickman (1998)	Ed Leadership
		focusing on factors not integral to student learning	Hatt, 2009	Ed Inequity
		not valuing teacher improvement	Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2016)	Ed Leadership
Institutional	Principal behaviors	failing to advocate for marginalized students	Furman, 2012; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002	SJL
		not hiring with marginalized students' needs in mind	Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Pabou, Anderson & Kbarem, 2011	SJ Pedagogy
			Goodman, 2000; Guerra & Nelson, 2009	SJL
		failing to schedule with marginalized students' needs in mind	Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013	Teacher Activism
		not communicating effectively with teachers and students	Holland, 2006	Ed Leadership

Table 15, Continued

Teacher barriers

Source	Factor	Finding	Reference	Literature Source
Institutional	Principal Behaviors	failing to enforce teacher accountability	McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004	SJL
		not providing administrative support staff	Marshall, 2009	Teacher Activism
		failing to support teacher agency outside of the classroom	Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2016; Marshall & Anderson, 2009	SJL
		failing to provide resources for curricular activism	Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013	Teacher Activism
		failing to provide professional development around issues of educational inequity	Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2007; Marshall, 2009	Teacher Activism
			Kose, 2007	SJL
	District priorities	scheduling	Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013	Teacher Activism
		overfocus on standardized testing	Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013	Teacher Activism
		opposition to social justice goals	Goodman, 2000; Guerra & Nelson, 2009	SJL
		budgeting decisions	Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Ostrander, 2015; Ravitch, 2010, 2013	Ed Inequity

Table 15, Continued

Teacher barriers

Source	Factor	Finding	Reference	Literature Source
Institutional	State/federal policies	standardized testing mandates	Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013	Teacher Activism
		No Child Left Behind	Marshall & Anderson, 2009	Teacher Activism
Community	Students	evidence of deficit thinking by teachers and leaders	Castro 2010; Hatch & Groenke 2009; Florio-Ruane 2001; Flynn, et al, 2009; Lewison et al. 2008; Marx 2006	Ed Inequity
	Families	evidence of deficit thinking by teachers and leaders		

received adequate training around tools that support educational equity. This lack of training stands in direct contrast to researchers' descriptions of teacher activists as those who teachers who have the skills to meet the needs of students from oppressed groups (Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2007), as well as the failure of campus leadership to design professional development for teachers that focuses on raising awareness of diversity (Kose, 2007).

District factors that were mentioned as presenting barriers included creating school schedules that limited the amount of time teachers had to work with their marginalized students, and prioritizing standardized testing over student needs. A persistent focus on high-stakes testing and inflexible schedules were both mentioned by researchers as common barriers to teacher activism (Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013). Several teachers mentioned district leader opposition to social justice goals as an impediment to their curricular activism. According to the literature on Social Justice

Leadership, such leaders must possess a commitment to equity if they are to successfully lead reform efforts that support social justice (Guerra and Nelson, 2009). The fact that so many of these district leaders were seen as lacking this commitment will be addressed in the section on implications for practice. Teachers in this study also complained that their district leaders created budgets that failed to provide adequate funding for faculty and staff positions that would assist teachers in meeting marginalized students' needs. While budgeting decisions have been identified as causes of educational inequity (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Crampton, Thompson, & Vesely, 2004; Maiden & Evans, 2009; Ostrander, 2015; Ravitch, 2010, 2013), and as issues of concern to teacher activists (Crocco, 1999; Goldenberg, 2016; Larsen, 2016; Lyderson & Brown, 2016; Midura & Larson, 2016; Verges, 2016), budgeting decisions were not mentioned as barriers to activism in the reviewed literature about teacher activism or Social Justice Leadership, and should be added to future conversations about this topic. The implications of this barrier on practice will be addressed in a subsequent section.

State and federal policies that were described as barriers included standardized testing mandates and the previously-existing "No Child Left Behind Act" education law. Negative comments about the restrictions placed on teacher autonomy by standardized tests support the already-mentioned studies that assert that a persistent focus on high-stakes testing is a common barrier to teacher activism (Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013). As mentioned previously, research has indicated that activist teachers may view federal policies as beneficial to their activism. In this study, however, only the two Special Education teachers shared this view.

Research Question 3

The third research question (What do those teachers who report high levels of involvement in curricular activism perceive as the supports for and barriers presented by campus principals to their activism?) was answered through the integration of analyzed survey and interview responses. Several findings emerged from this integration:

Supports for curricular activism provided by campus principals. Interview data yielded two sets of supports, one in the form of principal attitudes and the other in terms of principal behaviors.

Attitudes. Reported principal attitudes were subdivided into the following themes: commitment to social justice values, caring/empathy, integrity, focusing on student learning, and focusing on teacher improvement. Two of these (commitment to social justice vales and caring/empathy) support elements of Furman's model of Social Justice Leadership (2012), which will be discussed further in the section on leader attributes. The reported focus on student learning was often described as a decision made by principals to overlook minor disciplinary infractions (e.g., dress code violations, cell-phone usage) in favor of maximizing students' time in the classroom. Considering the fact that marginalized students are often subjected to harsher disciplinary measures than their non-marginalized peers (Hatt, 2011), this attitude could be seen as an attempt to minimize this type of educational inequity. As this particular type of leader advocacy was not mentioned in the literature reviewed for this study, it could present an interesting topic for future research, and will be addressed in that section of the chapter.

Integrity, while not specifically mentioned in the reviewed literature on Social Justice Leadership, does appear frequently in the literature on educational leadership writ

large. Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2016), for instance, assert that trust is integral to successful school reform efforts, and Allen and Glickman (1998) state that said trust is contingent, in part, on teachers seeing that their administrators follow through on their commitments. Therefore, it may be that that factors that encourage the growth of positive teacher-leader relationships in general, will also affect the outcomes activism for educational equity. The focus on teacher improvement refers to teachers' perceptions that their principals gave them opportunities to reflect on, and make corrections to, lessons, activities or other decisions that did not have the anticipated positive outcome for students. Like the one mentioned above, this represents another attitude that, while not appearing in the SJL literature, does appear in the general literature of educational leadership as a positive leader characteristic that contributes to instructional improvement (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2016). These last two findings will be addressed in the section on recommendations for future research.

Behaviors. Reported principal behaviors were subdivided into the following themes: advocating for marginalized students, hiring with marginalized students' needs in mind, scheduling with marginalized students' needs in mind, communicating effectively with teachers and students, enforcing teacher accountability, providing administrative support staff, and supporting teacher agency in the classroom. While some of these behaviors appear in the SJL literature, some appear only in the literature on education leadership in general.

Advocating for marginalized students is a key feature of Social Justice Leadership, in that doing so requires both recognizing that injustice exists and acting to address it (Furman, 2012; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002). Inflexible scheduling was

previously reported to present a barrier to teacher activism (Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013); thus, the description of flexible schedules as supports for such represents a confirmation of that previous finding. Protecting teacher autonomy/agency is recommended by Marshall (2009) as a means by which leaders can assure that teacher activism agency does not become "muted and cautious" (p. 173). Hiring practices that involve screening teacher applicants' attitudes towards marginalized students are not specifically mentioned in the SJL or teacher activism literature, but do indicate leaders' awareness of the importance of social justice values to the practice of teacher activism, an awareness deemed critical for social justice leaders (Goodman, 2000; Guerra & Nelson, 2009). Furthermore, the hiring of teachers who match the demographic characteristics of their students is referred to in the literature on culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy as a way of increasing the engagement and academic performance of marginalized students (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings,1995; Pabou, Anderson & Kbarem, 2011). The provision of specialized administrative support personnel speaks to the creation of job descriptions that support educational equity (Marshall, 2009). While not mentioned in the reviewed literature in the context of administrative positions, it is included in the context of teaching positions. This finding may therefore represent an intersection between teacher activism and Social Justice Leadership, and will be discussed in the section on recommendations for future research. Effective communication between school administrators and teachers, while not appearing in this study's literature review, is mentioned in the general educational leadership literature as fundamental to the creation of a relationship that supports improved instruction (Holland, 2005). The fact that two principals were lauded for holding teachers accountable for the academic performance of

their marginalized students is interesting, given Marshall and Anderson's description of intense scrutiny by administrators as part of the political context that inhibits teacher activism (2009). At the same time, however, McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) name "equity traps" that leaders may allow to occur, which includes failing to hold personnel accountable for the outcomes of their practices. This complex finding deserves greater exploration and will be covered in the section on recommendations for future research.

Barriers to curricular activism created by campus principals. Interview data yielded two sets of barriers, one in the form of principal attitudes and the other in terms of principal behaviors.

Attitudes. Reported principal attitudes were subdivided into the following themes: lack of commitment to social justice values, absence of caring/empathy, lack of integrity, focusing on factors not integral to student learning, and not valuing on teacher improvement. As all of these attitudes represent the absence of the supportive attitudes listed above, their mention serves as further indication that the presence of such are valued by these teacher activists. Furthermore, as some of the principals in this study were described by different teachers as either displaying or not displaying the same attitudes, it demonstrates the value of interviewing multiple individuals about their leaders' characteristics.

Behaviors. Reported principal behaviors were subdivided into the following themes: failing to advocate for marginalized students, not hiring with marginalized students' needs in mind, failing to schedule with marginalized students' needs in mind, not communicating effectively with teachers and students, failing to enforce teacher accountability, not providing administrative support staff, failing to supporting teacher

agency outside of the classroom, failing to provide resources for curricular activism and failing to provide professional development around issues of educational inequity.

As was the case with attitudes, the first six behavioral barriers represent the absence of reported behavioral supports and should, thus, be considered as further corroboration of the importance of those behaviors. The final three, however, are qualitatively different from the behavioral supports and must be discussed further. Failing to support teacher agency outside of the classroom provides evidence of siloing as mentioned earlier, but also speaks to Marshall and Anderson's observation of the informal professional rules in educational institutions that inhibit activism by discouraging teachers from "leading from below" (2009). Failing to provide resources for curricular activism is a factor mentioned in the literature that stymies teachers' efforts in effectively teaching for social justice (Agarwal, 2011; Agarwal, et al, 2010; Dover, 2013). Finally, failing to provide professional development around issues of educational equity stands in contrast to Marshall's contention that ongoing staff development on issues of social justice is an institutional support for teacher activism (2009).

Barriers to principals' Social Justice Leadership. When describing their principals' social justice efforts, all of the interviewees indicated their belief that these leaders faced conditions beyond their control that inhibited their efforts. These conditions consisted of accountability pressures, district priorities, funding issues, and unreasonable job expectations (see Table 16). These accountability pressures, which interviewees described as forcing their principals to focus on numbers rather than students, are mentioned by Theoharis (2007) as examples of national, state and local policies that reinforce inequity and impinge on a leader's ability to enhance social justice. District

priorities that were unaligned with campus leaders' social justice goals were also mentioned as barriers, an indication that the "bureaucratic and market structures [that] work hand in hand . . . to disrupt democratic efforts" in schools (Ryan and Rottmann (2009 p. 493) may be in play in these districts. Funding issues, which manifested as insufficient funding for faculty and support staff given the campus demographics, while not mentioned in the SJL literature, are mentioned as factors contributing to the maintenance of societal and educational inequity (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Ostrander, 2015). Finally, all of the principals in this study were described by their teachers as being overburdened with responsibilities, and that the many obligations they faced prevented them from being able to focus on social justice issues. Although the teachers did portray this situation as outside of the principals' control, Theoharis (2009) contends that this is actually a leadership choice, and that valuing the technical aspect of leadership over the moral and ethical aspects is a common decision that can derail social justice efforts in schools. As this study looks at principals' efforts from an outsider's perspective, it is not possible to determine whether or not the principals viewed their responsibilities as involving an element of choice. It would be instructive to interview these leaders and examine this factor from their point of view. This point will be addressed in the section on recommendations for future research.

Leader attributes. Interviewees described their campus principals as having (to differing degrees), certain attributes that have been proposed in the literature about Social Justice Leadership. These characteristics will be discussed in terms of how they conform to Furman's (2012) model, which describes social justice leaders as: action-oriented and transformative, committed and persistent, inclusive and democratic, relational and caring,

reflective, and oriented towards a socially-just pedagogy. The literature is lacking

Table 16
Barriers to principals' Social Justice Leadership

Finding	Source	Reference	Literature source
district priorities	school district	Ryan and Rottmann, 2009	SJL
unreasonable job expectations	school district	Theoharis, 2009	SJL
funding issues	school district, state/federal entities	Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Ostrander, 2015	Ed Inequity
accountability pressures	school district, state/federal entities	Theoharis, 2007	SJL

activist teachers' perceptions of their principals' SJL characteristics; thus, this next section will focus on these perspectives:

- *Action-oriented and transformative:* according to this model, social justice leaders are acutely aware of institutionalized injustices and are able and willing to construct new, more equitable versions of those institutions. Two of the four principals discussed by the teachers in this study were described as openly advocating for their marginalized students, and having the integrity to back up their words with actions. Joe perhaps presented the most succinct expression of this opinion, when he said that he admires his campus principal because "he talks about being transformational, but he also does what he can

to achieve that transformation. He puts his money where his mouth is." The two other principals were described as "being well-meaning" but not always following through on statements of support for marginalized students. It should be noted that these two principals were seen by their teachers as being prevented from carrying out their intended actions by factors outside of their control. This observation was addressed in the previous section on leadership barriers.

- *Committed and persistent:* In this model, leaders demonstrate dedication to the cause of eliminating injustice and perseverance in the face of resistance or setbacks. All four of the principals in this study were described as committed to educational equity. Interestingly, one of those same principals was criticized by one female teacher as harboring sexist attitudes, pointing out the importance of gathering the opinions of teachers from different demographic groups when studying the impacts of principal behaviors on their faculty members. Furthermore, several teachers described former principals as having deficit views of marginalized groups, and expressed their frustrations around trying to work for educational equity in such an environment. The quality of persistence, however, was not mentioned by any of the teachers in their descriptions of their current principals. Indeed, two principals were criticized by teachers for failing to push for reforms or services in the face of resistance from parents or district administration. The researcher posits that this finding may be linked to the prevailing opinion that these principals are beset by

many factors that impede their actions, and are thus, prevented from being persistent.

- *Inclusive and democratic:* Furman's model states that socially-just leaders share a belief that all members of an institution should have opportunities to engage meaningfully within that institution. Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) refer to this as "authentic participation." Evidence that the principals in this study exhibit democratic tendencies can be seen most clearly in their support of teacher autonomy within the classroom: each of the four principals were described by at least one teacher as giving them the freedom to choose topics, activities and materials that assisted them in teaching with social justice in mind. On the other hand, it should be noted that interviewees also described their autonomy as generally limited to their classrooms, and expressed frustration that they lacked power on a broader (i.e., school-wide) basis. These observations lend credence to the contention that these teachers are experiencing isolation from the higher echelons of power. The implications of this finding will be discussed in a later section.

  In terms of inclusivity, two principals were lauded by their teachers for allowing other teachers or students to express their sexual orientation or divergent gender identities on campus, a fact which, these teachers contended, contributed to a climate of inclusiveness in their schools. Additionally, several teachers described former principals who were decidedly un-inclusive, and shared their opinions that this attitude made it difficult for them to advocate for those students.

- *Relational and caring:* According to this model, these leaders focus on building supportive relationships within the institution through the use of "purposeful and authentic communication" (Theoharis, 2007). Three of the principals in this study were described as caring or empathic by their teachers. This empathy was portrayed as being directed at both students and teachers alike, and as having a positive effect on teachers' attempts to reach their marginalized students.
- *Reflective*: Social justice leaders engage in critical self-reflection to challenge personal biases or other issues that might interfere with the ability to achieve social justice. Only one teacher described her principal as being reflective. There is a possibility that this characterization did not otherwise appear in the interviews because being reflective is primarily an internal discussion that one has within one's own mind. The teacher in this case was able to see her principal's reflection taking place in the context of a one-on-one discussion about a particular student. Thus, although this characteristic may be difficult to observe from the outside, open communication between leaders and teachers may reveal inner thoughts and motivations.
- *Oriented toward a socially-just pedagogy:* These leaders deliberately seek out opportunities to bring issues around social justice into the classroom for discussion and action. Although a few teachers described principals' efforts to encourage engagement in teaching techniques that support educational equity, most described their leaders as embracing a hands-off approach to pedagogy, encouraging those who used such techniques, but not offering concrete

suggestions, feedback on lessons or adequate training to those who did not. This again demonstrates the siloed nature of these schools, in which what happens in a teacher's classroom is generally seen as her purview and ultimately, her responsibility.

If we examine teachers' descriptions of their principals, therefore, we see that they do not fully meet Furman's definition of how a social justice leader should act. This observation will be addressed in the section on implications for practice.

Major points

Important findings from this study are as follows:

- *Teacher Attitudes*- Teachers' social justice attitudes were the single most powerful factor motivating them to engage in curricular activism. These attitudes consisted of a cluster of positive beliefs about marginalized students and a cluster of democratic values. Even so, many of the interviewed teachers still harbored deficit beliefs about marginalized students and their families. This fact, especially when paired with the decidedly negative attitudes evinced by the self-described curricular activist, Tammy, highlights the importance of educating teachers about social justice, in general, and the lives of marginalized students, in particular.
- *Social Norms* – Teachers in this study characterized their work peers as being largely unsupportive of their activism efforts. At the same time, most interviewees shared stories about teacher allies upon whom they could rely for motivation and assistance in serving marginalized students. Forming these ally relationships may represent a key strategy that activist teachers and social justice leaders may employ to further the cause of educational equity on their campuses.

- *Perceptions of behavioral control* – Teachers in this study indicated that their beliefs about their ability to affect change in their environments do not impact their intentions to engage or their actual frequency of engagement in social justice activism.
    - *Principal attitudes and behaviors*- Interviewees described their principals as being generally in support of their activism, but as providing little in the way of resources or guidance that might facilitate such efforts.
    - *External barriers*- Interviewees also described many external factors that they believed impinged on their curricular activism and their principals' engagement in social justice leadership, including district, state and federal education policies and community characteristics.

Interview findings suggest that curricular activists do not believe they can rely on their campus leaders or educational institutions writ large to provide the resources and opportunities to enact said activism, and focus instead on themselves and a few trusted teacher allies for motivation and support. Breaking down the siloes that perpetuate such teacher isolation may serve to encourage effective efforts towards educational equity.

- *Intentions*- The teachers in this study appeared to be primarily motivated by their own social justice attitudes and the support of a few teacher allies to continue engaging in curricular activism.
- *Activist behaviors*- Quantitative findings indicate that 74% of the teachers in this study report engaging in curricular activism at least once per month. Interviewees

stated, however, that their activism efforts were often unsuccessful in producing positive outcomes for their marginalized students.

Final conceptual map

Figure 13 contains the final version of this study's conceptual map, taking into account the findings from this study. The map begins at the problem this study seeks solutions for: educational inequity. Originally, this inequity was hypothesized to motivate school leaders to engage in Social Justice Leadership, and that this engagement essentially motivated teachers to engage in curricular activism. This study found, however, that these teacher activists were also motivated by their attitudes towards social justice, in general, and marginalized students, in particular. Therefore, an arrow was added in the diagram from educational inequity directly to teacher activism. Furthermore, the study found that teachers' perceptions of behavioral control did not predict either their intentions to engage or actual engagement in curricular activism. However, based on teachers' recommendations for improvement, those factors were kept in the model; arrows between these factors were changed to dotted lines to indicate that such relationships, if strengthened, could help support curricular activism in the future. Additionally, the study found that external factors (district, state and federal policies) were reported to negatively impact both principals' social justice activism, teachers' curricular activism and the outcomes of such activism; this element was also added to the diagram. Finally, this study found that the interviewed teachers reported that their activism often did not have the desired positive effects on marginalized students. Therefore, as the connection between curricular activism and educational equity was not

clearly established, the solid arrow between these two elements was changed to a dotted arrow.

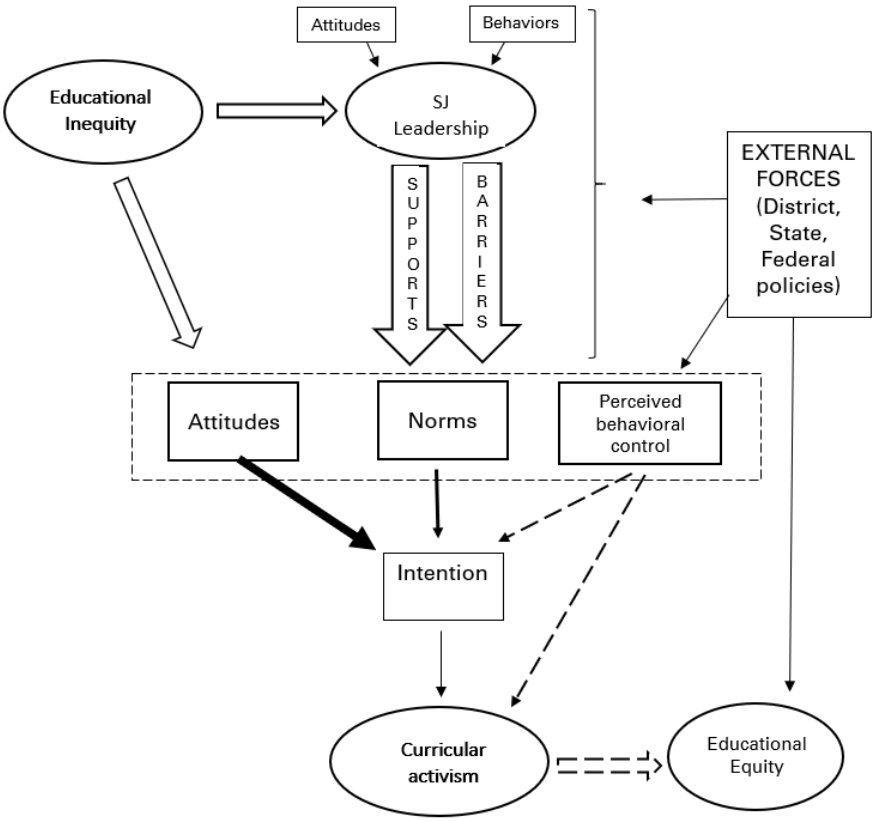


Figure 13: Final conceptual model

Implications for Practice

The findings from this study will now be used to generate suggestions for increasing the numbers of teachers who are curricular activists, and for building on the supports and dismantling the barriers that exist in the educational environment to that activism.

Implications for teacher preparation programs

The findings from this study indicate that many teachers may lack the attitudes, skills and leadership characteristics that make curricular activism possible. Teacher preparation programs have the capacity to increase curricular activism by cultivating those qualities among pre-service teachers.

Social justice attitudes. Based on the research indicating that many pre-service teachers harbor values that are antithetical to social justice activism (Castro 2010; Han, 2013; Hatch & Groenke 2009; Florio-Ruane 2001; Flynn, et al, 2009; Lewison et al. 2008; Marx 2006; Sleeter, 2008), and based on this study's findings that unsupportive peers impeded curricular activism on their campuses, it is clear that, if curricular activism is to become more common, teacher education programs must do a better job of exposing prospective educators to the realities of educational inequity, and challenge them to examine their attitudes towards marginalized communities.

Many methods exist for instructing pre-service teachers about social justice issues, including social justice pedagogy (Apple, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2004); critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2011; Kincheloe, 2008), critical race pedagogy (Matias & Liou, 2015); Pollock, Deckman, Mira, & Shalaby, 2010): culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995): peace education (Harris & Morrison, 2003): feminist pedagogy (Ackerly, 2000; Malka Fisher, 2001): activist pedagogy (Preston & Aslett, 2014): queer pedagogy (Quinlivan, 2012): disability studies pedagogy (Derby, 2016); and anti-oppressive education (Kushamiro, 2000), to name a few. One in particular offers a comprehensive approach that includes techniques and activities that teachers can bring with them into their own classrooms. Social Justice Education (SJE), the stated goal of

which is finding “more effective ways to challenge oppressive systems and promote social justice through education” (Bell, 2007, p. 1) provides a structure wherein teachers and teacher educators may lead students through a systematic exploration of issues surrounding oppression and inequity. This approach involves the use of an interdisciplinary conceptual framework for analyzing myriad types and sources of oppression, multiple lesson plans addressing the experiences of different marginalized groups, and a set of pedagogical principles for implementing instruction (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2007). These principles (Adams, 2007, p. 15) are as follows:

- Establish an equilibrium between the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process;
- Acknowledge and support the personal and individual dimensions of experience, while making connections to and illuminating the systemic dimensions of social group interactions;
- Pay explicit attention to social relations within the classroom;
- Make conscious use of reflection and experience as tools for student-centered learning;
- Reward changes in awareness, personal growth, and efforts to work toward change, understood as outcomes of the learning process.

Pedagogical skills. Findings from this study also indicated that curricular activists perceive that many of their peers lack the skills necessary to effectively teach marginalized students, especially those with disabilities. Therefore, this researcher recommends that teacher preparation programs improve their efforts to impart such skills to their pre-service teachers. Given the demographic changes underway in our nation’s

public schools, it is critical that these programs better equip teachers to meet the challenges they will increasingly face once they enter their own classrooms. Specific skills are offered by the social justice pedagogies mentioned earlier, along with others, including the practice of creating *transformative expectations* that challenge societal beliefs about minority students' inferior academic capabilities (Liou, & Rojas, 2016), the implementation of civic advocacy projects to allow students to have the opportunity to engage in political discourse and experience democratic processes on a small scale (Levy, 2011), and the use of service learning projects to build empathy for and encourage taking actions for positive societal change (Morton, 1995; Pompa, 2002).

Teacher leadership and teacher activism. Additionally, findings from this study suggest that curricular activists feel disengaged from the power that exists outside of their classrooms. It is vital, therefore, for teacher preparation programs to provide pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills that will assist them in expecting, demanding and receiving greater access to those sources of power. The literature around teacher leadership and teacher activism provides guidance on how to approach these issues and encourage teachers to view themselves as agents of change on the campus, district, state and federal levels, and should be integrated into teacher preparation programs. (Costa & Garmston, 2016; Cozza, 2010; Crowther, Kaagen, Ferguson & Hann, 2002; Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster & Cobb, 1995; Hunzicker, 2012, 2013; Jacobs & Crowell, 2016; Jacobs, Gordon & Solis, 2016).

Implications for current teachers

Of course, teacher preparation programs can do little to impact those teachers who are already in the field. This study, however, does provide some suggestions to current or

would-be teacher activists who want to improve their efforts in support of educational equity. All of these require said teachers to proactively educate themselves about the knowledge and skills vital to these efforts. This educational process could be undertaken on a personal basis, or might be sought out from professional organizations, district, state or federal entities, or institutions of higher education.

Teacher allies. This study indicates that one of the most potent sources of support for teacher activists can be found in their like-minded peers. It is recommended, therefore, that activist teachers seek out these peers, and develop collaborative relationships that offer mutual support for activist efforts. Such relationships are, of course, facilitated by institutional structures such as professional learning communities (PLCs) and common planning periods, but in the absence of such structures, can still be achieved on an informal basis. Several of the teachers in this study, for example, made the time to meet with their allies outside of school hours, an example which, while not feasible for all teachers, could provide opportunities to collaborate that would not otherwise exist. Recommendations for how to form and maintain these informal alliances can be found in the literature on formal collaboration efforts (Hunzicker, 2012).

Teacher activism and leadership. Additionally, teachers may avail themselves of the literature surrounding teacher activism for recommendations on how to parlay their power into extra-classroom contexts (Jacobs & Crowell, 2016). Again, these efforts can be restricted by campus and district policies, but may offer teacher activists suggestions as to how they might influence those entities to make policy changes that could increase said power.

Implications for educational leadership preparation programs

Another major finding of this study was that teacher activists are often prevented from effectively engaging in curricular activism by decisions made by their campus leaders. This section addresses improvements that could be made to educational leadership preparation programs that would address these institutional barriers.

Social justice attitudes. A number of the interviewees in this study described former or current principals as harboring attitudes that were not in alignment with social justice values. The literatures on Social Justice Leadership and social justice pedagogy provide a great deal of guidance for educational leadership programming that assesses and challenges deficit thinking about marginalized groups (Adams, 2007; Guerra & Nelson, 2009; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

Social Justice Leadership skills. Furthermore, this study found that even those principals who held social justice values were perceived by their teachers as failing to act on those values. Again, the literature on SJL offers a wealth of information on how these campus leaders can parlay their values into action that supports both teacher activism and support for marginalized students (Bustamante, Nelson & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Furman, 2012, Frattura & Capper, 2007; Guerra & Nelson, 2009; Henderson & Whipple, 2013; Kose, 2007; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; O'Malley & Capper, 2015; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003; Skrla et al, 2004, 2010). Such skills address the ability to create campus climates that support social justice, to encourage teacher leadership and activism, and to recognize and contend with the extra-campus factors that impinge on their leadership for social justice.

Creating a campus climate for social justice. The literature on Social Justice Leadership provides guidance on how to promote change that supports social justice on school campuses. Guerra and Nelson (2009) for instance, emphasize the necessity for leaders to change not only the behaviors, but also the beliefs that undergird educational injustice. Guiding such belief shifts requires leaders to engage in careful planning of professional development efforts. The authors present a six-step training model for these efforts, with which they report success in transforming teachers' deficit beliefs and inequitable behaviors. Covered fully in Chapter 2, these authors recommend that leaders conduct a personal inventory of their own beliefs and skills in the area of social justice, raise social justice issues with teachers in ways that minimize teacher defensiveness while still addressing teachers' deficit thinking, assess the readiness of teachers to engage in change efforts, provide teachers with opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills around those issues at a level that matches their readiness, lead teachers through the process of identifying inequitable practices and assist them in implementing culturally-responsive practices, and enlist "advanced" teachers to engage in the examination of school-wide policies and procedures. The authors also contend that this work must be ongoing since "transforming beliefs and practices is an ongoing journey, not a destination" (p. 359).

Furthermore, Furman (2012) offers a "toolbox" for social justice leaders filled with strategies that may support educational equity on campuses. This toolbox, which is covered in its entirety in Chapter 2 includes the following tools: equity audits (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003; Skrla et al., 2004, 2010); neighborhood/community walks (Henderson & Whipple, 2013; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004); campus book studies of texts that

"expose the ways in which Whites [sic] often view 'racial Others'" (McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004, p. 616); exposing teachers to equitable practices in action (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004), and providing professional development for teachers that focuses on raising awareness of diversity and provides techniques for building cultural capital for marginalized students (Kose, 2007).

Encouraging teacher activism. Marshall (2009) offers a set of recommendations for specific actions that principals may take to support teacher activists on their campuses. These recommendations, which are discussed in depth in Chapter 2, include the following: creating space for teacher collaboration; creating policies and job descriptions that legitimize activism as an integral part of teachers' jobs; providing ongoing community and staff development on issues of social justice; fostering conversations between educators and community groups; and protecting teachers' rights and autonomy. Educational leadership preparation programs could be instrumental in helping future principals promote teacher activism by exposing them to and giving them the opportunity to practice these recommendations before they begin their tenure as campus leaders.

Addressing siloing on campus. The findings of this study suggest that teachers on the included campuses feel isolated from each other and from sources of power that exist outside of their classrooms, and that this isolation interferes with their ability to engage in curricular activism. As Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2016) have asserted, such isolation may be the direct result of the siloing that occurs on so many of our nation's public school campuses. Educational leadership programs should address this issue with prospective leaders and impart to them the knowledge and skills needed to

dismantle these siloes, thereby allowing teacher activists greater access to power sources that support their activism.

Addressing external factors. Teachers in this study named several external factors that they felt prevented their principals from effectively supporting their curricular activism: accountability pressures, district priorities, funding issues, and unreasonable job expectations. Leadership programs would do well to prepare future leaders for these barriers, and assist them in developing strategies for addressing such. Indeed, it could be a rich vein of research to examine these barriers and the factors involved in their creation, so that recommendations that assist educational leaders at every level of power might be crafted. At the same time, efforts should also be made to inform district, state and federal educational leaders about the barriers to educational equity that they are creating.

Implications for current educational leaders

Of course, as with current teachers, there are also many current principals who are struggling with educational inequity on their campuses. These leaders would be well-served by proactively educating themselves about the knowledge and skills vital to these efforts. This educational process could be undertaken on a personal basis, or might be sought out from professional organizations, district, state or federal entities, or institutions of higher education.

These individuals might avail themselves of the afore-mentioned recommendations for educational leadership programs as sources of information that could help build the social justice capacities of themselves and their teachers, or again, seek out such information from professional organizations, district, state or federal

entities, or institutions of higher education. Specific areas of concern are discussed below:

Demonstrating integrity/building trust. Teachers in this study expressed a firm desire to see their principals follow through on promises made to them about their marginalized students. This desire speaks to a less-than-optimal level of trust between these teachers and campus leadership. Leaders wishing to improve such trust might look to the general educational leadership literature on such for guidance (Allen and Glickman,1998; Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 2016).

Communicating effectively. The curricular activists in this study also mentioned wanting clearer communication from their principals in general, but also specifically around social justice issues. This lack of clear communication may also be contributing to the lack of trust mentioned above. Leaders could look to the SJL and general educational leadership literature again for tips on developing effective communication on their campuses (Holland, 2005; Theoharis, 2007).

Supporting teacher agency inside and outside of the classroom. While most of the teachers in this study reported feeling high levels of agency within their own classrooms, they also stated that they felt removed from power outside of their classrooms. The literature on teacher activism provides guidelines for increasing teacher power on their campuses (Marshall, 2009).

Implications for school districts

In this study, school districts were described by interviewees as placing impediments in the way of their, and their principals' social justice efforts. These barriers

took two basic forms: attitudes and behaviors.

Attitudes. Several teachers described district leaders as holding attitudes that were antithetical to social justice in general and Social Justice Activism for educational equity, in particular. Thus, districts wishing to increase curricular activism should avail themselves of the same resources mentioned for campus leaders to determine and address the attitudes of their own leadership.

Behaviors. Certain specific behaviors of district leaders were also mentioned as barriers to educational equity on school campuses. Those behaviors include failing to provide adequate funding for needed faculty and staff positions, and prioritizing test score results over alternative measures of school success. Districts should enlist teachers and campus administrators in identifying the barriers the district is erecting to educational equity and in coming up with solutions for change. Teachers mentioned that district-created curricula that focused on skills as opposed to pre-determined content allowed them the freedom to create lessons and activities that directly addressed issues of social justice. This may be a factor that districts should consider when creating district curricula.

Implications for researchers

This study produced several findings that appeared only in the literature on Social Justice Leadership or on teacher activism, but not both, or that appeared in neither. Researchers investigating Social Justice Activism in education may want to expand their theories so that they include relevant concepts from the SJL, teacher activism, general education leadership, educational inequity, social justice pedagogy, and curriculum

design bodies of literature so that a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena may be developed.

Specific suggestions from current teacher activists

During the interview process, curricular activists offered specific recommendations that they wished their principals would follow. In consideration of the time and effort these teachers invested in this study, these recommendations will be shared. Some of these recommendations have already been presented in earlier sections, but will be covered in terms of their application to the studied campuses below:

Hiring with marginalized students in mind. Several teachers requested that their current principals do a better job of screening teacher applicants for their social justice values and their previous experience successfully serving marginalized students and their families. Other teachers called for hiring practices that ensured greater representation of student demographics. Leaders on these specific campuses may want to rethink their hiring practices with these recommendations in mind (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings,1995; Pabou, Anderson & Kbarem, 2011).

Scheduling with marginalized students in mind. Teachers also asked their principals to create school schedules that allowed for greater collaboration with teacher allies (i.e., common planning periods) and more time to meet one-on-one with their marginalized students (i.e., extra planning periods). These leaders may want to consider retaining or creating school schedules that would give teachers greater flexibility to collaborate with peers and devote more time to needy students.

Providing professional development. Teachers also recommended that their campus leaders provide professional development geared towards understanding and

developing the capacities of the specific populations of marginalized students on their campuses. They also noted that they would prefer trainings that offer concrete examples of how such development could occur in terms of lesson plans and activities. These principals may want to refer to Furman's toolbox (2012) for suggestions on how to create these opportunities.

Improving instructional supervision. Many of the teachers in this study expressed concern that they and the other teachers on their campuses, were not receiving adequate feedback on their classroom efforts. This, they felt, hampered their ability to improve their professional practice, something they deeply valued. Instructional supervision practices, such as the ones outlined by Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2016) could assist principals in providing teachers with the feedback needed to more effectively meet marginalized students' needs.

Programming choices. The teachers in this study also recommended that their principals initiate or expand programs designed to address the specialized needs of marginalized students, in particular Early College High School programs. The leaders at these campuses may want to research these programs to determine whether their initiation or expansion could benefit their students**.**

Advocacy. These teachers also stated their wish that their principals engage in greater action that supports educational equity, especially in terms of defending that advocacy in the face of resistance from outside entities. Again, the literature on Social Justice Leadership provides strategies principals can utilize in these efforts.

Attitude changes. Finally, teachers recommended that their principals embrace "can-do" attitudes that support real, transformative change. These principals may want to

conduct a self-assessment of their attitudes, such as the ones put forth by Guerra and Nelson (2009).

Recommendations for Future Research

A vital outcome of research is the clues it provides about the questions the researcher was not able to fully answer. It is incumbent on researchers, therefore, to examine their findings for such clues, so that future endeavors might provide an even richer picture of the phenomenon being studied.

Social Justice Scale

One of the limitations of this study lies in the observation that several of the factors measured did not have the expected effect of curricular activism. This scale was originally developed to study the social justice attitudes of people employed in human services fields (Torres-Harding, Siers & Olson, 2012), and has primarily been used to study those people, not teachers, *per se (*Khan, 2016; Kozlowski, Ferrari & Odahl, 2014; Torres-Harding, et al, 2015). As was pointed out earlier, teachers' work environments differ qualitatively from many others, in that, through the process of siloing, teachers are often isolated from others in their workplaces. It is therefore possible that this scale is not appropriate for use with teachers. It is also true, however, that the SJS was applied successfully to teachers in Turkey (Cirik, 2015); one way of investigating this conundrum would involve studying schools in Turkey to determine if their schools are as siloed as they are in the United States. If they are not, such a finding would provide support for the conclusion that the SJS is not appropriate for use in schools where siloing occurs.

Confirming teacher perceptions

This study relies on teachers' reports of their own attitudes and behaviors. The study does not however seek to confirm the degree to which the participants' perceptions are shared by others. Therefore, a future study might entail conducting observational (Glesne, 2016; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) or ethnographic research (Merriam, 2009; Van Maanan, 2011) on a selected subset of the interviewees to further explore how their curricular activism plays out in practice.

Role of teacher accountability

Holding teachers accountable for the academic performance of their marginalized students was mentioned by teachers in this study as contributing to their ability to meet these students' needs. This finding exposes conflicting assertions in the literature, with the research on Social Justice Leadership suggesting that principals do so as a way of removing campus "equity traps" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004), but with the research on teacher activism contending that such scrutiny inhibits activism (Marshall & Anderson, 2009). These contradictory assertions are troubling, because they send mixed messages to those who are engaging in or supporting curricular activism. Further study of the role of teacher accountability as being either friend or foe to social justice efforts in the school context could provide clarification to school leaders on the best course of action to take in support of educational equity.

Effectiveness of curricular activism efforts

This study did not set out to examine teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of curricular activism efforts. Even so, interviewees did report more failures than successes, in terms of how their efforts impacted their marginalized students' lives. It is unclear,

however, if the root cause(s) of these failures were the curricular activism methods being utilized, the barriers that existed to this activism, or other factors. It is vital that this issue be investigated more deeply, so that solutions for this general ineffectiveness might be generated.

Leader characteristics

This study revealed several reported leader characteristics that were unexpected or unexplained in the current literature. These will be discussed below, along with suggestions for future research that could clarify these findings:

Focusing on student learning. Teachers in this study reported that their principals sometimes overlooked minor disciplinary infractions in favor of maximizing students' time in the classroom. This particular type of leader advocacy was not mentioned in the literature reviewed for this study, but considering the fact that marginalized students are often subjected to harsher disciplinary measures than their non-marginalized peers (Hatt, 2011), future research on these choices might expand leaders' repertoire of social justice advocacy behaviors.

Job descriptions that support activism. Teacher activism and Social Justice Leadership are two fields of study that show a considerable degree of overlap. Even so, this study was able to uncover a factor that appeared in the teacher activism literature that does not currently, but could also apply to Social Justice Leadership. This factor involves the use of job descriptions that validate activism as part of an individual's work responsibilities. Future research could investigate the degree to which such job descriptions might also help principals enact social justice activism on their campuses.

Leaders' perspectives. The purpose of this study included collecting teacher perspectives on the factors affecting their curricular activism. It is also true, however, that many of the factors they discussed were from an outsider's point of view, including opinions of leaders' barriers to activism and their internally-held beliefs surrounding social justice. It would therefore, be instructive to interview the principals in this study and obtain their responses to the findings, as well as to determine how well teachers' perceptions matched their own.

Application of general educational leadership principals to SJL and teacher activism

This study found several descriptions of leader characteristics that were mentioned as assets or barriers to curricular activism that do not appear in either the SJL or teacher activism bodies of surveyed literature, but are featured extensively in the general education leadership research. These elements include the existence of trusting relationships and of effective communication between leaders and teachers. Future research might explore the applicability of other general educational leadership principles to the development of equitable schools.

District barriers

Teachers in this study also complained that their district leaders created budgets that failed to provide adequate funding for faculty and staff positions that would assist teachers in meeting marginalized students' needs, but that district-created curricula that focused on skills rather than content allowed them the freedom to choose supporting content that address social justice issues. Neither of these factors were mentioned in the reviewed literature about teacher activism or Social Justice Leadership. Future research

on this topic could inform district decision makers about how they might remove existing barriers to, and build supports for, educational equity.

Conclusion

The primary social ill that this study sought to seek solutions for is that of educational inequity, a problem that perpetuates a *status quo* in which people of color, low socio-economic status, or other minority status have limited access to economic, social and political power. This not only has potentially lifelong negative impacts on members of these marginalized groups, but also on society as a whole. The state of Texas, in particular, faces dire circumstances if these inequities are not adequately addressed: with each passing year, the population of Texas schoolchildren is becoming increasingly "brown" and poor (Murdock, Cline, Zey, Jeanty & Perez, 2014; Texas Education Agency, 2016a). Murdock, et al (2014) predict that as these numbers rise, the State's ability to provide social services to needy populations will be quickly outpaced, and the state's ability to provide enough skilled workers to keep the economy afloat will collapse, leading to greater economic hardship for all Texans. The same demographic pressures are also being faced by numerous other states, as well. It is in the best interest of our nation in general, and of Texas, in particular, that steps be taken to ameliorate these inequities.

Curricular activism is one means of addressing economic, social and political imbalances, by seeking to dismantle the educational inequities that contribute to the problem. Educational leaders and teachers who avail themselves of the information provided by this study, and other studies like it, are arming themselves and those around them with strategies that can be utilized in this effort. By engaging in curricular activism, teachers may be changing the lives of marginalized students, their families and their

greater communities for the better, and may be supporting societal change that will, ultimately, benefit everyone. Leaders who support curricular activism are not only facilitating these positive changes, they are also providing a school climate that supports greater teacher engagement and job satisfaction, factors that help eradicate two of the most pernicious problems facing public education: teacher apathy and turnover. In so doing, therefore, these leaders are also contributing to building work environments that increase teacher effectiveness for all students. Furthermore, principals who support the development of teachers' leadership capacities may find themselves with more campus agents on whom they may rely to support their own change efforts, thereby enhancing their own effectiveness and job satisfaction. Similarly, district leaders may reap the benefits of higher student achievement, greater stability of personnel, and greater campus leader efficacy, all of which enable the district to push for even greater reforms. Researchers who engage in the further exploration of this topic are, therefore, contributing to the understanding of a phenomenon that has the potential to ameliorate some of the gravest problems facing our society. It is my sincerest hope that my research efforts here will have such an impact.

APPENDIX SECTION

APPENDIX A

SOCIAL JUSTICE SCALE ITEMS

1. I believe that it is important to make sure that all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard, especially those from traditionally ignored or marginalized groups .
2. I believe that it is important to allow individuals and groups to define and describe their problems, experiences and goals in their own terms .
3. I believe that it is important to talk to others about societal systems of power, privilege, and oppression
4. I believe that it is important to try to change larger social conditions that cause individual suffering and impede well-being .
5. I believe that it is important to help individuals and groups to pursue their chosen goals in life .
6. I believe that it is important to promote the physical and emotional well-being of individuals an groups .
7. I believe that it is important to respect and appreciate people's diverse social identities .
8. I believe that it is important to allow others to have meaningful input into decisions affecting their lives .
9. I believe that it is important to support community organizations and institutions that help individuals and group achieve their aims .
10. I believe that it is important to promote fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, obligations, and resources in our society .
11. I believe that it is important to act for social justice .
12. I am confident that I can have a positive impact on others' lives .
13. I am certain that I possess an ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering .
14. If I choose to do so, I am capable of influencing others to promote fairness and equality .
15. I feel confident in my ability to talk to others about social injustices and the impact of social conditions on health and well-being .
16. I am certain that if I try, I can have a positive impact on my community .
17. Other people around me are engaged in activities that address social injustices .
18. Other people around me feel that it is important to engage in dialogue around social injustices
19. Other people around me are supportive of efforts that promote social justice .
20. Other people around me are aware of issues of social injustices and power inequalities in our society .
21. In the future, I will do my best to ensure that all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard .

22. In the future, I intend to talk with others about social power inequalities, social injustices, and the impact of social forces on health and well-being .
23. In the future, I intend to engage in activities that will promote social justice
24. In the future, I intend to work collaboratively with others so that they can define their own problems and grow their own capabilities.

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

The following question asks about your efforts to make certain that marginalized students receive an education that meets their needs and gives them access to the same educational opportunities as their non-marginalized peers.

For the purposes of this study, marginalized students include members of the following groups: racial/ethnic minorities, religious minorities, English Language learners, women/girls, low-income, the disabled or LGBT (Lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender).

Examples of these types of efforts include, but are not limited to:

* advocating for or supporting marginalized students in your classroom or school;
* choosing classroom materials that avoid stereotypical portrayals of marginalized groups;
* actively addressing issues of social, racial or economic injustice in class;
* intervening to stop harassment of marginalized students

25. How often did you engage in curricular activism in the past year?
    a. Less than once
    b. At least once per year
    c. At least once per semester
    d. At least once per month
    e. At least once per week
    f. At least once per day

Would you be willing to participate in a short face-to-face interview (approximately 30 minutes in length) at a time and place of your convenience about this topic at some point in the next 2 months?

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in Research Study

My signature on this form indicates that I have read the information provided and have decided to participate in the project titled, "Leading for change: An exploration of principals' support of teacher activism for educational equity".

This study seeks to understand the degree to which high school teachers are engaged in activities that work towards an equitable education for all students, and to gather teachers' opinions about how their principals support or impede those activities.

I understand that I, along with every other certified teacher on my campus, have been invited to participate in this study.

I agree to the conditions listed below with the understanding that I may withdraw my participation in the project at any time, and that I may choose not to answer any questions that that I not want to answer. I understand my participation is completely voluntary.

1. Phase One of the study asks teachers to complete an online survey which should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. One teacher from each campus will then be invited to participate in Phase Two, which involves being interviewed by the researcher at a time and location of the teacher's choosing. This interview will take approximately one hour, and will be videotaped. Participation in Phase One does not obligate the participant to complete Phase Two.
2. Data to be collected include responses to the online survey and responses to interview questions.
3. In order to protect participants' identities, each will be assigned an ID number; the list matching names to ID numbers will be kept on a password protected hard drive, and will only be accessible to the researcher and her dissertation committee. The list will be maintained on this hard drive for 3 years; after this time, it will be destroyed.
4. The collected data will be used in the researcher's dissertation project, and may subsequently be presented at professional education conferences and published in education journals. All data will be maintained for 3 years on a password-protected hard drive, and will be destroyed after this time period has elapsed.
5. Risks of participating in this study are minimal, but may include feelings of anxiety about having personal opinions about their school experiences revealed to coworkers or supervisors. In order to alleviate these anxieties, participants' identities will be kept confidential.
6. Benefits of participating include contributing to the field of knowledge concerning school conditions that support equitable educational experiences for all students.

A summary of the findings will be provided to participants upon completion of the study, if requested. Access to these findings may be requested by emailing the researcher at sc40127@txstate.edu.

This project [2018047] was approved by the Texas State IRB on November 8, 2017. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Jon Lasser (512-245-3413 - lasser@txstate.edu) and to Becky Northcut, Director, Research Integrity & Compliance (512-245-2314 - bnorthcut@txstate.edu).

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK

1. On your survey, you indicated that you have been involved in one or more of the following activities in the last school year:

* advocating for or supporting marginalized students in your classroom or school;
* choosing classroom materials that avoid stereotypical portrayals of marginalized groups;
* actively addressing issues of social, racial or economic injustice in class;
* intervening to stop harassment of marginalized students

Which one(s) have you engaged in?

2. Tell me a story about a time when you engaged in one of these activities and it had a positive outcome for the student(s).

- Prompt: What helped you be successful?
- Prompt: What stood in your way?

3. Tell me a story about a time when you engaged in one of these activities and it did NOT have a positive outcome.

- Prompt: What stood in your way?
- Prompt: What could have been done to help you be successful?

4. Describe your school principal in terms of how he/she may have supported you in these efforts.

5. Describe your school principal in terms of how he/she may have hindered you in these efforts.

6.What could your school principal do to help teachers fight for their marginalized students?

APPENDIX E

TACTICS FOR DRAWING CONCLUSIONS IN QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

- Noting patterns and themes
- Seeing plausibility
- Clustering
- Making metaphors
- Counting
- Comparing/contrasting
- Partitioning variables
- Subsuming particulars into the general
- Factoring
- Noting relations between variables
- Finding intervening variables
- Building a logical chain of evidence
- Making conceptual/theoretical coherence

Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, (2014)

APPENDIX F

OBSERVATIONS FARTHEST FROM THE CENTROID

(MAHALANOBIS DISTANCE)

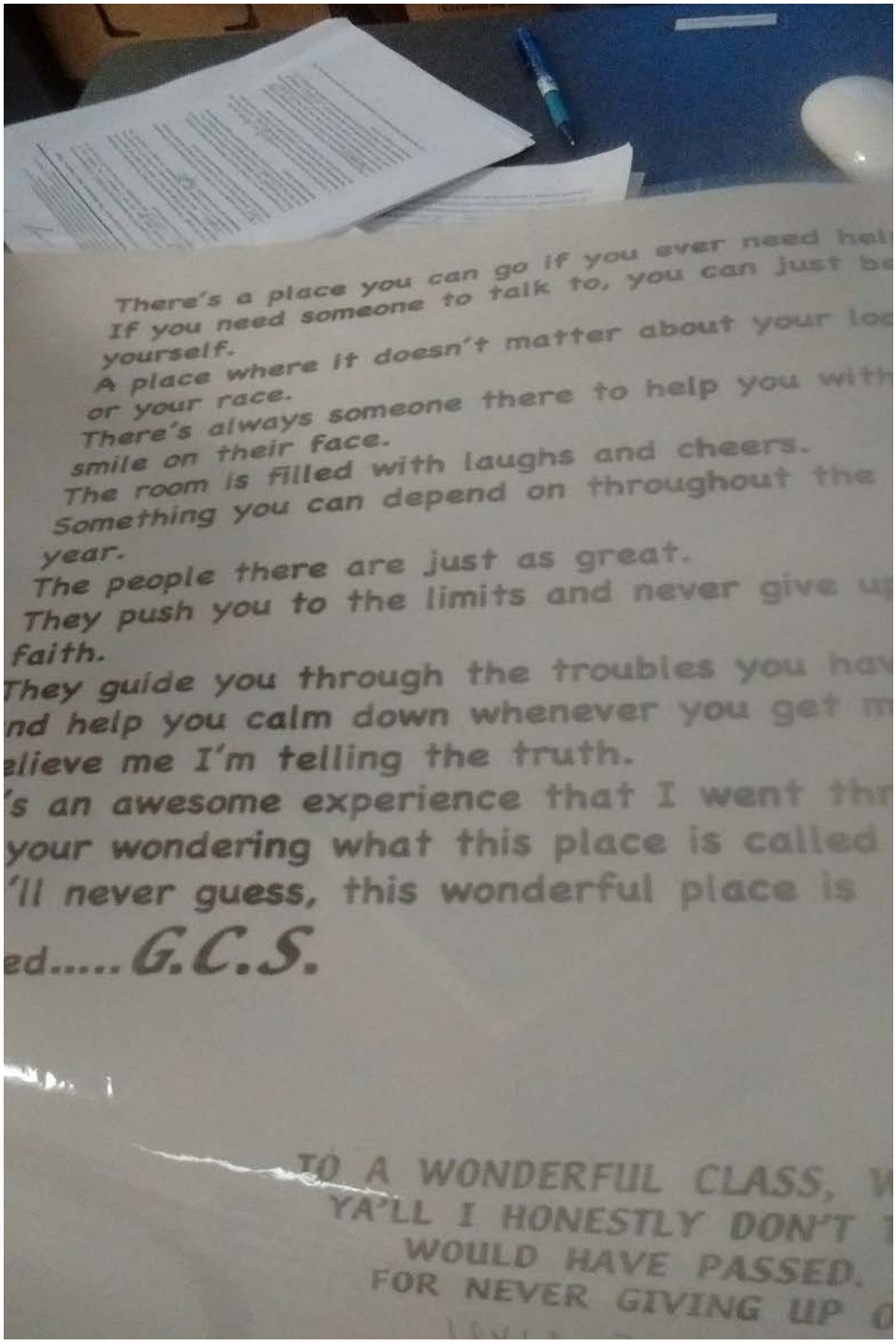
Observation number	Mahalanobis d-squared	p1	p2
4	101.843	0.000	0.000
167	95.986	0.000	0.000
146	91.979	0.000	0.000
93	89.660	0.000	0.000
145	85.207	0.000	0.000
83	80.807	0.000	0.000
133	80.312	0.000	0.000
120	76.386	0.000	0.000
23	76.004	0.000	0.000
103	68.610	0.000	0.000
139	67.974	0.000	0.000
82	65.874	0.000	0.000
157	64.252	0.000	0.000
92	63.005	0.000	0.000
76	59.098	0.000	0.000
2	56.952	0.000	0.000
137	56.678	0.000	0.000
160	53.599	0.001	0.000
159	53.145	0.001	0.000
60	49.981	0.002	0.000
128	47.340	0.004	0.000
108	45.719	0.007	0.000
165	45.331	0.008	0.000
166	43.673	0.012	0.000
123	41.794	0.019	0.000
36	41.616	0.020	0.000
125	41.331	0.021	0.000
73	40.781	0.024	0.000
48	39.964	0.029	0.000
26	39.772	0.031	0.000
112	38.961	0.037	0.000
114	38.815	0.038	0.000
99	38.442	0.042	0.000
115	37.776	0.049	0.000

Observation number	Mahalanobis d-squared	p1	p2
105	37.727	0.049	0.000
172	36.812	0.060	0.000
42	36.392	0.066	0.000
45	35.542	0.079	0.000
169	35.093	0.087	0.000
170	35.093	0.087	0.000
98	32.668	0.140	0.000
21	32.352	0.144	0.000
71	32.352	0.148	0.000
86	30.712	0.199	0.041
111	30.114	0.220	0.112
57	29.677	0.237	0.193
147	29.569	0.241	0.182
62	28.789	0.273	0.456
134	28.748	0.275	0.409
74	27.822	0.316	0.787
138	27.774	0.318	0.756
1	27.668	0.323	0.747
113	27.262	0.343	0.851
16	27.156	0.348	0.847
39	26.793	0.366	0.912
40	26.619	0.375	0.924
44	26.249	0.394	0.963
67	25.863	0.415	0.985
50	25.401	0.44	0.996
109	25.275	0.447	0.996
168	24.853	0.471	0.999
89	24.667	0.481	0.999
88	24.195	0.508	1.000
69	24.147	0.511	1.000
135	23.979	0.521	1.000
7	23.642	0.54	1.000

Observation number	Mahalanobis d-squared	p1	p2
116	23.388	0.555	1.000
37	23.228	0.564	1.000
140	23.003	0.577	1.000
12	22.754	0.592	1.000
130	22.669	0.597	1.000
117	22.39	0.613	1.000
13	22.361	0.615	1.000
27	22.108	0.629	1.000
121	21.35	0.673	1.000
102	21.014	0.692	1.000
119	20.348	0.728	1.000
124	20.34	0.729	1.000
152	19.518	0.772	1.000
148	19.471	0.774	1.000
54	19.107	0.792	1.000
79	18.966	0.799	1.000
3	18.737	0.81	1.000
61	18.552	0.818	1.000
81	18.529	0.819	1.000
15	18.359	0.827	1.000
126	18.315	0.829	1.000
31	18.198	0.834	1.000
14	18.122	0.837	1.000
6	17.939	0.845	1.000
59	17.615	0.858	1.000
127	17.485	0.863	1.000
162	17.288	0.871	1.000
52	16.997	0.882	1.000
100	16.288	0.906	1.000
72	16.09	0.912	1.000
19	15.951	0.916	1.000
20	15.949	0.916	1.000
149	15.554	0.927	1.000

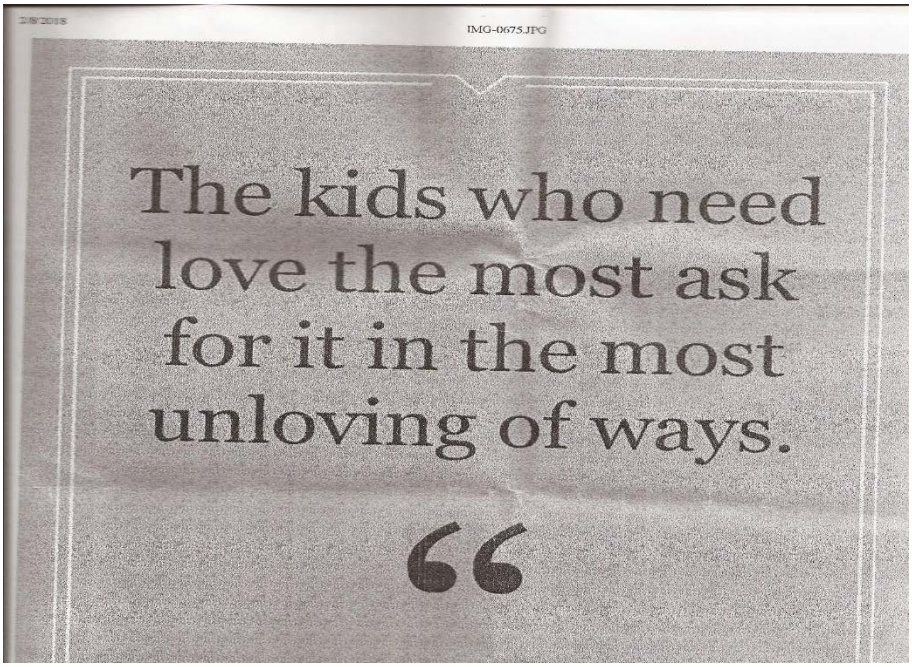
APPENDIX G

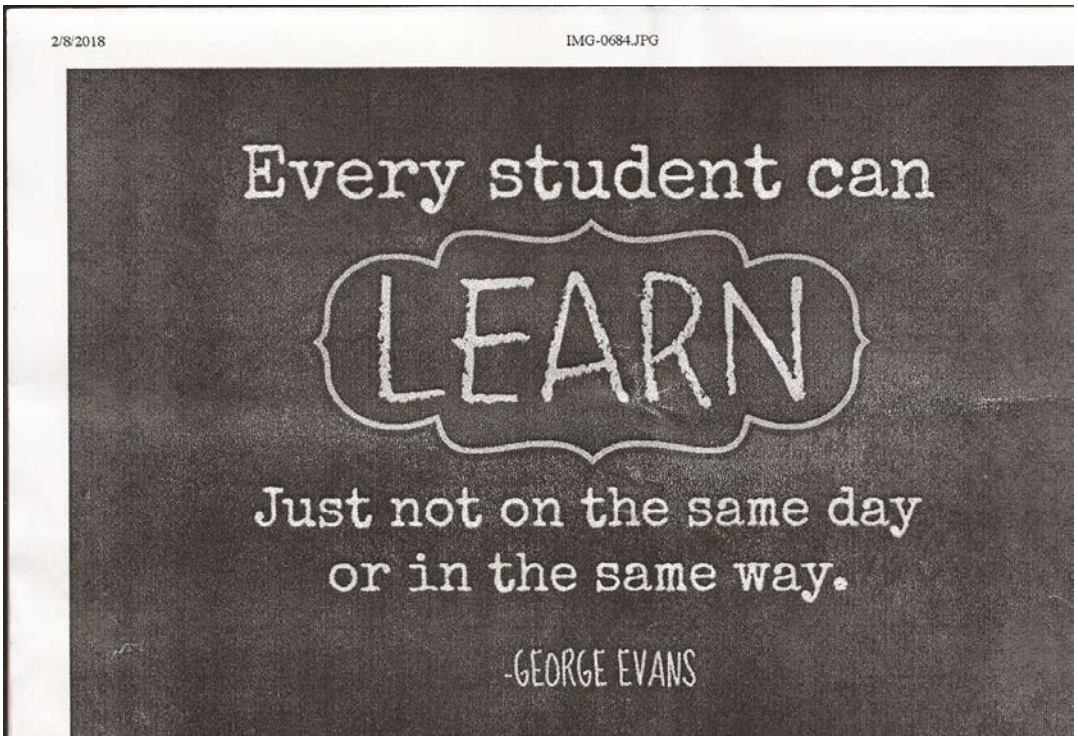
ARTIFACT: STUDENT-CREATED POSTER



APPENDIX F

ARTIFACTS: PRINCIPAL-CREATED NEWSLETTERS





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