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FROM DISPOSITION TO ACTION: BRIDGING MORAL/ ETHICAL REASONING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP

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Over fifty years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, students continue to be marginalized both in and outside of school. Students of color, students with disabilities, students learning English, students from low income families, students with differing sexual orientation, and other marginalized student groups continue to face inequitable opportunities in schools and the resulting disparate achievement (Frattura & Capper, 2007). Addressing this continued marginalization and inequitable schooling is a key principle of the growing call for leadership for social justice (Grogan, 2002a, 2002b; Theoharis, 2007), where the principal serves as the moderator of the equitable interests of *all* within a school context (Hodgkinson, 1999). These calls for a more deliberate focus on equity and justice, coupled with the growing socio-cultural diversity within our schools, suggest increased scrutiny of the value-laden reasoning and actions of school administrators (Begley, 1999; 2006).

Knowing that school leadership is key to reforming schools (Fullan, 1993; Grogan, 2002a, 2002b), scholars focused on better understanding social justice leadership have identified exemplar cases where school leaders committed to equity have taken action to create more just learning environments for marginalized students (Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002; Scheurich, 1998; Theoharis, 2007). This article seeks to build upon this growing body of scholarship by bridging the examination of these social justice leaders with the research base on moral/ethical reasoning. We believe that these distinct and separate areas of scholarship are natural compliments to each other, particularly as one examines the relationship between moral/ethical reasoning and the transition of this reasoning into leadership actions that move beyond conventional models of school leadership towards rights-based models of social justice leadership in schools. Before we proceed further in examining the relationship between school leaders' social justice actions and their degrees of moral/ethical reasoning, we must first acknowledge that the literature is filled with varying definitions of social justice (see Bogtoch, 2002; Dantley & Tillman, 2006). For the purposes of this article, we borrow from Dantley and Tillman's (2006) position that social justice ultimately changes inequities and marginalization. Furthermore, we heed Bogtoch's (2002) call to situate this social justice position within the context of school leadership. In doing so, we

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arrive at Theoharis' (2007) definition of leadership for social justice and thus frame this article in accordance:

(Social justice school leaders) advocate, lead, and keep at the center of their practice and vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States. This definition centers on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools. In doing so, inclusive schooling practices for students with disabilities, English language learners, and other students traditionally segregated in schools are also necessitated. (p. 222)

Approaches to morality and ethics in educational leadership traditionally include the articulation of a moral/ethical principle. Noting that the principles of moral philosophers and classic moral theorists are often lost in the translation towards meaningful practice by administrators (Rest et al., 1999; Strike, 1982), more recent efforts have focused on multi-dimensional models that approach ethical leadership decisions from differing perspectives (Furman, 2004; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001; Starratt, 1991). Begley offers a conceptual framework of authentic educational leadership that centers on the individual self (2004) but further addresses how an individual's motivation, ethical values, and attitudes translate to professional and ethical actions (2004, 2006). Similarly, Hodgkinson (1991) illuminates four broad motivational forces, suggesting that individual leaders can take action based upon self-interest, a desire for consensus, a recognition of consequences, or willful promotion of ethical principles.

We recognize the growing research base on the underlying ethical dispositions that promote the actions of school leaders. We further recognize recent calls (Bebeau, 2002) for additional research on the intersection of ethical decision-making and the translation of decisions into actions. In an effort to continue this inquiry of school leaders' ethical decisions and resulting ethical actions, we scrutinize the intersection of moral/ethical reasoning and professional expertise from the lens of moral psychology. Specifically, we examine the psychological construct that governs moral sensitivity and moral judgment in conjunction with the professional actions of educational leaders for social justice (Begley, 2006). The complimentary nature of moral/ethical reasoning and social justice leadership directs us to refer to the moral/ethical *disposition* of school leaders. We define disposition as trends in an individual's judgments or actions within ill-structured contexts (Reiman & Johnson, 2003). Thus, we scrutinize the intersection of moral reasoning (judgment) and decisions (actions) made by school leaders. The use of

the term *ill-structured* indicates that there is often no universal answer, position, policy, as each school leader works within a complex and ever-changing scholastic context.

While Kohlberg's (1969) theory of moral/ethical development grounds our discussion of professional ethics in educational leadership, our focus is on the work of the Neo-Kohlbergians (Rest et al., 1999) and their expanded examination of ethical components and schema that promote moral reasoning and decision-making. We posit that it is their continued scrutiny and assessment of the moral psychological construct that must connect to discussions of ethics in educational leadership contexts.

Kohlberg and Moral Reasoning

Lawrence Kohlberg's work in moral thinking shifted the moral paradigm from the behaviorist perspective of learning, internalizing, and conforming to one's societal norms to the cognitive perspective, where the individual (and not society) emerges as the responsible party in determining right, wrong, and subsequent actions (Rest, 1994). Kohlberg focused on cognition as it relates to moral decision-making, operating from the stance that this meaning making process gradually becomes more complex and principled (Rest, 1994). Kohlberg's focus on cognition and moral development led to his proposed six-stage developmental sequence of moral judgment within three broader categories of morality – pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional reasoning. These three categories represent differences in the ways that individuals think about questions of social justice (Reiman & Peace, 2002). It is important to note that at the pre-conventional level of moral reasoning, morality and judgment hinge on external happenings/occurrences rather than on persons or standards. Through personal and professional growth, individuals can develop to the conventional level of moral reasoning, where morality and judgment center on performing one's right role in order to maintain conventional, societal norms and to meet the expectations of others. Additional development leads to the post-conventional level of moral reasoning, where morality and judgment reside in a shared commitment to democratic rights, ideals, principles, and duties. This foundation in Kohlberg's original model is important as we transition to our discussion of the Neo-Kohlbergian Four Component Model and its focus on the post-conventional moral reasoning schema.

The Neo-Kohlbergian Four Component Model and Moral/Ethical Schema

Additional work with Kohlberg's theory of moral development (e.g. Rest, 1983) led to the development of a Neo-Kohlbergian approach to ethical behavior, including the recognition and designation of other moral processes within the broader spectrum of cognitive development. Rest's (1983) extensive review of morality literature considered morality from the social learning, behaviorist, social

psychological and cognitive-developmental perspectives. The resulting Neo-Kohlbergian model addresses, incorporates, and builds upon Kohlberg's stages of moral judgment, but significantly extends scrutiny to another equally important aspect of morality – moral behavior (i.e. moral action). We now turn to the Neo-Kohlbergian model in an effort to broadly examine professionals' moral/ethical dispositions, or their trends in judgment and action as they work within ill-structured scholastic contexts.

The Neo-Kohlbergian Model

Seeking to more comprehensively capture the principles of moral behavior, Rest and others (1983, 1984, 1986, 1994, 1999) proposed the Four Component Model (FCM) that includes the following four psychological components:

Moral Sensitivity – Interpreting the Situation. This component represents an individual's awareness of different courses of action, how those actions impact others, and the establishment of potential cause/effect relationships. A weak moral stance emerges from an individual who is unaware of and fails to recognize surrounding persons and contexts. Attempts to develop and assess moral sensitivity have occurred across the fields of dentistry, medicine, nursing, and education (Bebeau, 2002; Brabeck et al., 2000; Maher, 2005) and include sensitivity training towards communication styles, race, gender, or ethnicity (Rest & Narvaez, 1994).

Moral Judgment – Judging actions as morally right/wrong. This second component builds on the awareness of the morally sensitive individual, focusing specifically on one's ability to choose the most morally justifiable action (Rest, 1994), representing a direct connection between the Neo-Kohlbergian model and Kohlberg's six stages of moral judgment. Failure to arrive at a morally sound decision often results from individuals who determine justice and equity from egocentric perspectives with little consideration of others. Moral judgment was initially assessed by Kohlberg using his moral judgment interview (MJI) process, but is now commonly assessed using an updated version of the Defining Issues Test (DIT-2). Dilemma discussions are considered an important intervention in the development of moral judgment (Bebeau et al., 1999).

Moral Motivation – Prioritizing moral values. Moral motivation addresses how an individual prioritizes moral values in relation to other competing, and often personal, values. Moral motivation deficiency occurs when an individual knowingly places personal values (relationships, compensation, etc.) over ethical tenets (justice, equity, fairness, etc.). Importantly, very little validated research and assessment has occurred in relation to this third component (Rest et al., 1999; Rest & Narvaez, 1994).

Moral Character – Courage, persistence, overcoming obstacles. Moral character is best described in consideration of the three earlier components. If an individual recognizes the various factors of an ethical situation (sensitivity), makes a sound ethical decision (judgment), and places moral values over personal values (motivation), then that individual is prepared to execute a moral action. We clearly see moral character in Kohlberg's post-conventional stage, but note that Kohlberg does not suggest *action*. The Neo-Kohlbergian model focuses on both moral reasoning *and* moral action. This follow-through from moral decision-making to moral action requires strength of moral *character* – fortitude, perseverance, a strong ego, and professional backbone. In an effort to illustrate the four moral components of this Neo-Kohlbergian model, consider the case of a school principal who is working to eliminate tracked mathematics instruction.

The morally sensitive principal understands the social justice benefits to an untracked math program for students of all abilities, particularly for students who have been historically marginalized. The principal is aware that this change would upset some members of the larger school community, recognizing that some have advocated for tracked instruction because it creates a system that supports their children. Additionally, the principal is aware that some teachers will oppose an untracked math program. It represents a change in "how things have always been done" and requires viewing teaching/learning in ways that are often outside of some teacher's current practices. Despite these sources of resistance, the principal determines that eliminating tracked math programs is the morally defensible action to best serve *all* students. The benefits of this decision to *all* students outweigh others' personal interests, relationships, and conventional views. Through supportive efforts and deliberate change agents, the principal eliminates barriers to change before and throughout the implementation process. Thus, the principal interprets the situation (moral sensitivity), judges which action is morally right (moral judgment), prioritizes making decisions with regard to issues of equity and justice over personal interests and relationships (moral motivation), and oversees school structures to support the implementation of the moral decision (moral character).

Moral/Ethical Schema

While the Neo-Kohlbergian perspective extended Kohlberg's initial focus on moral judgment to an expanded consideration of moral sensitivity, motivation, and character, it also offers additional insight into Kohlberg's early work with psychological structures. Kohlberg's designation of fixed stages of moral development is extended by the Neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral growth through increasingly complex moral schema that demonstrate advancement from micro- to macro-morality. That is, the Neo-Kohlbergian emphasis on *macro*-morality scrutinizes the degree to which an individual focuses holistically on society-wide cooperation

as opposed to *micro*-morality, where an individual remains centered on routine interactions with known others (Narvaez & Bock, 2002). Their incorporation of the progressive Piagetian schema framework allows for other factors/contexts (i.e. religion, culture, etc.) to interact with moral psychological structures (i.e. moral judgment stages) and influence moral decision-making (Narvaez & Bock, 2002; Piaget, 1959; Reiman & Peace, 2002).

The first moral/ethical schema is the Personal Interest Schema (PIS). It reflects Kohlberg's pre-conventional focus on the morality of individual relationships. Issues of personal advantage and survival characterize this schema and emphasis is placed on what the individual will gain or lose as a result of interacting/cooperating with others (Maher, 2005; Rest et al., 1999). The Maintaining Norms Schema (MNS) converges with Kohlberg's fourth stage of moral judgment, representing an early shift from micro- (individual) to macro- (society wide) morality, as the individual recognizes his/her role within the larger society that is governed by established roles, duties, codes, and practices (Maher, 2005; Narvaez & Bock, 2002; Rest et al., 1999). The final Post-conventional schema (PCS) represents principled and integrated moral reasoning. This macro-morality stance allows the individual to explore various moral courses of action, challenge laws/codes/practices that are unjust, apply moral ideals such that all individuals are equal, and operate from a democratic, universal human rights perspective (Maher, 2005; Narvaez & Bock, 2002; Rest et al., 1999).

The Neo-Kohlbergian Perspective in Praxis: School Leadership for Social Justice

We posit that the Neo-Kohlbergian Four Component Model and the three moral/ethical schema offer a tandem perspective on school leadership for social justice. The very nature of school leadership suggests that administrators make decisions from the macro-morality perspective, where each decision should be considered with regard to the entire (scholastic) society. This macro-morality approach hinges on the *degree* to which school leaders shape their school contexts through impartial, principled actions, avoiding the micro-morality tendencies of favoritism and partisanship (Rest et al., 1999). We sought to examine the intersection of the Neo-Kohlbergian perspective on moral reasoning in conjunction with the macro-morality actions taken by school leaders. That is, we began to examine individual leader's school contexts and structures that foster cooperation, fairness, equitable practices, democracy, and the inclusion of *all* individuals.

Theoharis' initial study examined seven urban principals who approached school administration with a drive to pursue equity and justice. These principals were selected based on their: 1) formal leadership of a public school, 2) belief that promoting social justice is a driving force behind their

leadership position, 3) advocacy and leadership that continually focused on issues of race, class, gender, disability, and sexual orientation; and 4) evidence that they fostered a more "just" school (2007). Once the seven principals were identified, initial site visits and interviews were arranged. Three interviews were completed with each principal. Each school was visited at least four additional times. During these visits, discussions/interviews with teachers were conducted, meetings/events with parents were scrutinized, and the general operations, structures, and teaching/learning atmospheres were observed. Documents reviewed included student achievement data, school handbooks, staffing plans, school maps, news articles, meeting agendas, memos, and staff/community newsletters. This initial study found that these principals made significant strides in guiding their schools towards equity in the areas of student achievement and school climate. Findings from this study delineated how these leaders advanced equity and justice, but also indicated that they faced significant resistance and consequently developed strategies to cope with the resistance.

Our follow-up study examines the same seven principals, their moral/ethical judgment in terms of post-conventional reasoning, and their actions that are convergent/divergent with leadership for social justice. Three years after the original study, all seven principals were contacted for this follow-up study. This study collected additional data on each principal's degree of moral/ethical reasoning by asking each to complete the Defining Issues Test (DIT-2). The principals' DIT-2 scores were compared with their work from the original study.

Based on Kohlberg's postulate that adolescence brings about a shift from micro- to macro-morality reasoning, Rest (1979) designed the Defining Issues Test (DIT) to measure shifts in moral schema as adults mature toward complex and integrated socio-centric perspectives (Elm & Webber, 1994; Narvaez & Bock, 2002). The DIT is a six-dilemma assessment that asks respondents to rate and rank the importance of twelve items in determining a course of action. Counter to Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview protocol, this "rate and rank" process places less emphasis on respondents' verbal capacity, allowing for a greater standardization of the assessment (Rest et al., 1999). Thousands of studies employing the DIT across the professions of medicine, dentistry, law, and education (Bebeau, 2002; Reiman & Peace, 2002; Rest & Narvaez, 1994) result in reliability coefficients ranging from .70 to .80¹ (Elm & Webber, 1994). Data are often interpreted by a weighted "P-score," reflecting the degree to which post-conventional items are selected over other items during the respondent's reasoning processes (Rest et al., 1999).

School Leaders' Moral/Ethical Reasoning

We now examine the principals' DIT-2 scores and degrees of post-conventional reasoning in comparison to their actions as school leaders. Table 1 outlines the principals' demographic

data and their DIT-2 scores for the Personal Interest, Maintaining Norms, and Post-conventional schema. Beside each principal's schema score is an additional score in parentheses, representing the mean schema score (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003) for each principal's educational level. We offer our subjects' schema scores in comparison to education level because this variable serves as the most common normative variable across 176 studies using the DIT-2 with a total $n=10,870$ (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003).

Table 1. *Principal scores across three moral reasoning schema*

Name	Age	Education Level	Personal Interest Stages 2/3	Maintaining Norms Stage 4	Post-Conventional P-Score
Natalie	47	MS Degree	12 (21.69)	16 (32.64)	64 (41.06)
Taylor	35	MS Degree	8 (21.69)	24 (32.64)	68 (41.06)
Tracy	35	Ph.D./Ed.D.	16 (18.71)	12 (27.24)	66 (50.69)
Scott	41	MS Degree	4 (21.69)	28 (32.64)	64 (41.06)
Eli	**	Prof. Degree	14 (19.76)	36 (31.41)	40 (44.87)
Dale	58	Ph.D./Ed.D.	12 (18.71)	22 (27.24)	62 (50.69)
Meg	38	MS Degree	8 (18.71)	20 (27.24)	56 (41.06)

With the exception of one outlier, the data represented in Table 1 represent P-scores that are larger than the normed mean schema scores represented in parentheses. A Cohen's d effect size was calculated, resulting in a positive effect size of .98 that is considered large in comparison to the DIT benchmarks established for level of education (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003; Cohen, 1992). Six of the seven principals show Personal Interest and Maintaining Norms schema scores that are lower than the normed mean scores, indicating that a predominance of their moral reasoning occurs at the Post-conventional level. Simply put, most principals in this study make moral judgments based on tenets of justice, equity, inclusion, and personal dignity. The data do not, however, describe how their reasoning and judgment are exemplified in their daily school leadership actions.

School Leaders' Social Justice Actions

To more closely scrutinize the DIT-2 data, we turn to Table 2 that outlines each principal's Post-conventional P-scores in conjunction with leadership actions taken in his/her individual school context. This examination of leader's actions allows us to scrutinize how their moral judgment is exemplified through daily leadership.

Table 2. *School leaders' DIT p-scores in relation to their professional actions*

Principal	DIT P-Scores	Post-Conventional Professional Actions
Dale	PCS – 62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> De-tracked Math program All special ed services – inclusive Change climate and way families/kids are addressed Refused to make school behavior criminal issue and reduced police involvement On-going examination/study of race & racial issues
Eli	PCS – 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff processes and decides all important issues of school Inclusive services for students w/disabilities Purposeful relationship-building with students and community On-going examination and addressing of race & racial issues
Meg	PCS – 56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restructured – eliminate pullout, separate ELL, reading, gifted, special ed. programs On-going examination/study of race & racial issues Ethnic parent meetings and outreach to families Climate of warmth and nurturing
Natalie	PCS – 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attracted more students of color and students w/ disabilities Inclusive Services for students with special ed needs Address staff attitudes that “at-risk” students cannot handle academics and only need to feel good Restorative justice discipline On-going examination/study of race & racial issues
Scott	PCS – 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate time-out room Changed schedule to eliminate choice between math support and music On-going examination/study of race & racial issues Push toward more inclusive special ed.
Taylor	PCS – 68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> De-tracked math program Teachers as professional decision makers in the face of “elitist, vocal white parents” Purposeful reaching out to families whose voice was missing from school discussion On-going examination/study of race & racial issues Supported inclusive special ed
Tracy	PCS – 66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restructured to inclusive special ed, ELL, and reading for <i>all</i> students Eliminate time-out room Climate where students and families respected On-going examination/study of race & racial issues Professional respect for teaching staff – shared decision making, respect team decisions Collaborate with city, county, public health to build neighborhood resource center

Convergent Results

Three patterns emerge from the principals' post-conventional actions to make their schools more equitable – inclusive services for students with special needs, leadership of on-going discussion about race, and the creation of more invitational school climates.

Importantly, the outlier in terms of the DIT-2 P-score data, Eli, supported inclusive services but did not center his work on issues of inclusion or articulate the same level of understanding about special education as the other principals. Thus, we see a definitive line between the Kohlbergian emphasis on moral judgment and the Neo-Kohlbergian emphasis on transitioning that moral judgment to moral action. The other six principals, in their drive to create inclusive services for students with special education needs, echoed the dispositions of inclusive leaders (i.e. moral

judgment at the post-conventional stages/schema). They articulated a bold vision, viewed inclusive services as a matter of justice, and possessed a sense of agency to implement changes (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, in press). They utilized school resources holistically to create support systems for students with diverse needs in general education classrooms by rearranging resources and creating new service delivery models (Frattura & Capper, 2007), transitioning their moral judgments into moral actions. Unlike many of their colleagues (Sirotnik & Kimball, 1994), they possessed an understanding of special education and ELL regulations, teaming structures, and instructional approaches that would benefit students, giving them the confidence to create new school structures that utilized this knowledge and skills base.

Through their efforts to provide inclusive services for *all* individuals within their schools, these principals demonstrated moral reasoning by interpreting school situations, imagining alternative scenarios, judging unfair situations, and implementing inclusive practices that were responsive to the needs of all students and families. Simply put, these inclusive actions align with the principals' high moral/ethical disposition P-scores. Table 2 shows the absence of Personal Interest actions, a willingness to move beyond maintaining the norms for special and gifted education, and a predominant leadership stance from the macro-morality perspective, where established (and unjust) practices were challenged and each school's premise shifted to democratic and universal human rights. Importantly, these principals did not just demonstrate post-conventional moral reasoning, but further enacted moral character and motivation as they took action to make their schools more socially just.

While all seven principals dealt with race and racial issues, Eli did not lead on-going professional development on race. Although he confronted racial issues, the other six principals led on-going investigations and personal reflections with their faculty. We see a difference in degree of moral motivation, as Eli's actions differ in comparison to the other principals' more in-depth scrutiny of school belief systems. However, all seven principals, including Eli, worked to change the school climate to a more invitational environment for students and families. While each principal approached this differently (i.e. changing discipline systems and approaches, different kinds of family groups, purposeful family/community partnership, etc.), they all focused on creating schools that were warm, nurturing communities.

These leadership actions are extensions of Post-conventional moral/ethical reasoning. Each school leader possessed the moral motivation and character to confront tacit racial issues, shifting from maintaining established norms to a macro-morality stance that fosters justice and equality for all individuals. Their attention to fostering invitational school climates exemplifies the transition from Personal Interest/Maintaining Norms actions to Post-conventional actions. Each principal recognized his/her role in the larger

scholastic society, challenged 'hidden' school practices, and literally opened the doors to the marginalized voices of students and their families.

Implications for developing school leaders committed to social justice

As increased attention is garnered toward mentoring novice school leaders (SREB, 2007; Villani, 2006), one must consider how to mentor school leaders for social justice. Simply put, can school leaders for social justice be developed? The participating school leaders developed their commitment to social justice through their life experiences (Theoharis, in press). Instead of relying on formative life experience to foster future socially-just school leaders, we posit that creating leadership preparation with the aim of social justice leadership is indeed possible and morally right. We approach the development of school leaders for social justice from two perspectives – the literature on social justice leadership and the development of moral/ethical reasoning.

As the literature on social justice leadership expands, increased attention is placed on leadership preparation and professional development. While there is no definitive method to "create" leaders committed to equity and justice, scholars provide insights and strategies on knowledge, skills, and dispositions that would position school administrators to advocate for justice and equity. The special issues of the *Journal of School Leadership* (Tillman et al., 2006), *Journal of Educational Administration* (Shoho, 2006), and the *Journal of Research in Leadership Education* (Rusch, 2007) provide perspectives and practical ideas on preparing social justice leaders. Individual scholarship, including Brown (2004), McKenzie et al. (2008), and Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis, (in press) bring additional depth to the notion of preparing leaders for social justice. These scholars do not focus on developing social justice leadership where the final destination results in one monolithic type of leader. Instead, they view leadership development as fostering dynamic leaders capable of using equity issues as a lens to interrogate injustice and create more equitable norms. We believe there is an important bridge between this work and the understanding of developing moral/ethical reasoning.

We briefly turn to Reiman and Johnson's (2003) meta-analysis of interventions across the teacher career spectrum in considering the question of developing school leaders for social justice. Each of the reviewed interventions (n=12) was designed to foster positive changes in professional pedagogy and moral/ethical judgment. Educators in these studies were asked to enact a common set of independent variables, including: assuming complex new human-helping roles (i.e. a new teacher, mentor, or leadership position), participating in a guided inquiry process of self-assessment and reflection, and engaging in this role/reflection balance across a time frame of at least three months. Ten of the twelve interventions included an assessment of moral/ethical judgment as a dependent variable, posting a large positive effect size of 0.75.

Transformations in teachers' performances were also assessed and significant differences ($p < .01$) were found in teachers' listening skills, responses to others' concerns, and the use of inquiry-based questioning.

These carefully structured interventions and the positive results in both professional action and moral/ethical judgment offer promise to the question of developing school leaders for social justice. While the principals in our study were selected because of their positions toward social justice leadership, they came to those social justice positions from a variety of different backgrounds. Theoharis (in press) discusses these paths in depth. None of the principals attribute their preparation programs in school administration as contributing significantly to their moral development. Instead, each school leader noted significant personal and/or professional experiences that developed and refined their social justice ideals. They did not have carefully structured interventions like those scrutinized by Reiman and Johnson, but yet they do show significant post-conventional moral reasoning. Although we learn from the scrutiny of our sample, we posit that school leadership cannot wait for Reiman and Johnson's variables to take hold naturally and tacitly influence social justice leadership. If we want school leaders that operate from tenets of justice, equality, dignity, and inclusion, then we advocate for deliberately developing school leaders who are sensitive to these tenets, make morally-justifiable decisions, and possess the strength of character to lead schools beyond duty-bound regulations and toward rights-based equal education.

As we consider the goal of developing social justice leadership, we acknowledge the need for additional research. There remains a need for research interventions that yield positive advances in moral/ethical judgment and close scrutiny of this research on nurturing school leaders' moral/ethical reasoning. As Strike (1982) and others continue to emphasize, we must further examine the link between moral/ethical reasoning and action within scholastic settings, scrutinizing the diffusion of social justice tenets and the degree to which they translate to practice within scholastic settings. Finally, we must continue to study the individual school leader for social justice to more specifically examine the elusive moral motivation and moral character components of the Four Component Model (Rest et al., 1999).

Conclusion

Kohlberg's theory of moral development led to the broader Neo-Kohlbergian perspective of morality and an expanded view of moral reasoning. Our focus has been the link between leadership for social justice and the Neo-Kohlbergian perspective (i.e. the FCM and the three moral/ethical schema). The FCM extends Kohlberg's work on moral judgment, outlining sensitivity to *and* judgment of moral issues in connection with the moral fiber that causes individuals to place others ahead of themselves in implementing moral

decisions. We argue that leaders for social justice make moral decisions through a daily, tacit examination of ingrained moral schema, where multiple socio-cultural factors and contexts influence leadership decisions. We acknowledge Strike's (1982) important connection to the intermediate constructs of the education profession, noting the often-overlooked divide between moral principles and daily moral actions.

The aforementioned connections in the data between the principals' social justice actions and degrees of post-conventional reasoning indicate a convergence between moral psychology and the ethical actions of school leaders. Thus, we propose that the Neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral reasoning is closely aligned with the parameters and goals of social justice leadership. Social justice school leadership provides for moral psychologists a connection between psychological constructs and action in the field of education, where scholars can begin examining moral judgment in praxis. In kind, moral psychology offers a research base for those working to deliberately develop school leaders for social justice. Exploration of the symbiotic relationship between moral psychology and social justice leadership holds potential for closely examining, preparing for, teaching, and enacting moral reasoning *and* moral action. Ultimately, we see this as a bridge to better develop and support administrators capable of leading schools where marginalized students flourish – an essential component of social justice leadership.

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