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# Social Studies Teachers Who Teach Toward Social Justice: An Examination of Life Histories

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Social Studies Teachers Who Teach Toward Social Justice:  
An Examination of Life Histories

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A Dissertation Submitted to The Graduate School at the  
University of Missouri—St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation reports on a qualitative investigation of two research questions: What experiences lead secondary social studies teachers to become passionate and committed to teaching toward social justice? How do these teachers conceptualize and practice teaching toward social justice in the social studies? The study, which employed a life history design informed by a sociocultural approach, examined data from interviews with thirteen secondary social studies teachers whose practice emphasized social justice concepts. Data were interpreted using both narrative analysis and inductive content analysis. A variety of life experiences such as family, schooling, oppression, spirituality, friendships, teaching experience, work experience, community, and media influenced the development of a social justice identity. These experiences shaped the participants' trajectories of identification, particularly in their childhood and adolescence, by either aligning them along a path that valued social justice and/or by promoting resistance to unjust practices that deepened their commitment to social justice. Participants also discussed how they addressed issues of social justice in their practice using techniques that reflected the ideas of critical pedagogy, multicultural education, and democratic citizenship education. The study implies that a greater commitment to social justice practice in the social studies may be facilitated by 1) increasing programming and curriculum in teacher training institutions that address both social justice theory and practice, and 2) developing networks of secondary social studies teachers that support critical reflection and exchange of ideas that promote social justice within both classrooms and schools.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

As I looked out across the room of forty teacher-leaders, thirty-nine of whom were white, all I saw were crossed arms and frowning faces. I had just finished a presentation about the history of white privilege in the United States, dotted with personal confessions from my own experience as a white teacher in a multi-racial school. A handful of the participants in this dismantling racism workshop seemed eager to explore questions of power and privilege within schools and society. However, the vast majority wanted nothing to do with an exercise that asked them to examine such issues in their own lives and professional practice. At the end of the day's session most of the participants fled the room quickly, but a few lingered to speak with my co-facilitators and me. They expressed regret that the group had rejected our challenge to critically reflect on the nature of racial inequity in schools.

When I drove home that night I was plagued by a nagging question: Why were those few teachers willing to examine questions of social inequity while most of their colleagues opposed this task? I began to contemplate how the different life experiences of these teachers, almost all of whom were white, might have created different lenses for understanding racism and oppression. While a few of the participants could comfortably discuss the issues presented during the workshop, most resisted the content and some even worked to sabotage the process. Their resistance differed significantly from the responses of earlier workshop participants from the same school district who eagerly explored their role in colluding with educational inequity. In reflecting on why this

session did not proceed as smoothly as the others, I realized that the white participants in the earlier sessions generally had a history of involvement in anti-racist and anti-oppressive education. The first workshops had been more successful because the facilitators shared a worldview with participants who had begun their journey toward social justice long before the event.

What shaped these teachers' predispositions toward social justice in education? That burning question led me back to the university and into a doctoral program that culminates with this dissertation. As a history teacher, I have come to believe that one's personal history is the critical factor in shaping one's attitude toward schooling. As Lortie (1975) explained, the formation of teacher identity differs from other professions like doctors or lawyers since all prospective teachers have had extensive experience within the institution in which they will work. He suggested that "socialization into teaching is largely *self-socialization*; one's personal predispositions are not only relevant but, in fact, stand at the core of becoming a teacher" (p. 79, italics in original). To understand the formation of teachers' professional identities we must explore their personal histories to unearth these personal predispositions.

### The Purpose of this Study

Because I am a history teacher, I have chosen to study the experiences of other social studies teachers who teach for social justice. Perhaps no other discipline in American schools is better equipped to address questions of social justice than the social studies. The goal of preparing students for active participation in a pluralistic, democratic and egalitarian society remains one of the most commonly stated purposes of public schools in general and social studies education in particular. In the first quarter of the

twentieth century, Dewey (1916) argued that the study of history provided “an organ for the analysis of the warp and woof of the present social fabric, of making known the forces which have woven the pattern” (p. 217). Parker (2003) built on Dewey’s view of the social studies as an instrument to understand and improve society. Social studies, he suggested, allows students to struggle with the central dilemma in a pluralistic democracy: “How can we live together justly, in ways that are mutually satisfying, and which leave our differences, both individual and group, intact and our multiple identities recognized” (p. 20).

Unfortunately, social studies classrooms are often places where students are expected to master a state sanctioned body of content knowledge that bears little relevance to the complex and controversial issues that young people confront in modern society. Loewen (2007) demonstrated that U.S. History textbooks present uncritical narratives that blandly recount a triumphant story of American success. Ross (2000) criticized the predominance of “Traditional Social Studies Instruction” for producing passivity among students and a spectator approach to knowing and citizenship. As a result of such traditional texts and pedagogy, social studies students in the United States have appropriated a master narrative of the American experience that over emphasizes the nation’s progress toward freedom and equality while ignoring the historic and contemporary challenges to obtaining such equity and opportunity (Wertsch, 1998; Wertsch & Polman, 2001). While social studies educators should continue to instruct students about our nation’s progress toward freedom and equality, it is equally important that their curricula present narratives that demonstrate how different social groups have struggled to gain access to the fruits of the nation’s success. Such counter-narratives

have the potential to complicate the dominant discourses embedded in popular history and promote greater reflection and activism among students (Zinn & Macedo, 2005).

In order to promote democracy, pluralism and equality in their practice, social studies teachers must be capable of leading their students in a critical examination of the social order while simultaneously helping them conceptualize ways to become engaged citizens working for social change. Lewis (2001) has argued that social studies teachers, most of whom come from white, middle-class communities, “should be aware of the ways in which issues of race, class, gender, ableism, and sexual orientation intersect and operate not only within classrooms, but also within the policies and practices of the school systems in which they work” (p. 189). However, as Matthews and Dillworth (2008) demonstrated, preservice social studies teachers often lack the disposition to reflect on their own identity and they have limited capacity to implement a critical approach in the classroom. Epstein (2009) explained that few teachers receive explicit instruction about how to handle controversial issues such as race in the classroom nor are they required to critically reflect on the influence of power and privilege in shaping their own identities and perspectives. Social studies teachers must develop both expertise and confidence about issues of social justice if social studies education hopes to foster a “pluralist, equitable democratic citizenship” (Bickmore, 2008, p. 165).

Given the current state of the field, it is vital that we consider what methods might prove efficacious in promoting a disposition toward social justice among social studies teachers who are not inclined toward critical, self-reflection. To help solve this dilemma, I seek to answer the following research questions in this dissertation:

- ♦ What experiences lead secondary social studies teachers to become passionate and committed to teaching toward social justice?
- ♦ How do these teachers conceptualize and practice teaching toward social justice in the social studies?

To answer these questions, I examined the lives and experiences of secondary social studies teachers who teach toward social justice. By using a life history approach (Casey, 1995; Coles & Knowles, 2001; Goodson, 1992; Goodson & Sikes, 2001) informed by a sociocultural approach (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998; Wertsch, 1991, 1998; Wortham 2006), I hope to identify common social, cultural and historical experiences that contribute to the development of a commitment to teach toward social justice.

### Defining Social Justice

The concept of social justice has gained increased popularity in recent years, both in the field of education and society at large. In popular discourse, the term has become so ubiquitous that both pro-life and pro-choice advocates have employed it to support their positions on abortion (Archdiocese of Santa Fe, 2007; Choice USA, n.d.). The proliferation of the term, however, has not provided clarity about its meaning. Despite increased attention, social justice in education remains an ambiguous, under-theorized and often contested concept (Gerwitz, 1998, North, 2008).

While the indefinite nature of social justice poses an interesting challenge to those attempting to establish a theoretical framework to study it, the concept's ambiguity provides practical opportunities as well. As Gerwitz and Cribb (2002) suggested, plural conceptions of social justice should be welcomed because they enlarge the agenda for

social justice action. Dialogue about multiple perspectives affirms the belief that social justice education is not just a goal, but also a process that is both democratic and inclusive (Bell, 2007). In inclusive, democratic processes, differences are not only welcomed, they are necessary. Embracing different perspectives allows for a dynamic, dialogical understanding of social justice that will help students develop new, deeper understanding of human experience (North, 2006).

Although the concept has plural meanings, I do not want to suggest that social justice is a completely relativistic field where “anything goes.” To operationalize the construct it is important to review commonalities that exist in the literature. First, social justice advocates generally maintain a critical stance toward power and privilege embedded in social institutions. Influenced by critical theory and postmodernism, social justice advocates seek to expose and interrogate hegemonic discourses that support oppression (Apple, 1995; Bell, 2007; Foucault, 1977; Freire, 1970; Marshall & Olivia, 2006). To authentically question this hegemony, social justice advocates must also possess the ability to critically reflect on their own identity and their relationship to power and privilege (Epstein, 2009; Howard, 1999; Bell, 2007).

Linked to this critical approach is a demand for greater equity. According to Bell (2007), “the goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs” (p. 1). Equity includes both a redistribution of resources as well as cultural recognition (North, 2006). To achieve equity in an oppressive world, social justice also stresses the capacity of individuals and groups to act as change agents who can transform society (Banks, 1996, Bell, 2007; Freire, 1970; Marshall & Olivia, 2006). Such transformation occurs at both the personal and the

systemic levels (North, 2006), and change comes about through a combination of reflection and action that Freire (1970) labels “praxis.”

Finally, social justice requires an open, inclusive and democratic process. As such, the experiences and opinions of diverse individuals and groups are brought together in a collaborative process where both privileged and oppressed groups discover their capacity to work collectively for change (Bell, 2007). This emphasis on including diverse experiences served as a guiding principle during my exploration of this topic. Teachers who participated in this study had varied ideas about the pursuit of social justice in social studies education. While the definition of social justice described above was used to frame my research, I did not impose my own views about social justice education as a standard to which the participants must agree.

### A Sociocultural Approach to Identity

Throughout this study, I employ a sociocultural perspective when discussing identity. Instead of viewing identity as fixed and stable, sociocultural scholars contend that identities are dialogically negotiated over time within specific cultural contexts (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998; Holland & Lave, 2001; Polman, 2006, Wortham, 2006). Along these “trajectories of identification” (Wortham, 2006), individuals both position themselves and are positioned by others within the context of broad sociohistorical patterns, local models of identity, and specific events. For instance, Wortham (2006) described a process whereby black males in a particular classroom were identified as unpromising students through a combination of widely circulating stereotypes, localized adaptations of those stereotypes, and specific classroom interactions that occurred over the course of a year. For many of the young men their

identities as unpromising students “thickened” as localized adaptations of widely circulating models were applied during specific classroom events. However, not all of the young men in the class accepted this positioning. One student resisted the local category of unpromising boy and negotiated his identity as a promising student without surrendering his identification with other black males in the classroom. Thus, while a sociocultural approach acknowledges the power of social and cultural forces to shape identity, it is not overly deterministic. As seen in the example above, individuals possess varying degrees of agency, and they can draw upon a variety of cultural resources as they negotiate identity within their specific cultural worlds (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998).

Britzman (2003) employed a sociocultural framework in her study of the identity development of student teachers. She demonstrated that a teacher’s professional identity is dialogically negotiated, particularly when novice teachers match their life experiences with the demands and expectations of classroom teaching. As she observed:

With this dialogical understanding, teaching can be reconceptualized as a struggle for voice and discursive practices amid a cacophony of past and present voices, lived experiences, and available practices. The tensions among what has preceded, what is confronted, and what one desires shape the contradictory realities of learning to teach (p. 31).

Britzman interpreted the life histories and personal experiences of two student teachers in an ethnographic study that detailed the development of their professional identities from a sociocultural perspective. Her study points to the potential for combining a sociocultural approach and life history methods to describe the

formation of teacher identity. Like Britzman, I employ a sociocultural perspective to interpret the participants' life histories. Exploring and comparing each participant's "history-in-person" (Holland & Lave, 2001) provides insight as to how a professional identity that emphasizes social justice forms over a lifetime of experience.

### Significance of Study

Social studies education represents a fertile field for promoting social justice. Because social education is tied to the core mission of public schools, preparing citizens to deliberate about the public good, social studies teachers who teach toward social justice can help prepare students for active participation in a pluralistic, democratic and egalitarian society (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Unfortunately, many social studies teachers are either unwilling or unprepared to teach in such a fashion. By studying the life histories of social studies teachers who teach toward social justice, I hope to describe the experiences that led them to form such an identity. If we can better understand what shaped their interest in social justice, perhaps we can learn how to foster experiences in communities, schools, and universities that promote a greater commitment to achieving the "full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (Bell, 2007, p. 1). It is important to recognize the basic tension that exists between Lortie's (1975) and Britzman's (2003) observations that teacher socialization is largely self-socialization and my desire to identify experiences that might promote a greater commitment to social justice among social studies teachers. Also, any knowledge claims made by this qualitative study with a relatively small sample cannot be generalized to the entire field of social studies education. However, insights gained from this study might be applied in different contexts to improve teacher education programs,

professional development offerings, or hiring practices at institutions that seek to promote equity and opportunity for all.

### Delimitations

Participants for this study were recruited from school districts within a major, Midwestern city. While such an approach provided a regional rather than a national perspective, limitations of both time and resources necessitate a geographically focused study. In addition, the study will only address the experiences of secondary social studies teachers (middle and high school). Such a concentration does not intend to deny the significant contributions of elementary teachers who promote social justice education within the social studies (as well as the other disciplines they teach). However, because most secondary teachers only teach one discipline it will be easier to clarify the role of social justice within social studies education. Finally, because a range of individuals including social studies supervisors, university faculty, administrators, and other teachers nominated participants, this study includes a relatively diverse sample of teachers. While these participants agreed with the dissertation's definition of social justice (see above), there remained significant variation among the practices and experiences of those who were identified as "teachers who teach toward social justice." However, as Gee (2001) suggested, one aspect of identity is "discursive identity." Thus, if others have perceived someone to be a "social justice teacher," at some level they possess that identity whether it has been achieved or ascribed.

### Language and Terminology

Just as it is difficult to define the term social justice, those who teach toward social justice often find it difficult to agree on precise language and terminology to

describe the experiences and phenomena they seek to confront. The fluid and contested nature of social relationships in the United States and the world produces considerable variation in how words are used to define those experiences. For instance, Gates (1994) described how his personal statement for his Yale application addressed the different ways people of African descent had identified themselves in the United States. He wrote, “My grandfather was colored, my father was Negro, and I am black” (p. 201). The changing nature of such language reveals the difficulty we have naming experiences and social relationships that are contested. As Volosinov (1973) observed, “language presents the picture of a ceaseless flow of becoming” (p. 66), and the words used by social justice advocates are constantly under revision. Given the variability of language it is vital that, at the onset of this dissertation, I clarify and define the language and terminology I have chosen to use.

To describe the injustice that exists in the United States (and in the world as well), I use the term *oppression*. Oppression refers to the pervasive and systematic inequality that is historically constructed, perpetuated by leading cultural institutions, and internalized by members of society. Oppression is a complex and interrelated system that distributes disproportionate power, status and opportunity to some social groups (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2007). I use the term *privileged* to describe those social groups who receive greater access to power and opportunity within this system, and *targeted* to refer to those who are marginalized. Recognizing that individuals possess multiple identities, Adams, Bell and Griffin (2007) described a matrix of oppression where a person may be a member of some privileged social groups while also targeted as a result of other social identities. For instance, a gay, black, middle-class male will experience privilege as a

result of his sex and class while simultaneously facing targeting because of his race and sexual orientation. The constant exposure to oppression in society leads people to internalize (Vygotsky, 1986) these ideas to various degrees. I will use the terms *internalized superiority* and *internalized oppression* to describe how individuals have come to believe many of the messages generated by an inequitable social system.

Contemporary American society includes a wide array of social groups dividing people by categories such as class, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability and religion (just to name a few). While physical and biological differences may account for some variation among people, prevailing ideas about group identity are socially constructed and developed over time. For instance, anthropologists have demonstrated that there is only 6% genetic difference between “so called racial groups” and that, biologically speaking, there is only one human race (American Anthropological Association, 1998). Modern notions of race emerged during the period of European colonization, ascribing superiority and greater power to lighter skinned people who became labeled as “White” while subjecting darker skinned people from Africa, Asia and the Americas to lower status (Allen, 1997; Frederickson, 1981). However, this artificial construction has changed over time. In the United States ethnic groups such as the Irish, Jews, and various Eastern or Southern European people were initially denied the identity of “White” but, due to their own actions and changing social circumstances, they eventually were included as members of the privileged racial group (Brodkin, 2005; Jacobson, 1998; Roediger, 1991).

Given that identity is socially constructed, words used to label various social groups should reflect the preferences of members of those social groups, particularly

those who have been targeted and labeled by others for much of their history. Throughout this dissertation I have attempted to use language that honors the desires of those social groups. For instance, I use the term *sexual orientation* instead of sexual preference because it more accurately represents the reality that who one falls in love with (whether of the same sex, a different sex, or both sexes) is not a choice or preference that can be turned on and off. Because the participants in this study were intentionally selected to provide balance by race and sex (see Chapter 3), the following two paragraphs discuss the language that I use to describe individuals in these two identity categories.

While there is no absolute consensus on what words to use to describe “racial” difference, I employ the commonly used *black* to refer to people of African descent and *white* to refer to people of European descent, capitalizing both words when used as proper nouns. However, I use the terms *Asian* and *Native American* (or *American Indian*) instead of “yellow” and “red” because colors are generally not used by those groups as self-identifiers. I also use the familiar label of *Latino/Latina* to refer to people of South American descent, even though the term ignores the complex identity that includes both Native American and African heritages.

I use *male* and *female* to describe differences by sex. I employ these words, associated with biological sex, in recognition that the terms “man” and “woman” denote specific, gendered norms of behavior that are resisted by people who identify as transgender. Transgender serves as an umbrella term for a number of identities such as transsexual or gender non-conforming where a person’s gender expression does not conform to the expectations linked to biological sex (Catalano, McCarthy & Shlasko, 2007). While biological sex is not a precise binary division (for instance, intersex

individuals possess bodies that are not clearly male or female), it provides words that can more accurately describe sexism, a system that affords males greater access to power and influence in society (Botkin, Jones, & Kachwaha, 2007). However, I recognize that my decision to use *male* and *female* will not completely clarify ambiguities created by social norms that often conflate sex and gender.

### The Structure of this Dissertation

Following this introduction, chapter 2 reviews scholarly literature pertinent to this study. Chapter 3 describes the qualitative methods employed in the study. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present my narrative analysis of the life history interviews, specifically responding to the first research question by exploring the factors that contribute to the development of a social justice identity. To respond to the second research question, chapter 7 discusses my content analysis of a second interview focused on the participants' social justice teaching practices. Chapter 8 concludes the dissertation with a review of my interpretations, recommendations for future practice, a discussion of the study's limitations, and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature review that follows explores social justice's connection to social studies education, identifies various tools and approaches that social studies teachers can use to challenge hegemony, and describes how a sociocultural framework provides a unique lens for analyzing the development of social studies teachers who teach for social justice. The literature concludes with a brief discussion of how life history has been used to explore how teachers construct their identities and perspectives.

#### Social Justice and Social Studies

A strong tradition of social justice advocacy exists within social studies education in the United States. Reform minded educators have promoted revisionist narratives that questioned the role of power and privilege in society over the past century. However, these reformers have faced considerable opposition from conservatives who supported a more traditional narrative that uncritically celebrates progress and promotes patriotism. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, social studies educators have navigated between the twin poles of traditionalism and revisionism. During that time, those who used narratives that addressed issues of social justice were influenced by a series of social movements that raised questions about power, authority and citizenship in the nation.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a traditional approach to history and social studies education gained ascendancy with the 1892 publication of the Committee of Ten and the 1899 publication of the Committee of Seven. Both the former, a report commissioned by the National Education Association, and the later, a study conducted by the American

Historical Association, recommended courses of study that would both prepare students for college while also promoting the values of patriotism and citizenship. Little attention was given to historical or contemporary questions of economic or social conflict (Evans, 2004).

Despite the influence of these two reports, the spirit of reform embedded in the progressive movement of the early twentieth century inspired a new generation of educators to advocate for a more critical and issues-oriented approach to history and the social studies. The combination of widening economic disparity, religiously inspired reform, and the growth of the social sciences in universities produced a cohort of educators committed to a curriculum that addressed questions of social justice (Evans, 2004; Nash, Crabtree & Dunn, 2000). For instance, in his influential book, *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916) stated, “It is the aim of progressive education to take part in correcting unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetuate them” (pp. 119-120). Progressive historians, such as Charles Beard, interrogated America’s past to expose the economic interests that might have motivated the founding fathers (Hofstadter, 1968). To accommodate this new emphasis on the social sciences and a more critical pedagogy, NEA’s 1916 report of the Social Studies Committee recommended both historical study as well as a more issues oriented, social studies course such as Problems in Democracy (Evans, 2004). At the high school level, these intellectual developments found expression in David Muzzey’s influential textbook, *An American History*. While Muzzey colluded with some of the dominant racial and ethnic prejudices of his era, he nevertheless critiqued events such as the Mexican-American War as a tool to expand slavery and the industrialism of the Gilded Age as a producer of

poverty (Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 2000). By the 1920's, a resurgence of conservative politics produced a backlash against the progressive movement in education. In 1924, the New Jersey legislature introduced a bill to ban the "treasonous" texts of authors like Muzzey and Beard (Zimmerman, 2002).

An emphasis on social justice in social studies education reemerged in the early 1930's with the advent of the social reconstructionist movement. In the midst of the social and economic crisis of the Great Depression, these intellectual descendants of the progressive movement viewed public schools as the means to build a new social order (Counts, 1933). Based at Columbia University's Teachers' College, these reformers advocated for a collectivist and critical pedagogy that would transform the socially and economically failed policies of unrestrained capitalism (Evans, 2004). In social studies education, the values of social reconstructionism found expression in Harold Rugg's extremely popular textbook, *History of American Civilization, Economic and Social*. This text, published in 1930 and based on a series of pamphlets written in the late 1920's, challenged students to use history to explore questions of equity and justice. While the text did not dictate an ideologically pure counter-narrative, it did invite students to contemplate questions such as "Was it right for the more numerous Europeans to drive back the scattered tribes of Indians?" (Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 2000, p. 42). Like Rugg, Carter Woodson (1933/2000) sought to challenge the dominant narrative of American history during the 1930's. He criticized traditional histories that glorified the accomplishments of Whites while diminishing the achievements of Blacks. His influential book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, presented a scathing critique of Eurocentric traditions within American schools and social education.

Ultimately, troubling the traditional narrative of American progress created significant trouble for Rugg. The swell of patriotism that emerged in the wake of World War II led conservative groups such as the National Association of Manufacturers to launch a successful assault on his textbooks (Evans, 2004). With the emergence of the Cold War following World War II and the rise of consensus historians such as Louis Hartz, Daniel Boorstin, and Richard Hofstadter (Hofstadter, 1968), critical explorations of conflict in American history fell into disfavor. A nation engaged in an ideological struggle with international communism eschewed a pedagogy that might question the limits of capitalism and democracy.

By the 1960's, dramatic reform movements demanding civil, economic and gender equality reinvigorated proponents of social justice within the social studies. While Cold War tensions continued to shape educational programs that would keep American children competitive with Soviet children, the ideas of equity, justice, and inclusion found expression in several curricular developments of the time. First, the "New Social Studies" that emerged with Project Social Studies, based at Carnegie-Mellon University, proposed an inquiry approach that incorporated some of the reform impulses of the era. While Evans (2004) noted that much of the new social studies was influenced by traditional notions about history that dominated the Cold War era, leaders of the project could not help but be influenced by the social disruptions of the day. In an introduction to the concept of equality in one text, *The Shaping of the Western Society*, Good (1968) observed, "Almost everywhere in the modern world, mankind clamors for equality. In the southern United States and in the northern cities, Negroes and whites together demonstrate to win equal rights for Negroes" (p. 255). In *A New History of the*

*United States*, Fenton (1969) suggested that a celebration of the nation's history must be balanced by a critical examination of the past:

Many people in developing nations believe that the United States has turned its back on the great revolutionary tradition in which it was born. Unless he knows the long history of his nation, no one can hope to understand its place in the modern world (p. xiv).

Another innovation in the 1960's, the Harvard Project directed by Donald Oliver, sought to restore a critical, issues-centered pedagogy to social education. Students in this program were encouraged to examine controversial topics in contemporary society and defend a position on the issues (Evans, 2004). Finally, the emergence of cultural nationalism in the late sixties placed pressure on both universities and high schools to produce more inclusive, culturally relevant narratives and curricula. For instance, black high school students in cities such as Kalamazoo, Michigan, Plainfield, New Jersey, and Erie, Pennsylvania, staged protests and teach-ins to obtain texts and courses that addressed black history and culture (Zimmerman, 2002).

The pressures that promoted a renewed interest in social justice during the 1960's dissipated by the beginning of the 1980's. The revival of cultural and political conservatism marked by the election of Ronald Reagan signaled the resurgence of a traditional pedagogy that emphasized content mastery. The 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, called for greater standards and accountability within education and led to a return of more traditional instruction in history and the social studies (Evans, 2004). However, the centrifugal forces of the sixties were not completely reversed. The diversity of scholars who entered the academy in the 1960's and the growing interest in history from

the bottom up produced the “New Social History” that significantly changed the direction of the field. Ironically, the standards movement of the 1980’s facilitated the articulation of this new, diverse and inclusive view of history through the publication of the National History Standards in 1994. Directed by Gary Nash, one of the foremost scholars of the New Social History, these standards called for a significant revision of the traditional narrative to give greater voice to the experiences of women, people of color, and the poor (Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 2000). While the publication of these standards unleashed a new battle in the ongoing history wars, it was clear that questions of social justice, equity and inclusion were not going to be purged from social studies and history instruction (Evans, 2004; Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 2000; Zimmerman, 2002).

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, teachers who desire to produce a social justice narrative within social studies and history education can draw from this vast history as well as contemporary scholarship to shape their approach. Bickmore (2008) argued that social education is uniquely qualified to inform about issues of justice and equity. The discipline’s focus on social processes, institutional governance frameworks, and substantive equity enables social education to facilitate learning for social justice. However, there is little consensus on how to accomplish these ends. Some scholars, influenced by critical theory and the social reconstructionist tradition, support using highly critical counter-narratives to assault the traditional narrative of unfolding freedom (Giroux, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Ross, 2000; Zinn, 2003; Zinn & Macedo, 2005). In response to critics (Stanley, 2000; Ravitch, 1990) who question if this approach leads to indoctrination, Ross (2000) replied that maintaining neutrality also represents a form of indoctrination, in this case indoctrination for the status quo.

Other scholars have endorsed an approach that maintains balance, providing students with multiple perspectives to evaluate traditional narratives (Marri, 2005). Banks (1995a, 1996, 2002), a leader of the multicultural movement, generally agreed with the critical stance taken by scholars such as Giroux, Ladson-Billings, Ross, and Zinn, but he did not endorse exposing students only to counter-narratives. Similarly, Parker's (2003) concept of democratic citizenship education emphasized diversity, equity, fairness, and dialogue. He stated, "cultural pluralism and equality are best served by nurturing the kind of democratic political community that in turn protects and nurtures cultural pluralism and equality, which in turn protect and nurture a democratic political community" (p. xvii). Echoing Ross (2000), he rejected the arguments of traditionalists who suggest that social education should remain neutral because such neutrality benefits those who already hold power. However he also supported using multiple narratives and perspectives in the classroom. Like Parker and Banks, Barton & Levstik (2004) argued that history education should encourage students to become broadly humanistic, reasoned in their judgment, expansive in their view of humanity, and committed to deliberating for the common good.

#### Tools for Teaching Social Studies Toward Social Justice

Lewis (2001) claimed that social justice is a foundational issue in the social studies that "involves exploring the social construction of unequal hierarchies, which result in a social group's differential access to power and privilege" (p. 189). In the discussion below, I describe various scholarly traditions within education and social education that can serve as tools for social studies teachers who teach toward social justice.

### *Critical Pedagogy*

Critical pedagogy represents a broad field of scholarship that both critiques and seeks to change inequitable and oppressive practices within schools and educational institutions. Influenced by the Marxist and neo-Marxist philosophy developed by the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School (Ewert, 1991), critical pedagogues depict schools as sites where cultural and economic hegemony is both reproduced and contested. Freire (1970) explained that schools perpetuate social, economic and cultural inequality through their use of the banking concept of education where teachers “deposit” officially sanctioned information into essentially passive students. Based on his work with oppressed peasants in Brazil, he urged teachers to promote a critical dialogue led by the students themselves. He believed that such dialogue would promote praxis, or reflective action, that would ultimately allow the oppressed to liberate themselves.

Apple (1995) portrayed schools as one of the most important institutions used by the elite to maintain their economic and political power. He argued that schools both reproduce and produce “the norms, values, dispositions, and culture that contribute to the ideological hegemony of dominant groups” (pp. 38). However, he also saw schools as sites for possible change, and he encouraged teachers and educational leaders to challenge curriculum (both overt and hidden) and school management techniques that seek to promote efficiency while simultaneously diminishing the intellectual capacities of both students and teachers. Giroux (1998) also envisioned schools as contradictory sites where cultural hegemony is both reproduced and contested. Like Apple, he called on teachers to reclaim their identities as intellectual leaders by challenging the technocratic management techniques that threaten democratic and critical approaches to education.

To reclaim their identity as intellectual leaders, Kincheloe (1993) urged teachers to adopt the stance of a critical, postmodern educator. Such a teacher should be aware of the operation of power in schools and pursue a practice that is constructivist, inquiry-based, self-reflective, democratic, pluralistic, action-oriented and humane.

Several scholars have applied critical pedagogy to the social studies. Cherryholmes (1983) analyzed the dominant discourses present in various domains of social studies education such as textbooks and research journals. He concluded that the most powerful discourses in social education reflected the values of the political and economic elite. For instance, the necessity of marketing textbooks in traditionally conservative states resulted in the creations of texts that stressed political consensus and loyalty to the government. Loewen (2007) made a similar critique of U.S. history textbooks. Cherryholmes admitted that more critical discourses existed in the field, and he cited several articles in *Theory and Research in Social Education* as evidence of a more progressive conversation within social studies research. However, he characterized these critical discourses as less powerful than the more traditional approaches to scholarship and textbook production.

To counter the power of the dominant discourse in social studies, Ross (2000) urged teachers to resist traditional approaches to social studies instruction that stress neutrality. Such neutrality, he contended, supports the status quo and promotes a passive approach to citizenship among students. Likewise, Zinn and Macedo (2005) argued that traditional approaches to history education reproduce a narrative of American history that promotes the interests of the powerful while ignoring the experiences of marginalized groups such as the working class. While Zinn warned “replacing one indoctrination for

another is a danger," (p. 192), he suggested that a teacher can avoid such indoctrination by disclosing their opinion while simultaneously welcoming and valuing the diverse opinions of his or her students. Such an approach, he believed, could promote a critically reflective classroom community similar to the one envisioned by Freire (1970).

Manfra (2009) described how some social studies teachers embraced critical pedagogy through the use of critical teacher research within a Masters of Education program. Throughout this program, a cohort of fourteen social studies teachers were exposed to both critical pedagogy and critical race theory (discussed below) as possible frameworks for conducting teacher research. Four of these teachers utilized critical pedagogy or critical race theory in their culminating action research projects for the "Teacher as Researcher" course. Their action research projects reported success with students, and Manfra argued that graduate work focused on critical teacher research could promote a greater emphasis on social justice among social studies teachers.

### *Critical Race Theory*

Critical race theory (CRT), which reflects the critical pedagogy discussed above, explores and challenges how society has constructed and maintained a system of racial oppression in the United States. According to Delgado & Stefancic (2001) CRT emerged from scholar activists (who call themselves crits) in the legal community during the 1970's. Early theorists sought to provide a more energetic framework for dismantling institutional racism by challenging liberalism's rationalism, incrementalism, and colorblind assumptions. The movement that emerged subscribes to several basic tenets. Crits contend that race is socially constructed, that racism is normative in American society, and that racism provides material and psychological benefits to Whites. By

emphasizing a materialist perspective, they expose the concrete benefits that Whites have obtained from systematic racism. They also challenge racial essentialism, the belief that all people of color share the same beliefs and act in the same way. To counter such white-produced narratives, which dominate racial discourse, they advocate for the use of storytelling by people of color. Crits believe that people of color have unique “voice” or standing when they tell their stories, and that these stories can be used to challenge the dominant racial discourse.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) urged teachers to use CRT to promote racial equity in schools. Accepting the crits’ materialist perspective, they argued that education must be viewed as property. Because of systematic racism, schools are constructed to protect the rights of Whites to access and utilize that property. First, Whites maintain the right of disposition, allowing them to determine the norms and cultural practices to which everyone must conform. Whites also possess the right to use and enjoyment, and the authors contended that the curriculum provided to white children is more challenging, interesting and creative than the curriculum presented to children of color. Racial privilege also carries with it the right to property and reputation and status. For instance, programs associated with white students in suburban schools such as Advanced Placement are routinely awarded higher status than those associated with black or urban schools such as African American history. Finally, crits argued that Whites maintain the right to exclude Blacks from high quality education through practices such as tracking. In the face of such structural inequality, the authors concluded that superficial multicultural practices of recognition and celebration are inadequate to mitigate the racial

disparities that permeate schools. Like Lewis (2001), they called for a systematic examination of the role of power and privilege in society.

Critical race theorists have criticized social studies education for not fully challenging institutional racism in schools or society. Ladson-Billings (2003) argued that social studies curricula and professionals have silenced racial discourse. For instance, traditional U.S. history textbooks provide only episodic treatment of people of color, and they fail to provide an ongoing analysis of the role of racism and race in American history. Tyson (2003) suggested that democratic education in the social studies must move beyond teaching civic competency and create a model of citizenship education that challenges racism and racial injustice. Howard (2003) described the lack of critical dialogue on race in premier social studies journals, particularly *Theory and Research in Social Education*. He argued that true citizenship requires an understanding of the importance of race and its connection to power and authority. Barber (2003) related how scholars in the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for Social Studies have failed to confront societal racism in recent meetings. Gay (2003) criticized the textbooks used by social studies teacher education programs as lacking a discussion of race or racism. These critiques raised questions that social studies educators who teach for social justice must address if they are to challenge hierarchies of power and privilege. Stovall (2006) demonstrated the possibility of employing Critical Race Theory in a summer social studies class entitled “Race, Class, Media and Chicago.” Using CRT as a framework, he encouraged students to critique contemporary issues through an exploration of media including film, television, music, and journalism.

### *Multicultural Education*

Multicultural education also provides a framework that social studies teachers can use to teach for social justice. Although its critique of traditional curriculum and pedagogy tends to be less severe than the stance taken by critical race theorists (Barber, 2003), multicultural educators share many of CRT's epistemological assumptions. One of the multicultural education's leading scholars, James Banks (1996, 2002) mirrored CRT's criticism of liberalism, particularly liberalism's assertion that teachers and researchers should remain neutral, rational, and colorblind agents within the educational process. Banks challenged the notion that individuals can be completely neutral, and he suggested that a person's position in society shapes their perspective. Knowledge reflects the values and interests of the scholar who produces it, and mainstream academic knowledge reflects the interests of those who enjoy positions of power and privilege in society. To counter the hegemonic properties embedded in mainstream academic knowledge, Banks argued that educators should promote "transformative academic knowledge" which challenges students to consider the process of knowledge construction and to engage in an active and critical exploration of meaning.

Multicultural education has specific implications for social studies education. Banks (1995a) advised social studies teachers to challenge hegemonic discourses in their classrooms by explicitly discussing how power and position shape the construction of knowledge. Using feminists and black epistemologies, he demonstrated how a lesson on the Montgomery Bus Boycott can be revised to reveal the role played by female leaders in the black community. Banks (1995b) also discussed how oppressed groups, particularly Blacks and Jews, have used counter-narratives to challenge the racial

discourse produced by dominant social groups. Scholars like W.E.B. DuBois and Franz Boas modeled how contemporary teachers can use counter-narratives to challenge the racial discourses embedded in popular stories like Columbus' "discovery" of the new world or the saga of America's westward expansion.

Marri (2005) built upon Banks' notion of transformative academic knowledge, urging the use of multiple perspectives in what he labels "thorough disciplinary knowledge." Thorough disciplinary knowledge combines transformative narratives with traditional narratives. Such an approach, he argued, allows students to master what Delpit (1995) called the "codes of power" embedded in the traditional narrative while simultaneously learning how to critique and challenge those codes of power. Marri placed thorough disciplinary knowledge in a methodology called classroom-based multicultural democratic education (CMDE). CMDE combines thorough disciplinary knowledge with community building and critical pedagogy to produce a social studies classroom that is both democratic and questioning.

Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) presented an approach to multicultural education that intentionally blended critical pedagogy with pluralistic principles. They criticized the naïve egalitarianism of liberal multiculturalists who stress the essential sameness of all people, ignoring how race, class and gender produce asymmetries of power. However, they also critiqued left-essentialist approaches to multiculturalism, such as Afrocentrism or orthodox Marxism, which created a romanticized version of identity that ignored the complex sociohistorical contexts in which identity is formed. For them, critical multiculturalism represented an action-oriented approach that "is dedicated to the notion of egalitarianism and the elimination of human suffering" (p. 24). Such an

approach exposes how schools operate to privilege some groups while denying other groups social, economic or political power. In a similar fashion, Au (2007) championed an approach to multicultural education “that recognizes the need to fight against systematic racism, colonization, and cultural oppression that takes place through our schools” (p.3). While critical multiculturalism promotes an explicitly political and activist stance, it also reflects the transformative agenda espoused by both Banks and Marri.

### *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*

Related to both critical pedagogy and multicultural education, culturally relevant pedagogy promotes instructional practices that effectively teach oppressed social groups whose needs have been ignored by traditional teaching methods. Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995) advanced a framework for culturally relevant pedagogy that affirmed student identity, promoted academic success, and facilitated a critical stance toward inequity. Her ethnographic study of eight teachers who practice culturally relevant pedagogy, five who were black and three who were white, revealed several common traits. These teachers viewed themselves as members of a community where students could succeed, they established equitable and reciprocal student-teacher relationships, and they maintained a critical approach to the content they taught.

Gay (2000) defined an approach to education similar to Ladson-Billings that she labeled culturally responsive teaching. The primary intent of culturally responsive education is to improve the achievement of children of color in American schools. She explained that such an approach is necessary to address both issues of academic failure as well as the broader mission of schools to prepare students for participation in a pluralistic

democracy. Culturally responsive teaching has four components including care for children, culturally attuned communication, curriculum that reflects knowledge about different cultures, and culturally congruent pedagogical practices (such as cooperative learning). Gay noted that many schools have resisted such an approach because it challenges established relationships of power and privilege. She has called for both preservice and inservice training of teachers to provide the type of instruction that will promote the success of students of color.

*Democratic Citizenship Education.*

The preparation of students for democratic citizenship in a diverse society has remained a central mission of social education for over a century. As discussed earlier, Dewey (1916) viewed democratic education as more than instruction about the mechanism of government. He conceptualized democratic education as a means to prepare students to work collectively with others in society. Like many of the advocates of critical pedagogy, multiculturalism, and culturally-relevant teaching described above, he feared that inequitable educational practices could ultimately destroy democracy. He warned that “a society to which stratification into separate classes would be fatal, must see to it that intellectual opportunities are accessible to all on equitable and easy terms” (pp. 87-88).

Like Dewey, Parker (2003) championed an approach to social education that emphasized a pluralistic and collective vision of democratic citizenship. He identified two wings in citizenship education that have dominated debates over citizenship education. The traditional wing urged mastery of knowledge about democratic practices compared to the progressive wing that favored students experiencing democratic

practices first hand. While Parker sympathized with the progressive wing, he criticized both for ignoring or minimizing the importance of cultural diversity in citizenship education. Parker presented a vision of democratic citizenship that did not remain neutral on questions of justice, incorporated the practices of multicultural education, celebrated diversity, encouraged dialogue as a means to both the democratic and moral development, and shared the tools of power with historically marginalized groups. To promote the democratic dialogue that Parker urged, Hess (2009) encouraged social studies teachers to utilize discussions of controversial issues in their classrooms. She explained that well-structured discussions of sensitive topics can develop the dispositions their students need to participate fully in a pluralistic, democratic society.

### *Historical Thinking*

Scholars interested in historical thinking have applied cognitive psychology to gain a better understanding of how students think about and interpret historical documents and texts. Wineburg (2001) described historical thinking as an “unnatural act” because the mind, in its default setting, naturally responds to historical events from its present understandings. Such “presentism” confounds historical thinking by preventing students from interpreting past events within the context of the time they occurred. For instance, he demonstrated how novice historians often fail to develop sophisticated understandings about Lincoln’s racial ideas because they respond to Lincoln’s statements from their contemporary conceptualizations about race and society. While historical thinking primarily addresses issues of historical interpretation, it also can serve as a tool to promote social justice. Wineburg argued that historical thinking should

be cultivated because it provides students with the interpretive skills necessary to understand people and events that are different from their own experience.

Barton and Levstik (2004) described four different “stances” that teachers and students take when thinking historically. The identification stance allows students to identify with a larger group. The analytical stance requires students to make connections between past events and current problems. The moral response stance addresses equity and justice by remembering victims of past oppression. The exhibition stance encourages students to share their knowledge through various means. All of these stances have relevance to social justice themes. For instance, students from oppressed groups can use history to identify with others who were oppressed, analyze the historical roots of this oppression, commemorate the injustice their ancestors experienced, and share their understanding with others through multiple media.

Some scholars have examined how historical thinking can be used to promote social justice in social studies classrooms. Bolgatz (2007) discussed a fifth grade teacher who utilized historical thinking to develop a deeper understanding of race relations during the Revolutionary War. She detailed how the teacher encouraged students to read historical texts more closely (Wineburg, 2000) to identify, analyze, and morally respond (Barton & Levstik) to racial issues that emerged during the war. The teacher in the study also adopted an ideological stance that reflected some of the ideas of critical pedagogues. Unfortunately Bolgatz did not fully explore the tensions that developed as a result of combining these two traditions.

Other scholars have explored how teachers develop the capacity to promote historical thinking with their students. Westhoff and Polman (2007-2008) described an

afterschool learning activity where preservice teachers worked with youth in an urban setting to investigate continuities between the past and present within the community. Like Wineburg, Barton and Levstik, and Bolgatz, they linked historical thinking to issues of social justice, arguing that it “can play an important role in preparing citizens who are able to identify with, analyze, and respond morally to the past and the present” (p. 2). They found that teachers who possessed a pedagogical content knowledge that included an understanding of the subject matter, the methods of inquiry within the discipline of history, and a general knowledge about teaching were the best equipped to encourage historical thinking with the students. Therefore, while historical thinking can serve as a powerful tool for social justice practice, it requires considerable disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical skill to utilize this approach.

### *Historical Empathy and Care*

Davis (2001) has linked historical thinking to empathy, and he asserted that empathy allows students to understand more fully the various perspectives of historical actors within the context of the time those actors lived. However, research on historical empathy has raised some questions about the capacity of students to develop such a perspective when considering issues of equity and fairness in their own nation’s history. Levstik (2001) evaluated New Zealand’s attempt to address social justice by challenging students to consider multiple perspectives about contested issues in the nation’s past. She found that students often had difficulty accepting perspectives that questioned the morality of their own social group. However, New Zealand students demonstrated the ability to acknowledge alternative perspectives that existed in more distant, global history. She suggested that instruction that promotes empathy and social justice within

national curricula should proceed cautiously, possibly leveraging students' ability to understand a distant past to develop tools that can help them explore contentious issues in their own nation's history.

Despite Levstik's caution, Barton and Levstik (2004) argued that empathy remains an important component of history and citizenship education. They identify two approaches to incorporating empathy into history instruction. The first, empathy as perspective taking, is a cognitive method that requires students to think about the feelings or emotions that certain groups experienced in the past. The second, empathy as caring, envisions a more affective approach where students develop their own feelings about a past event, care about the people affected by it, and are moved to act in a particular way. Both methods are important tools that can develop students' capacities to consider and care about multiple perspectives as they work collaboratively to solve problems as citizens in diverse societies. Building upon Barton's and Levstik's work, Endacott (2010) demonstrated that affective approaches to empathy do promote deeper historical understanding when they are coupled with cognitive approaches such as perspective taking that require students to support their contentions with historical evidence.

As the previous scholars have suggested, care plays an important role in developing historical empathy. Noddings (2002) claimed that an ethic of care remains a critical component in social justice because "justice itself is dependent on caring-about, and caring-about is in turn dependent on caring-for" (p. 6). She explained that social studies education can provide a unique platform for promoting an ethic of care. In her critique of the superficial attempts to add women to history curricula (Noddings, 2001), she suggested that a unit on homemaking within a history class might encourage a greater

commitment to care and justice among students. Such a unit should both describe the nature of caregiving within homes as well as critically evaluating the exploitation of women that often accompanied such domestic arrangements. This approach, she contended, might better prepare both young men and women to act as caregivers in their own lives.

The various scholarly traditions described in the section above represent interpretive tools that teachers who teach social studies toward social justice might use in their practice. In the section that follows, I discuss how a sociocultural framework can be used to understand more deeply issues of social justice within social studies education.

### Using a Sociocultural Approach to Understand Socially Just Teaching

Sociocultural theory represents a broad field of inquiry that views human development as a product of social and cultural interactions. Drawing on the work of Vygotsky and Bakhtin, Wertsch (1991, 1998) explained that human action is mediated by cultural tools, particularly language and other semiotic devices, which are learned through those interactions. Unfortunately, as Ross (2000) observed, most social studies teachers have not appropriated the tools that would allow them to act and teach for social justice. For instance, James (2008) described how preservice elementary school teachers resisted critical and interpretative approaches in history education. This resistance limits the possibility of promoting social justice as a central aspect of social studies curriculum and pedagogy. As Bickmore (2008) suggested, “a key challenge in citizenship education for social justice is teacher expertise and confidence” (p. 156). To develop such expertise, teachers must become knowledgeable about social justice concepts in their discipline, and they must be aware of how their own identities influence their thoughts

and actions in regards to issues of social justice (Lewis, 2001). A sociocultural framework allows for a deeper understanding of how teachers construct professional identities that emphasize social justice.

#### *Similarities in Social Justice and Sociocultural Approaches*

Many of the central tenets of social justice are mirrored in sociocultural approaches. For instance, social justice advocates generally adopt a critical stance toward oppressive and hegemonic systems. According to Marshall and Olivia (2006), “delving deeply into social justice issues requires challenging the status quo, traditional patterns of privilege, and deep assumptions about what is real and good” (p. 8). Volosinov (1973), one of the members of the Bakhtin Circle and a leading contributor to sociocultural concepts, also questioned hegemonic power. He identified conflict about the meaning of words and signs as “an arena of class struggle” (p.23), criticizing those in power for attempting to impose a monological or unitary understanding on those words and signs.

In contrast to those in power maintaining the status quo through dominating, monological meanings, both social justice and sociocultural theories emphasize an open and dialogical process. Bell (2007) explained the “goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs” (p. 1). This mutuality reflects the sociocultural emphasis on dialogical utterances, which are two-way expressions that are “determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant.” (Volosinov, 1973, p.86, italics in original). North (2006) explicitly linked a sociocultural approach to the social justice project in education, suggesting that “dialogical understanding, when applied to critiques of education and social life more

generally, support a future- and process-oriented way of addressing current social arrangements...” (p. 526).

Additionally, the assumptions of social justice practitioners about identity development echo Vygotsky’s (1986) theories regarding concept acquisition and the internalization of knowledge. He asserted, “the true direction of the development of thinking is not from the individual to the social, but from the social to the individual” (p. 36). In a classic work used by many social justice advocates, Freire (1970) described how this process led poor peasants in Brazil to accept the unjust structures of their communities:

Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion that the oppressors hold of them.

So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness (p. 63)

Building on Freire’s ideas about internalization of identity, Bell (2007) cited several sociocultural theorists when she wrote, “as members of human communities, our identities are fundamentally constructed in relation to others and to the cultures in which we are embedded” (p. 9).

Finally, both social justice ideals and sociocultural approaches emphasize the ability of the individual to promote positive social change. In describing the goals of multicultural education, one component of social justice thought, Banks (1996) wrote:

An important goal of multicultural education is to help students acquire the knowledge and commitments needed to make reflective decisions and to take personal, social, and civic action to promote democracy and democratic living (p. 344).

Sociocultural approaches embrace a similar goal. Wertsch's (1991) synthesis of Vygotsky's and Bakhtin's ideas emphasized mediated action as a central aspect of a sociocultural framework. At the end of his study, he implied that understanding the psychological processes for such action has, as its end, a higher and more liberatory function: "This [understanding] in turn would allow us to free ourselves from undesirable patterns and create new patterns. There can be no higher goal for scholarship in the social sciences and humanities" (p 147). The essential elements of social justice ideals are both informed and supported by a sociocultural framework.

#### *A Sociocultural Approach to Social Studies Education*

Wertsch (1998) used a sociocultural framework to examine how American college students appropriated narratives about the nation's early history. He asked twenty-four students to write a short essay on the origins of the United States. Analyzing those essays he found that twenty-three of the participants organized their narrative around the "quest for freedom" theme. Several participants did not fully appropriate this narrative and many essays demonstrated a multivoicedness that revealed various levels of resistance to this theme. However, even those students who resisted the "quest for freedom" theme still utilized it to organize their narratives. Because historical narratives are tools that mediate action and the "quest for freedom" theme is not a politically neutral

stance, Wertsch suggested that its prevalence constrained the actions of those students who might seek to question or challenge it.

Barton and Levstik (2004) also applied a sociocultural perspective to analyze how both teachers and students use historical narratives to mediate action. They emphasized that history education's central purpose is to help students take action in the present, collaborating with others in a pluralistic democracy to promote the common good. As described earlier, they identified four different narrative stances employed in history education that mediate a variety of actions. All of these stances contain both affordances and constraints for the larger, democratic purpose of social studies instruction.

Another sociocultural framework applied by social studies researchers is the notion of “figured worlds.” Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) illustrated how human interactions occur in multiple figured worlds, and these cultural worlds shape identity. They described how those identities both facilitate and constrain individual agency, particularly regarding the capacity of a person to challenge privilege and power. Robinson (2007) utilized the concept of figured worlds to his analysis of a social studies teacher who used revisionist history in her classroom. He concluded that the teacher’s use of counter-narratives created a figured world that questioned power and privilege. Revisionist history served as a mediational tool that engaged urban students in the study of history. Polman (2006) also incorporated Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain’s (1998) ideas to describe how students either appropriated or did not appropriate historical learning in a project based, after-school history club in an urban community. He explained that one student’s historical learning advanced because of a connection that developed between his identity trajectory as a computer gamer and the activities of the

club. Another student's learning, however, did not advance because of the tension between his identity as a rap music fan and school norms. Polman and Miller (in press) conducted a similar investigation of a science apprenticeship program that provided opportunities for African American youth to develop new trajectories of identification. Employing the concept of prolepsis, where representations of the present are used as tools to negotiate a different future, they demonstrated how many of the participants used narratives about their experience in the program to envision a more positive life trajectory.

Epstein (2009) used a sociocultural lens to explore the intersection of racial identity, pedagogy, and historical interpretation in social studies classroom. She exposed how racial identity shapes the teaching practices of teachers, the historical interpretations of students, and the nature of community interpretations of historical events. She found that a significant racial divide exists in US history classrooms and communities. White teachers (no black teachers were studied) presented a generally positive and progressive view of American history and avoided controversial discussions of race. This approach aligned with the dominant narratives of the white students and parents within the school district. Conversely, black students and parents maintained a critical view of US history and tended to be skeptical of the traditional pedagogy presented in the school.

### *Sociocultural Approaches and Teacher Education*

Another area where sociocultural literature informs a study focused on the construction of social justice identity is in the field of teacher education. Several scholars have used a sociocultural framework to analyze the effectiveness of teacher education programs designed to promote social justice. McDonald (2005) applied a sociocultural

approach, with a particular emphasis on activity theory, to evaluate how well two different social justice education programs in California prepared teachers to teach for equity. She found that both programs demonstrated a sincere commitment to social justice education but the outcomes of the programs varied. While both were relatively successful in providing students with conceptual tools to address issues of diversity and equality, they were less successful in providing them with practical tools. The practical tools the students developed arose primarily from their clinical placements. Furthermore, the author found that the existence of a "Multicultural Foundations Course" in one of the programs better facilitated the acquisition of practical tools for addressing race and ethnicity compared to the other program that diffused social justice content across the entire teacher preparation curriculum.

Matusov and Smith (2005) applied Bakhtin's concepts of narrative to evaluate the perspectives of preservice teachers enrolled in a multicultural education course at the University of Delaware. Using data from their students' discussion board postings about a practicum at a local neighborhood center for Latino youth, the authors found that most preservice teachers developed narratives that objectified the children. Such a perspective prevented the development of an authentic dialogue and relationship between the student and the teacher. The authors argued that pre-service teachers needed to engage in authentic dialogues with their students. They suggested that pre-service teachers can learn to engage in this type of dialogue through the instructor's intervention, clinical experiences and personal activism.

Bakhtin's ideas influenced another study that explores how dialogue within a teacher education course can promote a greater disposition toward equity and social

justice. Herman-Wilmarth (2008), an out, lesbian, education professor in a southern college, discussed her efforts to build dialogic space with one of her students, a conservative, Christian woman. Although not explicitly written from a sociocultural perspective, she cited sociocultural theorists and discussed dialogic space from a vantage point that affirms Bakhtin's philosophy. She suggested that there are three core requirements to building dialogic space in a classroom. First, both parties must be willing to engage in dialogue. Next, both parties must share common texts and languages. Third, both parties need to understand the cultural and historical background of the other person. Hermann-Wilmarth explained that her efforts to create an open and dialogic space in her classroom modeled for her preservice teachers how they could act likewise in their own practice.

### Using Life History to Study Teacher Identity

Collecting focused life histories of social studies teachers who teach toward social justice provides data that can be analyzed utilizing the theoretical frameworks described above. Goodson (2006) noted that the popularity of life history in contemporary scholarship has made our time "an age of narrative" (p.7). He explained that modern life history research, which focuses on small-scale narratives of individuals, differs from the grand narratives of early ages. While he saw such life histories as useful sources of data, he urged researchers to place individual narratives within a collective and historical context.

Several studies have used such collective life history methods to explore teacher identity and perceptions about social justice. Jenne (1997) studied the life histories of former military personnel who entered teaching as a second career. He concluded that

their experiences in the military shaped a traditional approach to teaching the social studies. Johnson (2002) used a life history approach to understand how white teachers develop awareness of racial issues. She studied six teachers, all of whom were white females, who were considered by knowledgeable peers to be racially aware. Using semi-structured interviews combined with a classroom observation, she identified three experiences leading to racial awareness: cultural immersion, activism, and personal marginalization. Johnson (2007) applied a life history methodology to study preservice teacher conceptions about equity. She studied the life history of ten preservice teachers enrolled in a program that seeks to develop a commitment to social justice. Johnson utilized the life history of one of her participants to exemplify an “ethics of access” that shaped the aspiring teacher’s conception of social justice. This ethic included students’ access to both educational opportunities as well as access to relationships with people who are different from them. Johnson believed that such a stance, which is rooted in the participant’s personal history, presented a solid foundation for social justice teaching. However, she argued that the ethic of access needed to be extended into a more critical assessment of how social and cultural forces lead to disparate access.

### Gaps in Research

Mathews and Dilworth (2008) noted that most preservice social studies teachers remain resistant to addressing issues of power and privilege in their classrooms, even when their teacher education program was designed to address multicultural citizenship education. Similarly, Manfra (2009) observed that only four out of fourteen social studies teachers utilized critical pedagogy in their teacher research projects despite the infusion of critical pedagogy and critical race theory throughout a Masters in Education

program. In her suggestions for future research she wrote, “Their experiences call for a deeper investigation of the characteristics that made them unique among their cohort peers” (p. 183). While life history research can serve as a useful tool for exploring why those teachers developed “such characteristics,” it has yet to be used to examine the formation of social studies teachers’ commitment to teach toward social justice. Jenne’s (1997) analysis of teachers who served in the military revealed the possibility of using life history to examine how past experiences shape current perspectives, but the study focused on the development of traditional social studies instruction. Johnson’s (2002) life history exploration of racially sensitive white teachers provided interesting evidence about the formation of teachers’ social justice perspectives, but she did not address topics beyond racial awareness and she did not focus her study on social studies teachers. Likewise, Johnson’s (2007) study of pre-service elementary teachers gave insight to how one teacher developed a commitment to social justice, but it lacked the comparative qualities a larger study might allow. By studying the lives of several social studies teachers who teach toward social justice in their practice, I build on literatures addressing social justice, social studies education, and identity construction. I hope to address gaps in the research literature to advance our understanding of what experiences foster a disposition toward teaching for equity and justice among social studies teachers.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

In this chapter I discuss the methods I employed in conducting this qualitative study. I begin with a description of the research design, and then I address my role as researcher. I outline the process I used to identify participants for the study and explain how I collected data. The last portion of the chapter details my use of both narrative analysis and content analysis to develop my interpretations.

#### Research Design

I employed a life history design to explore the identity formation of social studies teachers who teach toward social justice. Life history research gathers participants' life stories and "draws on individuals' experiences to make broader contextual meaning" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 20). According to Goodson and Sikes (2001) the method, which originated with the Chicago School of the 1920's, provides qualitative researchers with tools to better understand the experiences of teachers in schools. It is particularly appropriate for research questions such as "why someone becomes a teacher, or how they cope with imposed change, or why they adopt a particular pedagogical style, or how being a teacher fits with other aspects of a person's life..." (p. 21).

Life history research is based on several epistemological assumptions that make it uniquely suited to a study of social studies teachers who teach for social justice. First, it asserts the centrality of narrative for understanding human experience. As Connally and Clandinin (1990) suggested, "The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead

storied lives” (p. 2). Such stories are particularly relevant when seeking to understand the formation of teacher identity. Lortie (1975), Britzman (2003) and Knowles (1992) argued that personal experiences of schooling are often more formative in shaping teacher attitudes than pre-service training programs. Thus, autobiographical narratives of teachers provides a greater understanding of the key experiences that led them to emphasize issues of social justice in their professional practice.

Life history also seeks to assert the importance of teachers’ voices within educational discourse. Narrative inquiry reemerged in the 1980’s and 1990’s in response to an increasingly conservative social and political environment that emphasized high stakes testing, accountability, and centralized control of curriculum (Casey, 1995). As Goodson (1992) observed, “The sponsoring of this kind of teacher’s voice is thus counter-cultural in that it works against the grain of power/knowledge as held and produced by politicians and administrators” (p. 11). The desire to refocus inquiry on the experiences of everyday people mirrors the stance taken by social justice advocates who seek to question hegemonic discourses of power and privilege in society (Bell, 2007; Freire, 1970).

In order to adequately represent teachers’ voices, life history research must occur in a collaborative manner. The researcher and participants enter into a partnership of shared inquiry that is built upon a mutually beneficial relationship marked by trust, care, sensitivity and respect (Cole & Knowles, 2001). Similar to the emphasis on mutuality found in social justice values (Bell, 2007), the process is equally important as the product in a life history project, and the researcher must work cooperatively with storytellers to ensure both. The collaborative nature of this method assumes and accounts for the

subjectivity of both the researcher and participants. It also acknowledges that the knowledge produced by such a dialogical relationship reflects an inter-subjective interpretation of events. Therefore, despite my best efforts to share the authentic voices of the teachers in this study, I must acknowledge the reality that my perspectives and values, essentially my voice, blends with the voices of the participants. This dialogical process reflects Bakhtin's observation that while I might, as a writer, try to create defined boundaries between my own words and the words of the participants, inevitably, my "expression penetrates through these boundaries and spreads to the other's speech, which is transmitted in ironic, indignant, sympathetic, or reverential tones..." (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 92-93). Such an epistemological and ontological stance locates life history within a postmodern approach to research and interpretation (Casey, 1995; Goodson 1992; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Tierny, 2003).

Finally, a life history approach fits naturally in a study of social studies teachers who teach for social justice. Wertsch (1998) explained that narrative serves as a cultural tool that mediates action. Social studies teachers who teach for social justice use this tool on a daily basis to examine questions of equity, diversity and democracy with their students (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Parker, 2003). This study utilized life history methods to better understand how these teachers' pasts shape such an approach to teaching about the past. In essence this project is a history of history teachers, exploring how their personal narratives shape the narratives they choose to present to their students.

### Researcher Role

The notion that the researcher serves as the primary instrument represents one of the most significant assumptions in qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

This maxim has particular salience in life history research where a researcher's own history comes into contact with the histories of the participants. As Cole and Knowles (2001) observed:

When we embark on a research journey we take a lot with us. And even if we think we can 'pack lightly' and leave a substantial part of ourselves behind at home or at the office—our biases, social location, hunches, and so on—we cannot. What we can do, however, is know the contents of the baggage we carry and how it is likely to accompany us on the research journey from the beginning to the end (p. 49).

In an effort to be as transparent as possible, I will "unpack my baggage" through a brief sketch of my background before proceeding further.

Like the participants in this study, I am a secondary social studies teacher who endeavors to teach toward social justice. As a white, middle-class, heterosexual male, my journey toward such a practice has been both circuitous and incomplete. The son of a nurse and an Episcopal priest, I grew up in a Midwestern household that valued service to others and social equality. As a child in the late 1960's and early 1970's, I remember discussing issues of racial, economic, and gender inequality within the context of the profound social changes of those years. However, I experienced all of these issues from a position of multiple privileges. For instance, on Sundays my parents provided a ride to church for a black family that lived close to us. Sitting in the back of our VW microbus, I received both an overt lesson about the importance of racial inclusion as well as a more covert lesson about the paternalistic assumptions that grow inevitably from white privilege and internalized racial superiority.

This tension between personal privilege and social injustice has continued to shape my academic and professional life. For instance, my undergraduate history thesis, which examined the racial policies of a liberal Episcopal bishop in Missouri, was facilitated by the privileged social identities that provided me with the resources to attend a small, liberal arts college. As a young teacher, the racial divide I experienced in my affluent, suburban high school led me to pursue professional activities such as serving on the multicultural committee, sponsoring a diversity club, and co-teaching an African American Studies course, all of which I hoped might narrow that divide. However, in all of those experiences I slowly discovered that my privileged identities often provided me with greater voice and influence than the women and the people of color with whom I collaborated. Furthermore, I had not even begun to examine the degree to which notions of internalized superiority led me to ignore, dismiss, or overlook the opinions of my colleagues. In fact, I did not start exploring these issues in a serious fashion until my teaching partner, a woman of color, challenged me to recognize and respond to both my privilege and internalized sense of superiority.

The epiphany that followed that conversation with my teaching partner opened a new trajectory in my journey toward a social justice practice. Shortly afterwards I attended a five-day, intensive, residential dismantling racism institute. My experiences there further challenged my assumptions about the nature of social justice work and my role within it. Since attending that institute almost a decade ago, I have become more seriously and consistently engaged in anti-oppression work with both youth and adults. As a teacher and a workshop facilitator I have engaged in an ongoing, recursive process of advocating for social justice while simultaneously wrestling with the embedded

assumptions and beliefs that limit my efficacy in such work. In fact, it was while co-facilitating a particularly unsuccessful anti-racism workshop that I began to wonder why some teachers possess a disposition to teach for social justice while others resist such a perspective. That question led me back to the academy and into a doctoral program that culminates in this life history project.

### Participants & Sampling

The thirteen participants for this study were recruited from the metropolitan region of a mid-sized, Midwestern city. All of the participants taught social studies at the secondary level (middle and high school). By concentrating on secondary teachers I did not intend to deny the significant contributions of elementary teachers who promote social justice education within the social studies (as well as the other disciplines they teach). However, because most secondary teachers only teach one discipline, I could clarify the role of social justice within social studies education. I also strived to obtain racial, gender and age diversity among the participants. Ultimately, three of the participants were black females, three were white females, three were black males, and four were white males. The age of the participants ranged from the early thirties to the mid sixties. The teachers also practiced in a variety of different schools including urban, inner-ring suburban, outer-ring suburban, and private schools.

Obtaining a sample of social studies teachers who teach toward social justice posed several challenges. As discussed earlier, there is considerable debate over the definition of social justice and there is no clear consensus on what it means to teach for social justice (Gerwitz, 1998, North, 2008). In order to address these challenges, I employed a combination of theoretical and snowball sampling strategies. According to

Patton (2002), theoretical sampling allows the researcher to select “people on the basis of their potential manifestation or representation of important theoretical constructs” (p. 238). Because the study seeks to examine the life experiences of social studies teachers who teach toward social justice, I identified participants who represented the construct of “social justice teacher.” Teachers who teach toward social justice demonstrated some or all of the following characteristics:

- ◆ They maintain a critical perspective toward the operation of power and privilege within institutions.
- ◆ They are self-reflective about their own identity and their relationship to power and privilege.
- ◆ They organize classroom experiences that encourage students to examine questions addressing social justice issues.
- ◆ They work within the school community to promote equity, inclusion and democratic practices.

When I made initial contact with potential participants, I presented them with this definition and allowed them to self-identify as a social studies teacher who teaches toward social justice (Appendix A). If they agreed that they manifested some or all of the characteristics described above, I encouraged them to take part in the study.

To identify teachers who represented the construct defined above, I employed a snowball sampling strategy. According to Patton (2002), snowball sampling begins by asking “well-situated people” (p. 237) to identify potential participants. I distributed the definition of a teacher who teaches toward social justice to principals, university faculty, curriculum coordinators and department chairs and asked them to recommend potential

participants. However, because my involvement in social justice work in the educational community has brought me into contact with a variety of social studies teachers who meet the criteria defined above, I also am a “well-situated person.” When I conceptualized this study, I made a list of several teachers who would be excellent candidates. Often, the recommendations I received from other well-situated people identified the teachers I had previously considered. Later in this chapter I will explain how I attempted to minimize the influence that my previous relationship might have on the collection of data. However, in the interest of transparency I will briefly describe each teacher who participated in the study and what, if any, prior relationship I had with them. I will also trace the recruitment of participants chronologically in an effort to reveal how I sought participants who were knowledgeable informants, could provide demographic diversity, and might serve as confirming or disconfirming cases (Patton, 2002) to test emergent patterns interpreted from the data. Table 3.1 below summarizes the participants included in the study and the order in which they were interviewed.

I began the sampling process in spring of 2009 when I conducted a pilot study. In the fall of 2009 I expanded my research beyond the initial pilot, and I continued the snowball sampling method until adequate saturation of data was achieved. Saturation occurs when data collection and analysis do not reveal significantly new findings but rather confirm interpretations previously reached from the data. Based on the research of Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), a sample of twelve participants generally provides adequate saturation of data. However, their study evaluated data from relatively

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Race Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Teaching Position</b>
1	Sandra	white female	Early 30's	Taught high school history in an affluent suburban district with a majority of white students but also considerable diversity
2	Allen	black male	Early 30's	Teacher/Administrator at a private high school with predominantly white student body from the entire metro area
3	John	white male	Early 30's	Teaches high school history in a suburban district with a predominantly white student body
4	David	white male	Mid 50's	Teaches high school history and sociology in an affluent suburban district with a majority of white students but also considerable diversity
5	Patricia	black female	Late 30's	Teaches high school history and government in a diverse suburb with a predominantly black school population
6	Karen	white female	Late 30's	Teaches high school history and government in a working class suburb with a predominantly black student body
7	Jeff	white male	Early 60's	Teaches high school history in a small, suburban district with a majority of white students but also considerable diversity
8	Goldie	black female	Mid 50's	Teaches middle school history in a suburb with a predominantly black student body
9	Craig	white male	Late 50's	Teaches high school history, psychology and government in a large urban district with a predominantly black student body
10	Adisa	black male	Early 30's	Teaches high school history in a suburb with a diverse, working class population
11	Dominic	black male	Early 30's	Teaches high school history in a suburban district with a predominantly black student body
12	Christine	black female	Mid 60's	Teaches high school history in an affluent suburban district with a majority of white students but also considerable diversity
13	Linda	white female	Early 50's	Teaches high school history in a suburban district with predominantly white student body but also black students who are bussed to the school

Table 3.1: Participant List

homogenous samples. Because my sample included racial, gender and age diversity, I had to contemplate the possibility that a more diverse sample of participants might not result in saturation as quickly. However, by the eleventh participant I achieved saturation for all of the twelve themes ultimately interpreted from the life history interviews. It is important to note, though, that a study with a larger sample or one conducted in a different place may have produced more or different themes. Therefore achieving saturation for this study does not mean that my research exposed all of the ways teachers might develop a commitment to teach toward social justice.

In the discussion that follows, I trace my sampling procedures for all thirteen participants. The first participant, Sandra, was a white female in her early thirties who taught in an affluent suburban school. She was the only participant in the study with whom I had worked as a teacher in the same building. From that shared experience I knew that she emphasized social justice in her practice and that she also sponsored a diversity related club. A colleague we worked with also recommended her as a participant in the study.

To begin to obtain racial and gender diversity I invited Allen, a black male, to be the second participant in the study. I knew Allen from a variety of contexts. He had been a student in an education course I co-taught, we both had served as facilitators for a youth leadership institute focused on dismantling multiple forms of oppression, and we had met several times in social settings. A university professor also recommended him as a participant. Although Allen had recently been promoted to Assistant Principal, he still taught one history class so he remained, in part, a social studies teacher who taught for social justice.

Because the first two participants in the pilot study had discussed their experiences as targets of oppression, I invited John, a white male, to be the third participant in the study. Like Allen, John had been a student in an education class I co-taught at a local university and a university professor recommended him.

Because John's narrative also discussed his experience as a target of oppression (in this case based on class) I asked David, another white male, to participate in the study in an effort to obtain data that disconfirmed one of the themes emerging from the data. Like Allen and John, a university professor recommended him. However, I also had met David on several different occasions. I taught two of his children, he participated in a professional development workshop that I helped facilitate, and we met previously to share curricular materials for a course he was developing.

Because I had not interviewed a woman of color, I invited Patricia to be the fifth and last participant in the pilot study. I had met Patricia when she participated in a week long, residential anti-oppression institute for educators that I co-directed in the summer of 2008. Her son also attended the school where I teach and he was my student during the 2009-2010 school year, the same period when I was concluding my dissertation research.

In the late summer of 2009, after I defended my dissertation proposal and obtained approval to expand the study from the university's Institutional Review Board, I continued the same sampling process. However, because three of the teachers in the pilot study were somewhat reluctant to claim the identity as a "Social Studies Teacher who Teach *for* Social Justice (the original title of this study), I changed the title of the study to "Social Studies Teachers who Teach *Toward* Social Justice." This title change was intended to capture the reality that while many of the participants did not articulate social

justice as a specific instructional stance before this study, their practice and their goals did seek to promote the values of equity and justice in classrooms and schools.

During the pilot study every teacher I contacted agreed to participate. This was not the case during the second phase of my research. Three teachers did not respond to my email request, three others could not participate because of scheduling conflicts, and one participant declined because she taught English and not social studies.

The sixth participant, Karen, was recommended to me by a teaching colleague. As a white female, she balanced the sample by sex. She was also the first participant in the study I had never met before. I asked her to be the first participant in the expanded study to check if my emerging interpretations had been shaped by my close connection to many of the participants in the pilot study.

A principal at a neighboring school district recommended Jeff, a white male, who became the seventh participant in the study. I had met Jeff previously at a regional conference of Gay-Straight Alliances and I was aware of his reputation through my sister who taught in the same school district. However, I had not had extended contact with him until we met for our first interview.

At this point, five of the seven participants were white and all of them were high school teachers. In addition, all but one of the teachers taught in relatively affluent suburbs. A professor at the university recommended Goldie, a black female who taught in an inner-ring suburb with a predominantly black population, during a party.

Another professor at the university recommended Craig, who became the ninth participant in the study. Craig, a white male, was a fellow doctoral student and we had

been in two classes together. He also was the first and only participant who taught in a large, urban school district.

At this point my sample was skewed toward white males. To balance the sample, I invited Adisa, Dominic and Christine to be the tenth, eleventh and twelfth participants. I had previously met Adisa, a black male, through a teaching colleague. A year earlier he had delivered a presentation on Hip Hop culture in my African Americans studies course. We had also communicated briefly about his desire to enter the teaching profession.

Of all the participants in the study, Dominic was probably the individual I knew the best. He was a former student in my high school class and we had remained in contact over the previous decade as he entered the teaching profession. While I worried that our previous connections might influence the data, I asked him to be the eleventh participant in the study. I was encouraged by the fact that he only referred to our past history once near the end of his second interview.

Christine, a black female and the twelfth participant, had been recommended to me by a number of individuals including the director of a local social education organization, a colleague, and a university professor. I had also met her previously when she made a presentation that addressed issues of internalized racism (although she did not use that term). Ironically, as the most recommended participant she was initially resistant to being identified as a teacher who teaches toward social justice.

At this point I had only interviewed two white females compared to three black females, three black males, and four white males. I asked Linda, a white female, to participate in the study to help balance the demographic composition of the sample. I initially met Linda when we were members of the same church. While her primary

teaching assignment was English, Linda also taught an art history class and she was certified to teach social studies.

My sampling strategy might raise questions regarding the accuracy of my recommendations or other people's recommendations about the social justice credentials of the participants. Furthermore, the initial hesitancy of a few of the participants might add to those concerns. However, Gee's (2001) concept of "discursive identity" suggests that identity is created, in part, by the discourse or dialogue of others. Discursive identity develops through a recursive process where one is both recognized as particular type of person by others while simultaneously acting in a way to produce such recognition. Nevertheless, it was important that participants acknowledged the identity ascribed to them by others. All of the participants agreed that they possessed at least one of the characteristics included in the description of a teacher who teaches toward social justice. Participants in the second half of the study also explained that they were more comfortable with the idea that they taught "toward" social justice as opposed to "for" social justice. Finally, once I began the interviewing process, all of the participants discussed how ideas of social justice, in one form or another, were significant in their life history and teaching practice. I must acknowledge that this study might have contributed to the discursive aspects of their identity since the teachers might have become more reflective about their social justice practice as a result of participating in this study. However, I do not believe this recursive process of identity development caused the participants to misrepresent their past experiences or current practices.

As mentioned earlier, life history research generally involves a collaborative relationship between the researcher and participant (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson &

Sikes, 2001). My invitational email to the participants explained the collaborative nature of life history research. Once a participant agreed to take part in the study, I worked to build a collaborative, positive and mutual relationship in several ways. First, I asked the participant to determine the time and location for all interviews. Before the first interview with each participant began, I reviewed the collaborative nature of life history research and emphasized that the participant would have the opportunity to read, review, and comment on all transcriptions, interpretations and representations of his or her stories. I offered to answer any questions the participant had about my own history, background, beliefs or assumptions. Only two participants asked for that information. I continued to nurture a collaborative relationship through all phases of the project by inviting comments on transcripts and interpretations, asking participants to select a pseudonym to identify themselves in the study, and remaining open to any questions they might have about the process.

#### Data Collection

I collected data in two stages using three different instruments. During the pilot study in the spring and summer of 2009 I used two different interviews to gather data from five participants. In the second phase of the study that began in the fall of 2009 and ended in early 2010, I added a third, focus group interview that included participants from both the pilot study and the second phase of research. The section below details my data collection procedures throughout the entire study.

The first interview focused on each participant's life history in relation to the development of his or her social justice identity. Life history research requires data collection strategies that privilege the voice of participant, and interview instruments

must be flexible enough to allow the participants involved to guide the direction of the life history interview (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). To achieve this goal, I employed the problem-centered interview (Witzel, 2000). The interview began with a pre-formulated, introductory question that was broadly constructed (Appendix D). This question, which asked participants to identify the key experiences that led them to become a teacher who teaches toward social justice, allowed them to respond any way they liked. The use of an open-ended question at the beginning of the interview facilitated the generation of data that reflected the emic (insider) perspective of the participant. By allowing the participant to choose the direction of the interview, this strategy also limited the influence that my prior knowledge about or relationship with the participant might have had on the production of data. The second part of the problem-centered interview included both ad-hoc questions that followed-up on data from the initial portion of the interview as well as specific explorations from a schedule of predetermined questions. This schedule of questions, which resembled a standard, semi-structured interview instrument, explored different periods of the participant's life. Such specific explorations provided a degree of standardization between interviews, allowing for greater comparison between the different participants' experiences.

Before conducting the first interview I also reviewed the informed consent form and both the participant and I signed two copies. I kept one copy for my records and the participant received the second copy. Because I received two different IRB approvals, one for the pilot study and one for the second phase of research, participants in the different phases of research received slightly different consent forms (Appendix B).

The second interview focused on the teachers' current social justice practice rather than their life history. However, between the two interviews I emailed each participant a PDF of the first interview transcript, and I invited them to make any corrections or additions at the beginning of the second interview. While three of the teachers made slight corrections on spelling, none of the participants requested substantive changes to the content of the interview transcript. All of them viewed the first interview transcript as an accurate account of their past. I employed a semi-structured interview instrument during the second interview (Appendix D). During this interview I asked participants about their definition of social justice, how they practiced social justice in the classroom, how they advocated for social justice in the school and community, and their challenges and successes while working for social justice.

In my initial communication, I asked each participant to select the location for each interview in an effort to maximize his or her comfort level. Most participants asked to meet in a public space such as a coffee shop or restaurant. Only four interviews took place in either the teacher's classroom or office. While public venues facilitated an open and frank discussion since the participants did not have to worry about colleagues interrupting or overhearing their comments, they did cause some difficulty during transcription because background noise occasionally made their statements inaudible. Furthermore, the two interviews that occurred in the teacher's workspace afforded me the opportunity to observe how they structured that space.

Prior to both interviews the participant and I spent a short amount of time talking without the recording device turned on. The purpose of these short conversations was to build the rapport and comfort necessary for a productive interview session. I also asked

the participant if I could take notes during the interview. All agreed, and I jotted down short notes about my observations during the interview on the schedule of interview questions. Immediately following the interview, I wrote brief field notes in a composition book that served as a research log. These field notes recorded any preliminary thoughts I had about the interview experience. Each entry was dated and I identified the participant by a number indicating the sequence in which he or she was interviewed. For instance, the first interviewee was identified as participant 1.

I recorded all interviews on an Olympus WS-321M digital voice recorder. On three occasions, my failure to depress the record button resulted in lost data. The first two mistakes occurred during the pilot study, and I caught the error after two or three minutes had transpired. In those cases, we restarted the interview and reviewed what had already been discussed. A more profound error occurred during the first interview with Linda, the last participant in the study. In that instance I failed to record the entire interview. Once I discovered my mistake (at the end of the interview unfortunately), we agreed to conduct the interview again, loosely following my field notes about the content she discussed. During the second interview, we reviewed much of the original content, however new data were introduced and some previous topics were not discussed.

After all of the interviews I loaded the digital file onto my Macintosh computer and converted the .WMA formatted recordings to .WAV format using the Switch Sound File Converter produced by NCH software. I then loaded the .WAV files into Express Scribe, a free digital transcription application developed by NCH Swift Sound. Using a VEC foot pedal connected to my computer by a USB cable, I played the recordings and transcribed each interview by typing both questions and responses in a Microsoft word

document. To standardize the textual representation of the interviews, I used transcription conventions modified from Atkinson and Heritage's (1999) description of Gail Jefferson's transcript notation (Appendix E). I made two passes through each interview. During the first pass I transcribed the interview as accurately as possible, noting all pauses and speech disfluencies. During the second pass I compared the transcription to the recording, making corrections when necessary. I stored all transcripts and audio files in a secure location on my computer. I stored printed copies of the transcripts in a locked file box. I also destroyed the audio files of the interview after the transcript was reviewed and approved by the participant.

In addition, I also asked participants to share documents that demonstrated episodes in their lives that helped shape their social justice perspectives or examples from their teaching practice that reflect their commitment to equity. Merriam (1998) suggested that documents provide a unique source of data because, unlike interviews, they are not created specifically to answer a researcher's question. Therefore documents are not altered by the presence of the investigator and they can provide a fresh perspective on the question at hand. Documents that demonstrate how the participants teach toward social justice might include course syllabi, lesson plans, or website postings. Other documents such as journal entries, letters, or online blogs may provide insight to moments in the participant's life history that contributed to their commitment to teach toward social justice. At the end of the first interview I asked the participants to bring any documents they would like to share to the second interview. I reminded them of that request in an email sent before the second interview. However, many of the participants were unsure about what type of document to share, and several forgot about my request. As a result,

only two participants provided me with documents. Copies of these documents were kept under lock and key.

Following a preliminary analysis of the data collected from individual interviews, I conducted two focus groups to test emerging interpretations. According to Patton (2002), focus groups can increase confidence in patterns that emerge from data. Focus groups operate better when they are comprised of a relatively homogenous population (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Sim, 1998), but because all of the participants shared the identity of a social studies teachers who teach toward social justice, I sought to create groups that varied by race, age and sex in order to promote interactions that exposed both the differences and similarities in the teachers' life histories across these various identities.

I invited all thirteen participants to attend one of two focus group sessions held at my house in late January and early February, 2010. Ten ultimately attended. The first focus group included six participants (Allen, Karen, Goldie, Craig, Dominic and Christine) and the second focus group included four participants (David, Patricia, Adisa, and Linda). Both groups were diverse by race, age and sex. While these gathering were smaller than typical focus groups, Kruger and Casey (2009) explained that smaller focus groups can allow for more in depth responses to the questions. My experience during the focus group interviews supported this observation as the participants tended to answer the questions in depth.

Before the sessions began, participants spent about twenty minutes socializing and eating light refreshments. After the participants developed a degree of comfort, we gathered in my living room for a one and a half hour session. In both sessions, one

participant arrived approximately ten minutes late and was introduced to the group. While the late entrances caused minor disruptions, they did not dramatically alter the flow of the conversations. Also, in the second interview one participant had to leave before the conclusion of the session. Again, this did not cause a significant disruption. Prior to the first session I prepared eight questions (Appendix D) that related to the themes identified from my preliminary analysis of the life history interviews. During the first session, participants responded at such length that I only was able to ask four of the questions (1, 2, 5 and 8) from the interview schedule. To make sure I obtained data for all of the questions on the schedule, I asked questions 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 during the second focus group session. I digitally audio recorded the focus group interviews using the procedures described above. In addition, I took a few observational notes during the interview. However, the attention required to moderate the group prevented me from making detailed notes. Immediately following the focus group I wrote more detailed notes in my research log. I transcribed the interviews using the procedures described above. I sent each participant a copy of the transcript for their review and all printed transcripts were kept under lock and key.

### Data Analysis

The varied forms of data produced by the different data collection methods necessitated that I use different methods to interpret the data. In general, the life history interviews and the focus group interviews produced narrative accounts of the past while the second interview produced more succinct responses to the questions. The following section describes how I eventually decided to employ narrative analysis to interpret the life history interviews and how I used inductive content analysis to interpret data from the

second interview. Because the focus groups produced data related to the themes identified from the life history interviews, I compared the narrative data from the focus groups to data produced by the life history interviews to confirm, modify, or disconfirm my initial interpretations.

#### *Analyzing the Life History Interviews*

In this section I describe the shift in my analytical approach to the data produced by the life history interviews (the first of the two series of interviews) as the study moved from the pilot to the final study. When I initially interpreted the data produced by three of the five participants in my pilot study, I followed the methods of grounded theory. As I moved deeper into my study and expanded it to thirteen participants, I found that narrative analysis generated more fruitful, and ultimately more compelling interpretations of my participants' life histories. I will begin by describing the analytical procedures I used in the pilot, and then detail why and how I subsequently turned to the methods of narrative analysis to approach my data, and what this shift entailed with respect to specific analytical procedures.

*Using Grounded Theory.* During the pilot study in the spring of 2009, I initially attempted to use grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to guide my analysis of the life history interviews. This method uses a process of constant comparison to develop categories through both open and axial coding. In the spring of 2009, I systematically applied open coding and microanalysis of the data from the first three participants of the pilot. Open coding is “the interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically. Its purpose is to give the analyst new insights by breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data”

(Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). I made constant comparisons to establish preliminary codes, first making marginal notes on the transcripts and copies of documents and then using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, to track the codes produced through this process. I also kept a record of my analytical decisions in an audit log.

I then read and reread the transcripts with the open codes in order to identify concepts. Strauss & Corbin (1998) defined a concept as “an abstract representation of an event, object, or action/interaction that a researcher identifies as being significant in the data” (p. 103). These concepts became the basis for my construction of categories and sub-categories. Corbin & Strauss (1990) defined categories as “higher in level and more abstract than the concepts they represent” (p. 7). Categories and sub-categories were produced through axial coding. According to Corbin & Strauss (1990), “in axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories, and the relationships tested against data” (p. 13). Continuing to use constant comparison, I established categories and sub-categories, defining the properties and dimensions of both in a separate codebook. These categories included identity, family, schooling, professional experience, friends, community involvement, media and place. Although I eventually decided not to use grounded theory, these codes did influence the development of the narrative themes I will discuss below.

*The Limitations of Grounded Theory.* While grounded theory proved useful in identifying and comparing aspects of the participants’ experiences, it also ignored the sequence, structure and form of the narratives the participants told. Life history interviews invariably produce data in narrative form (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Mishler, 1999; Riessman, 1993, 2008) and those forms reflect the self-interpretations or

meanings each participant makes about his or her life story (Ochs & Capps, 1996; Personal Narratives Group, 1989). Furthermore, narrative interviews are interactional events that occur in specific contexts where both the narrator and the interviewer seek to position themselves in relation to the other (Goffman, 1959; Wortham, 2000). Grounded theory does not easily account for the interaction of the narrator and interviewer nor does it explore the meanings a participant might give to a particular narrative segment. Thus I adopted a new approach, narrative analysis, to interpret the data produced by the life history interviews.

*Using Narrative Analysis.* Unlike grounded theory, narrative analysis does not fragment the text into extremely small units for the purpose of developing comparative codes and categories. Rather, the structure of the entire narrative is maintained and studied (Mishler, 1999; Riessman, 2003, 2008). As Riessman (2008) explained,

...the analyst is interested in how a speaker or writer assembles and sequences events and uses language and/or visual images to communicate meaning that is, make particular points to an audience. Narrative analysts interrogate intention and language--*how* and *why* incidents are storied, not simply the content to which language refers (p. 11)

However, narrative analysis remains an extremely diverse field with a variety of approaches. For instance, Riemann (2003) conducted a workshop with an international group of scholars who analyzed one autobiographical narrative of a Turkish woman named Hülya who immigrated to Germany in the late 1960's. Taking different analytical approaches to her life story, these scholars interpreted the same interview to explore a range of issues including language acquisition, agency and suffering in the migration

experience, individual identity changes influenced by migration, and how background constructions are used to shed light on mechanisms of suffering (Franceschini, 2003; Gültekin, Inowlocki,, & Lutz, 2003; Kazmierska, 2003; Schütze, 2003; Treichel, & Schwelling, 2003). Similarly, the scholars of the Personal Narratives Group (1989) shared a common interest in applying feminist theory to women's life stories, but the authors used a wide array of analytical techniques in their interpretations. Because life history research can produce such a diversity of interpretive methods, it is important that I clarify my approach to narrative analysis.

To interrogate the data produced by the life history interviews, I used both thematic and structural approaches to narrative analysis. Thematic analysis focuses on what participants say in their interviews (the "told") while structural analysis closely scrutinizes the form and structure of narrative segments to explain the meaning a participant gives their story (the "telling") (Reissman, 2008, p. 77). My approach adapted procedures used by Robichaux and Clark (2006) who combined thematic and structural analysis in their study of the decision making process that critical care nurses used during patients' end-of-life experiences. Beginning with thematic analysis, the authors described a variety of themes embedded in the nurses' narratives. They then retranscribed the narratives, reformatting the text into a series of clause or "idea units." They applied a structural framework to determine the narrative functions of those clauses. Moving back and forth between smaller segments of text and the larger narrative structure, they identified narrative plots that reflected the meaning of the narratives. At the last stage of analysis they produced a typology that described three reoccurring plots in the nurses' narratives.

*Thematic analysis.* I began my thematic analysis by re-reading each transcript and plotting the structure of the story by summarizing the substance of smaller narrative segments embedded within the larger life history. The individual narrative segments within the larger structure were isolated using Labov and Waletzky's (1967) definition of narrative as a sequence of clauses that share common temporal, referential and evaluative functions. These narratives generally (but not always) include six elements including an abstract that summarizes the content of the narrative; an orientation that sets the time and place of the event; complication which describes the unfolding of the action; evaluation where the speaker comments on the meaning of the action; resolution where the outcome of the plot is describe; and a coda where the story is formally ended. For instance, a speaker may begin one narrative segment with a discussion of a teacher who inspired them while in high school. During that segment the speaker may describe the setting of the school (orientation), explain how the teacher acted in class (complication), reflect on what they thought about the teacher (evaluation), and conclude by describing how the teacher ultimately resigned (resolution). At the end of the narrative, the speaker might transition to another narrative segment with a different reference point such as a girlfriend they dated while in high school.

At times, the boundaries between each narrative segment were not obvious. Storytellers do not always narrate a story in a linear fashion, and they will occasionally move back and forth in time or briefly change the referential or evaluative focus of the narrative. In general, I gave primacy to the referential aspect of the narrative segment. In those instances when the narrator made brief temporal, referential or evaluative asides, I did not separate those lines into a separate narrative segment. For instance, if the

participant was discussing her mother but made an aside about her father, I did not establish a separate narrative segment for the deviation from the main referential point of the story. Once I had established the boundaries of each segment, I typed a condensed plot summary (Appendix F) in a table format that included the topic of the narrative segments, the line numbers of that segment, and my questions that either preceded or followed the segment.

After I created these plot summaries for each life history, I compared and contrasted different cases to see if similar themes were shared across narratives. In this way I adapted Mishler's (1999) method of comparing and contrasting different moments in the life histories of the craftartists he studied. He explained that "the use of a comparative framework allows us to recognize the range and sources of variation in how identities are constructed; at the same time, similarities between individuals directed us to features of their shared sociocultural contexts" (p. 135). By comparing the plot developments of different participants, I was able to identify a total of ten common themes that influenced the formation of the participants' identity as social justice teachers.

I organized the themes into two major divisions: primary and secondary themes. Primary themes were defined as themes that were introduced by at least two participants in their response to my first, open-ended question and that were repeated with high frequency during the course of at least two life history narratives. The four primary themes include: stories of family/parents, stories of learning/schooling, stories of oppression and stories of spirituality. Secondary themes were defined as themes that were not introduced in at least two participant's opening responses or were not repeated

with high frequency during the course of the life history narratives. Because the average number of responses per theme was 2.96, I considered any number above 3 to represent high frequency. The six secondary themes include: stories of friends, stories of community, stories of teaching experience, stories of non-teaching work experience, stories of media, and stories of creative expression. The distinction between primary and secondary themes does not mean that one type of theme was more important or influential than another. Instead, the separation into primary and secondary themes recognizes the varied emphases that the participants themselves placed on those themes. To compare and contrast the themes, I color coded each participant's plot summary to indicate the theme or themes represented by the bounded segments within the entire narrative. I then tabulated the number of times each theme was discussed during the participant's life history interview (see Table 4.1, p. 81).

*Structural analysis.* While the participants may have discussed similar themes, the meanings they attributed to their experiences varied across cases. As mentioned earlier, personal narratives of past events are not simple retellings of the past. Ochs and Capps (1996) saw narratives as enactments of the current self, mediating how individuals feel about those past events and experiences. As they commented, "The narrated past matters because of its relation to the present and the future. Interlocutors tell personal narratives about the past primarily to understand and cope with their current concerns" (p. 25). To better understand the meanings participants gave to their stories, I employed a structural analysis of isolated narrative segments based on the work of Labov and Waletzky described above. Of the six elements they identified in their approach, they argue that evaluation represents the critical component of narrative because it reflects the

narrator's interpretation of the meaning or significance of the story. Therefore, much of my interpretation focused on the evaluative comments.

To select narrative segments for the structural analysis, I identified participants whose life histories included representative examples of a particular theme. After isolating specific segments that represented the theme to be analyzed, I retranscribed those sections placing one idea unit per line. I then coded each line using Labov and Waletzky's (1967) framework of abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution or coda (Appendix G). Paying particular attention to the evaluative clauses, I compared the narrative segments within each case and then across cases to develop interpretations about life experiences that influenced the formation of the participants' social justice identity.

*Narrative Analysis of Focus Group Interviews.* To check my interpretations of the individual life history interviews, I compared the narrative data produced by the two focus group interviews with data produced from the life history interviews. Sim (1998) suggested that focus group data can be used to examine theoretical generalizations produced from earlier research. To examine my initial generalizations, the questions were written to produce additional commentary on the primary and secondary themes identified from the life history narratives. In most cases the stories shared during the focus group interviews paralleled those told during the first interview, and sometimes the participants used the exact same utterances to tell their stories. However, the interaction among the participants and the opportunity to elaborate on their previous narrative produced some new data that either contradicted or complicated some of my initial analysis. Using a process of constant comparison, I identified passages in the focus

group interviews that either challenged or elaborated on those earlier interpretations. I then analyzed those narrative segments using the process described above, and I ultimately included those segments in the narrative analysis in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

#### *Content Analysis of the Interviews on Teacher Practice*

While narrative analysis ultimately proved fruitful in interpreting the life history narratives produced in the first interview and the data produced by the focus groups, the second interviews resulted in more succinct answers with fewer narrative segments. Therefore, I utilized inductive content analysis (Mayring, 2000) as well as elements of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to interpret the data about teaching practices shared in the second interview. Inductive content analysis seeks to create interpretative categories that emerge from the data through a recursive process of analysis. As Mayring explained:

The main idea of the procedure is, to formulate a criterion definition, derived from the theoretical background and research question, which determines the aspects of the textual material taken into account. Following this criterion the material is worked through and categories are tentative and step by step deduced. With a feedback loop those categories are revised, eventually reduced to main categories and checked in respect to their reliability (2000, paragraph 12).

Following this procedure, I began by establishing six analytical categories, what Mayring described as “criterion definitions,” derived from the second interview schedule. The second interview scheduled was produced to obtain data to answer the second research question in this study: How do these teachers conceptualize and practice teaching toward social justice in the social studies? The six initial criterion definitions

included: 1) definitions of social justice 2) social justice in the classroom 3) social justice in the school 4) social justice in the community 5) challenges working for social justice 6) successes working for social justice. These criterion definitions remained constant throughout the process of inductive content analysis and became the basis for the six categories established in the code- book (Appendix H).

I then analyzed the first four transcripts obtained during data collection (Sandra's, Allen's, John's and David's) in the order that I interviewed the participants. I decided to interpret the transcripts in chronological order so that I remained consistent with the theoretical sampling procedures described earlier. On each of the four transcripts I made marginal notes in pen to describe concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) and ideas that I interpreted in the data. Throughout my analysis of these four interviews, I made constant comparisons across the transcripts to refine and clarify the emerging concepts and ideas. When I completed each transcript, I made hand written notes of the emergent concepts in my audit log, organizing the concepts under the six initial categories described above. Once the four initial transcripts had been analyzed, I typed a preliminary list of concepts organized in a table with a separate cell for each analytical category. I identified concepts that were present in multiple interviews by placing an asterisk after the concept. Because of the frequency with which they appeared in the data, those asterisked concepts served as initial sub-categories.

Mayring suggested that revisions of initial categories should continue until between 10% and 50% of the material has been analyzed. Because I was working with a relatively small sample, I decided to use his upper limit before I established preliminary codes that would identify sub-categories for each of the six broader categories.

Therefore, I repeated the process described above for the next three interviews (Patricia, Karen, and Jeff). I then added any new concepts that I interpreted from these interviews to the typed table. That table ultimately included a total of 81 separate concepts.

I established the new sub-categories by subsuming similar concepts into broader, more abstract sub-categories. By combining similar concepts together, I ultimately identified 33 preliminary sub-categories. For instance, under the general category of “social justice in schools” I combined the concepts “challenge other teachers-speak up,” “advocate for students,” “address structural inequities (class),” “navigate political structures,” “take leadership,” “make climate safe for students,” “avoid leadership,” “political organizing with other teachers,” and “challenge tracking” to produce one sub-category titled “school leadership and advocacy.” Each sub-category was identified as a separate code in a code book (Appendix H) that described the sub-category’s properties and an example for each code was provided. For instance, the code “school leadership and advocacy” had the property of discussing the participant’s leadership for social justice within the school.

I used hyperRESEARCH, a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software produced for Macintosh computers by ResearchWare, to manage my coding and analysis of the second interviews. I selected this software because other QDA software such as NVivo and ATLAS.ti do not have native programs for the Macintosh computer that I used to conduct this research and write this dissertation. While hyperRESEARCH afforded me the ability to work from my home, its limitations did require me to make some adaptations. The greatest limitation I faced was hyperRESEARCH’s inability to produce hierarchical coding schemes that are easily established in NVivo. Because my coding

scheme included two levels, I decided to represent this hierarchy by making the first word of the code represent the general category while the following words represented the sub-category. Therefore, the code “social justice critical” referred to the participants’ definition of social justice as critical pedagogy while the code “classroom critical inquiry” referred to the participant’s use of critical pedagogy in classroom activities. While this system allowed me to keep track of both levels of coding, it prevented me from producing a third level of coding which may have been helpful in further interpreting the data.

I then began to code each transcript using hyperRESEARCH. I decided to make my unit of analysis paragraphs because the participants’ explanations of their practice were too complex to be coded at the level of words or sentences. Each coded segment was generally comprised of one or more paragraphs. To remain consistent with the theoretical sampling process described earlier, I coded the transcripts in chronological order beginning with the first interview, Sandra’s, and ending with the last interview, Linda’s. Mayring’s (2000) approach to inductive qualitative analysis requires continuous revision of categories as new data is interpreted. Through a process of constant comparison, I added new sub-categories or re-named old sub-categories as necessitated by emergent data. By the end of the coding process, I expanded the original 33 codes to 40, and I renamed two codes to better reflect the nature of the data identified by that code. Each code represented an individual sub-category.

The final step in Mayring’s approach to qualitative content analysis requires the researcher to interpret the results produced through coding the data. Two features of hyperRESEARCH facilitated this process. I used the frequency report function to

identify the total number of times a code appeared in the data as well as the average number of times it was used (Appendix I). This function allowed me to assess quickly which codes were most commonly referred to by the participants. However, qualitative content analysis is more than just counting the frequency of responses. I used hyperRESEARCH's report function to examine and interpret the various beliefs and practices revealed by the participants in the data. This feature allowed me to isolate all of the responses for a particular code. Then, by clicking on a hyperlink I could open a window that revealed the text for each participant's response. Therefore, I could easily move between the responses of different participants to gain a deeper, richer understanding of the data. By moving back and forth between various responses for a particular code, I was able to constantly compare data between the participants as well as compare it to the literature discussed in Chapter 2. The results of this analysis are shared in Chapter 7.

I also used these two functions to analyze the similarities and differences between various subgroups of participants. To accomplish this comparison, I divided participants into two distinct subgroups for each of the following identities: race, sex, age and life experience. To isolate participants by race I divided the six black participants from the seven white participants. To isolate participants by sex I divided the six female participants from the seven male participants. To isolate participants by age, I divided the six participants over the age of 50 from the seven participants under the age of 50. Finally, I divided the participants based on their life experiences, specifically if their life histories emphasized resistance to injustice or alignment with social justice. I identified five participants as "resisters" (Sandra, Allen, Patricia, Karen and Craig) because their

life history narratives stressed resistance in at least two of the primary themes identified in the life history interviews. The other eight participants, or “aligners,” may have discussed resistance at some point but the majority of their life experiences aligned them along a trajectory of identification that stressed social justice (see Chapters 4-6 for a deeper discussion of alignment and resistance).

While I recognize that these binary divisions do not represent complete or accurate representations of all aspects of the participants’ identities, they did provide a lens to compare the experiences of various subgroups. I ran a frequency report for all of the cases selected for each subgroup, and by comparing the average number of times a code was mentioned within a subgroup I was able to explore some possible differences and similarities among different identity groups. I also used the report function to compare and analyze the data in the various participants’ responses. These interpretations are also shared in Chapter 7.

#### Ethics and Trustworthiness

To assure that the research process was carried out in an ethical manner, I first obtained permission to conduct the project from the University of Missouri-St. Louis’ Institutional Review Board. I obtained two separate IRB approvals, one for the pilot study in the March of 2009 and one for the larger study in September of 2009. Before beginning the first interview, the participant and the researcher read and discussed the informed consent form (Appendix B). This consent form explained that the participant’s identity would remain confidential and that he or she could withdraw from the study at any time. Further protections included storing digital recordings in secured files on my laptop, destroying all recordings once transcriptions were completed and checked by the

participant, and using pseudonyms in all transcriptions and written reports. Both the participant and I signed two copies of the consent form, and both parties kept a copy of the form. All printed materials were kept in a secured and locked file box in the researcher' home.

I employed several strategies to make my interpretations as trustworthy as possible. First, I have detailed my audit trail of my data collection and analytical procedures in this chapter. I also kept a research journal to record the decisions I made during both data collection and analysis. The collaboration of the participants at several stages of the study also served as a member-check, increasing the trustworthiness of the process. Participants were sent digital copies of all transcripts (both the one-on-one interviews and the focus group interviews) for their approval. None of the participants asked me to change the substance of their interviews although a few made small editorial corrections such as the spelling of a particular name. I also sent each participant my preliminary interpretations of their specific life history interview for their review and comment. Again, none of the participants asked me to clarify or adjust any of my interpretations.

As a final strategy to make my interpretations as trustworthy as possible, other researchers are invited to review the transcripts and data analysis records produced during this research process. If you would like to review these materials, please contact me through the University of Missouri—St. Louis, College of Education, Teaching and Learning Division. I have also included an example of my research products for one participant, Jeff, in Appendices E, F, and G to provide other researchers with an overview of my data collection and analysis procedures.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRIMARY THEMES IN LIFE HISTORY NARRATIVES

In telling their life stories, the teachers in this study engaged in acts of self-representation to explain why they developed a teaching practice focused on social justice. While it is not my intent to present these stories as objective accounts of the past, the narratives reveal the types of experiences that the participants themselves believed shaped a commitment to teach toward social justice. Through my analysis of the interviews below, I argue that the direction of the participants' life trajectories was set during their youth. Their responses to my first, open-ended question demonstrated how early experiences with family, schools, spirituality and oppression started them along a path that ended in their current commitment to teach toward social justice. Furthermore, these experiences required each participant to negotiate their current identity, either accepting or resisting attempts by others to position them along a particular pathway. In many cases, life experiences aligned them with social justice ideals. However, their social justice perspectives also were formed by resisting unjust or oppressive acts in their early life. As I will argue in chapter 8, the early emergence of a social justice trajectory and the twin experiences of alignment and resistance have significant implications on practices that might encourage a greater commitment to social justice among secondary social studies teachers.

In the following three chapters, I present the results of my narrative analysis of the life history interviews of the thirteen participants in this study. Chapter 4 below

Name	Primary Themes					Secondary Themes					
	Family	Learning School	Oppression	Spirituality	Friends	Community	Teach Exper.	Work, non-ed	Media/ Current	Creative Express.	Other
Sandra (white female)	3	2	13	2	5	0	4	0	0	0	1
Allen (black male)	2	10	4	0	4	1	3	0	1	0	0
John (white male)	6	4	13	1	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
David (white male)	3	10	9	0	0	1	5	3	0	0	0
Patricia (black female)	2	4	4	1	3	1	3	2	0	0	0
Karen (white female)	4	11	4	1	7	1	11	0	0	1	1
Jeff (white male)	13	8	2	1	0	2	5	4	3	0	0
Goldie (black female)	4	9	8	2	1	5	1	2	2	0	0
Craig (white male)	2	7	0	1	3	2	5	6	2	0	0
Adisa (black male)	6	7	1	1	1	1	4	3	0	2	0
Dominic (black male)	2	3	2	10	2	0	5	1	1	2	0
Christine (black female)	7	11	4	2	2	2	4	0	1	0	0
Linda (white female)	2	8	0	7	1	0	3	0	3	0	0

Table 4.1: Theme Frequency

describes and interprets the four primary themes I identified. Chapter 5 will describe and present the secondary themes. In chapter 6, I will consider the interactions between and among the primary and secondary themes by interpreting the narratives of two participants. Throughout these chapters I will also refer to data from the focus group sessions that confirmed, contradicted or expanded on data initially introduced in the life history interviews.

I interpreted all of the themes through a sociocultural and sociohistorical perspective (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Wortham, 2006). The participant's stories revealed how identities are negotiated through a dialogical process whereby individuals both position themselves and are positioned by others within the context of broad sociohistorical patterns, local models of identity, and specific historical events. By the end of the chapter 6, I will have analyzed the personal narratives of all thirteen participants, and I conclude with a summary of my overall interpretations. To provide an overview of the frequency with which each theme was addressed, Table 4.1 summarizes the number of times each participant emphasized a particular theme within the narrative segments identified in their life history interviews.

I have divided chapter 4 into four sections, each focusing on one of the following primary themes: stories of parents/families; stories of schooling/learning; stories of oppression and stories of spirituality. As described earlier, primary themes were defined as themes that were emphasized by at least two participants in their response to my first, open-ended question and that were repeated with high frequency during the course of at least two life history narratives. In most of these instances, I will discuss how the particular theme influenced the participant by positioning or aligning her along a path

toward social justice. For instance, a parent might align a child toward social justice by encouraging her to do volunteer work for a local charitable organization. However, a social justice identity can also develop when a participant resists attempts to position her in a particular way, such as a child opposing the values of an intolerant or closed-minded parent. Both alignment and resistance will be discussed for each theme.

To analyze each primary theme, I identified participants whose stories epitomized one of the four topics. I grouped storytellers who stressed a particular theme in their response to the first, open-ended question and who returned to that topic several times throughout the interview. For instance, to interpret stories of parents/families I present Jeff and Adisa's narratives. While their life histories include examples of many of the other themes, their emphasis on the influence of their parents allowed for a deeper analysis and comparison of how this particular experience shaped the identity of a teacher who teaches toward social justice. In order to provide the reader with more context about the participant's full life experiences, I begin each example with a brief summary of his or her life story. To represent their life trajectory, this summary is arranged chronologically and does not always follow the sequence by which the participant related their personal narrative. I will conclude the discussion of each primary theme with a short section that briefly analyzes the stories of other participant's whose experiences either contradict or complicate the interpretations of the archetypal examples.

In the chapter 4, 5 and 6, I share the participants' voices as accurately as possible. The direct quotes incorporated into this chapter include the pauses and disfluencies that are common in spoken language. Because the life history interviews produced over 300 pages of transcription, it was impossible to include everything that the participants said.

In all three chapters I edited out large portions of each narrative to highlight the primary themes. However, I maintained the sequence of each participant's story in chapters 4 and 6 by quoting narrative segments in the order in which they were presented. I must also acknowledge that while I have attempted to present the participants' voices as accurately as possible, my analysis of their stories and my choices regarding what segments to share inevitably populates their voice with my own subjective interpretations (Bakhtin, 1986).

To facilitate the structural analysis of narrative segments, quotes from the interview are presented as a series of idea units with one idea per line. This structure allowed me to apply Labov and Walenksy's (1967) framework for interpreting the function of each idea unit. I identify those functions by marking (A) for abstract, (O) for orientation, (C) for complication, (E) for evaluation, (R) for resolution, and (Co) for coda at the end of each clause. The line numbers at the end of each quotation reference the portion of the original transcript from which the segment was taken.

It is important to note that while I present one participant's story at a time in chapters 4 and 6, I assert that all of these life histories reveal similar experiences about teachers who teach for social justice. In their study of teacher professionalism, Goodson and Choi (2008) argued that multiple life histories allowed for interpretations about the inter-subjectivities that existed among a group of twelve teachers with different life trajectories. The interconnected nature of this research project became apparent to me in a series of two interviews that I conducted within a twenty-four hour period. During my first interview with Jeff, a white male in his early sixties, he explained how his father would discuss racial discrimination in housing as they drove to baseball games in a segregated portion of their town. The next afternoon Goldie, a black woman in her

fifties, described how she and other children would watch the traffic jams as white sports fans headed toward baseball games along the same road that Jeff drove with his father. I was struck by the fact that these two teachers, who had grown up in different circumstances and who had never met, possibly passed each other on game days in the early 1960's. Their stories unfolded within the shared context of time and place. Like Goldie and Jeff, most of the participants in this study grew up in Midwestern communities during the last half of the twentieth century. During both of the focus groups sessions, the teachers often remarked about their common experiences and perspectives. Thus, while I present their individual stories, I also make comparisons and contrasts about the experiences of participants.

#### Stories of Parents/Families

Stories about parents/families proved to be one of the most prevalent themes in the life history interviews. Ten of the thirteen participants shared that one or both of their parents encouraged the development of their views about social justice, and each of them discussed this influence in their response to the first, open-ended question at the beginning of the interview. However, two participants, Jeff and Adisa, began their narratives with stories about their parents and returned to that theme several times throughout their life history. In this section, I will use their stories to explore how parents often align their children along a social justice life trajectory. However, I will conclude the section with brief examples from three participants who developed a social justice perspective in opposition to the messages they received from their parents. These interpretations suggest that while parents who model equity and justice can be important in shaping a commitment to social justice, they are by no means a necessary precondition.

*Jeff's Story: Pride in Parents who Questioned the Status Quo*

*Summary of Jeff's Life Story.* At the time of the study, Jeff was a white male in his early sixties who taught in a small, suburban high school with a diverse student body. He grew up in a conservative suburban community outside of a Midwestern town. His parents, both of whom were members of a religious minority, modeled racially inclusive attitudes and his father served as the city attorney for a historically black municipality near his home. He recalled how his family faced discrimination both for their religious views and when his sister dated a black man. Although he attended a relatively conservative public school and a college, he found himself drawn to black culture and music during the 1960's, and he roomed with one of the few black students at his college. His interest in social justice issues increased when he entered law school in the early 1970's, and he was influenced both by the emerging feminism of the time and opposition to the Vietnam War. He practiced law with his father briefly after graduating, but eventually he became a property manager where he had first hand experience with the challenges of maintaining a stable, equitable, and racially integrated community. He also served as an alderman in the community where he lived. Ultimately, he decided to return to school and become certified to teach social studies in the early 1990's. He taught for over a decade in an affluent, suburban district and at the time of this study he taught in the school district where he was raised. In recent years he has participated in a professional development program focused on social justice and he has served as the president of the local teachers association.

*Jeff's Narrative of His Parents.* Jeff's story revealed a deep pride in his parents, and their influence on his social justice identity served as a central theme throughout his entire narrative. Despite the fact that his parents came from a conservative religious tradition and lived in a conservative, suburban community, they courageously questioned the social inequities around them. Jeff refers to them both in his response to my first, open-ended question of the interview.

Rob:

You've been identified as a social studies teacher who teaches for social justice. What experience or experiences do you think really helped shape and lead to you, lead you to adopt that kind of practice in your teaching?

Jeff:

When you first contacted me, (A)  
one of the first things I was thinking about (A)  
was my dad/, um, my hero. (A)  
And a great influence on my life, (A)  
my dad was very active in the local civil rights movement (O)  
Um, very much a thinker (O)  
and we would talk about a lot of social issues (C)  
as I was growing up, (O)  
my mom did too, (C)  
when she was back in college, (O)  
I know back in forties (O)  
she was making speeches about the, uh, the "negro problem" (C)  
as they often referred to it back then. (C)  
And, uh, shocking the Republicans up at (college name), so (C)  
my mom and dad really had a big influence on me (E)  
and, uh, and I think, I think that, uh (E)  
experiences that went through childhood (E)  
and through college, um, really did influence me in that sense (R)  
(Jeff, interview 1, 28-40)

Identifying his father as his hero, Jeff tells two other stories about him during his initial narrative segment. In the first story, he explained how his father discussed racial discrimination as they traveled to baseball games in a segregated portion of their city (Jeff, interview 1, 40-46). He also talked about his father's capacity for growth and his

eventual support for the gay rights movement despite some early reluctance (Jeff, interview 1, 75-92).

Responding to the stated importance of his father, I followed Jeff's opening comments with a question about his father's activism. He replied by telling me a variety of stories that demonstrated his father's commitment to civil rights. He began the first story with the evaluative comment, "Let me tell you, one of the// one of the things I'm most proud of, um" (Jeff, interview 1, 128-129). He then shared a story about how his father, a lawyer, became upset when a black attorney was denied entry into the local, segregated bar association. To protest the action and show solidarity with his black friends, his father joined the black bar association becoming the only white member of the group (Jeff, interview 1, 128-143). He ended his response to my question with another story outlining his father's actions as the mayor of their small, conservative suburb in the 1960's and 1970's.

Jeff:

He was mayor of (municipality) for thirteen years, (O)  
making sure that restaurants integrated, you know, (C)  
he'd get the clergy involved, (C)  
making sure that, uh, (C)  
we had black officers on the police force, things like that, so (C)  
he, he was very active in a, (C)  
in a sense of doing that day to day things (C)  
he was never arrested, (C)  
you know, at the, at the (name of local civil rights protest) (C)  
and uh I mean he knew// (name of local civil rights activist) (O)  
and some of those people in the movement, (O)  
and uh, and a good friend of (name of local civil rights activist), and people like  
that (O)  
they were the ones who had Jackie Robinson in their home (C)  
when he came to town because yeah, (C)

Rob:

When he played for the Dodgers?

Jeff:

Yeah, so uh, he, he was a, an activist in that sense. (R)

I'm very, very proud, um (E)

(Jeff, interview 1, 166-175)

Jeff ended his response to my second question by repeating the evaluative statement with which he began, proclaiming his pride in his father's actions.

Jeff's mother also played an important role in the formation of his social justice identity. In one story, he recalled how his mother subtly challenged his racial assumptions when his elementary school integrated:

In the school, I remember (A)  
when the first black kids came to elementary school (O)  
I uh, I remember I came home from school (C)  
and I told my mom (C)  
I was in the fourth grade, // (O)  
And my, I said to my mom, (C)  
mom, we have a, we have a negro boy in our class (C)  
and he's really nice (C)  
and my mom just looked at me (C)  
and said well, what do you expect? (R)  
So my mom was really on top of things too. (E)  
(Jeff, interview 1, 193-198)

Jeff shared his pride in his mother's commitment to racial equity later in the interview when I asked a follow-up question about her involvement with the civil rights movement. He described the speech she delivered to her conservative college community in the 1940's.

and my mom, I reread it again about a year ago (A)  
um she gave her senior speech in the chapel (A)  
they all gave senior speeches, (O)  
and it was about the negro problem (C)  
and being, trying to understand (C)  
you know why don't we treat them equal (C)  
you know, why don't we, (C)  
you know here's this daughter of conservative Republicans (O)  
you know, making these statements, you know. (R)

When I read it now, (E)  
it just makes me feel so proud. (E)  
(Jeff, interview 1, 539-544)

The evaluative comments at the end of this section repeated the feelings of pride that he had articulated earlier about his father. He followed this story with another one describing how his mother and father maintained their interest in social justice during retirement. They traveled to various points of interest in the civil rights movement such as the courthouse used in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Again, at the end of this section he concluded with an evaluative statement about his mother, “I’m, I’m really proud of her, I guess I learn more and more about her as the years go by” (Jeff, interview 1, 558-559).

Near the end of his narrative, Jeff reflected on how his parents challenged the conservatism of their faith community and their families by reading and thinking for themselves (Jeff, interview 1, 566-585). By modeling a commitment to both independent thought and racial justice, they laid a foundation for Jeff’s commitment to social justice. As he explained in his response to my final, open-ended question at the end of the interview, his parents “always telling me to think” (Jeff, interview 1, 598) led him to develop that commitment. His pride in their example resonated through his entire life history.

#### *Adisa’s Story: Carrying on the Vision of a Troubled Father*

*Summary of Adisa’s Life Story.* At the time of the study, Adisa was a black male in his early 30’s who taught in an inner ring suburb with a racially diverse, predominantly working class population. He began his narrative by discussing the influence his parents, both of whom embraced a black nationalist philosophy in the 1970’s. He grew up in a majority black community in a large Midwestern city, and he attended Afrocentric

schools as a young man as well as an orthodox Islamic mosque. His father, who had a profound influence on his life, became addicted to drugs in the early 1980's and after his parents divorced his mother moved to a middle class, predominantly black suburb outside of his home city. As a young man, Adisa was drawn to spoken word performances, largely to attract the interest of his father, and he continued to perform in college. An avid reader, he was both a successful student and athlete in high school. However, he was often unfairly targeted and harassed by the police and those experiences left a bitter taste in his mouth. Initially he attended a private, historically black college, but he ultimately decided to return home and attend a local university where he majored in Africana Studies. His academic interests led him to work in historical museums in several different cities. Feeling unfulfilled in museum education, he decided to transition into public education and has been teaching world history and African history for two years. He obtained his teaching certificate at a local university and although he enjoys both the community and the school district where he currently works, he still sometimes feels like an outsider when he challenges the status quo.

*Adisa's Narrative of His Parents.* Like Jeff, from the very start of his narrative, Adisa emphasized the role his parents played in shaping his identity. He began his story by describing how his parents infused a sense of racial pride from a very early age. In the first narrative segment, he oriented his life in the framework of their black nationalism:

my parents were, were black nationalists, um (O)  
and then they, they converted to Islam, (C)  
not the Nation of Islam but orthodox Islam, in the, in the early 80's (O)  
uh, gave their children African names, Adisa from West Africa (C)  
changed their last name from Johnson (C)  
which is on my birth certificate and my social security card original one (O)  
and legally changed their name to Hassan (C)  
um, I remember when I was a kid (O)

Going to these Afrocentric charter schools and private schools in (city) (C)  
Um//just//um singing, singing Swahili national anthems (laughs), (C)  
and, and just always I guess (E)  
being brought up with this sense of um, you know, cultural, racial and ethnic  
identity (E)  
when I look back now (E)  
some of it was kind of overkill (E)  
but I think that's the situation that, that we were in. (E)  
And//I guess, I was never taught (R)  
To feel that there was something wrong with being black, um (R)  
(Adisa, interview 1, 42-54)

While he described some of these early experiences as “overkill,” like Jeff he is proud of his parents and appreciated the foundation they provided for him. Later in his response to my first question, when discussing his experiences mentoring black children during his college years, he explained that those ideas have given him a mission to empower others and instill in them a similar sense of pride:

So, I (hh) guess I was, (E)  
I was always on a mission (E)  
as early as I can remember, (E)  
to/help people/see their/their, their place in the, um, in the world (E)  
and see that//that you only take a backseat to someone (E)  
when you, when you decide to get in the backseat yourself (E)  
(Adisa, interview 1, 77-81)

However, in the next narrative segment, Adisa revealed that his father, who was the most influential person in shaping his perspective, also became a victim of drug addiction at this time.

Rob:

Uh, so, um, do you think you think that they had that sense of mission? Did the, did they con-talk to you about sort of what the world is about and your place in it?

Adisa:

Yep, my father definitely more than my mother (A)  
Um, my father suc-um, he//being in the 80's (O)  
And, um, in (city), drugs hit the area really hard, (O)  
Um as a matter of fact some people say that (O)  
They came up with the Just Say No campaign (O)

After Nancy Reagan drove through the streets of (city) (laughs) (O)  
Um my father, um, got strung out on drugs (C)  
And that's when my parents divorced (C)  
When I was in the fifth grade (O)  
(Adisa, interview 1, 95-102)

Throughout the remainder of his life history, Adisa made several references to his father and alluded to both his father's influence on his worldview as well as the damage that was inflicted on their relationship because of his drug addiction. Perhaps one of the most revealing accounts of this conflicted relationship is evident when Adisa explained how he began performing poetry and speeches to impress his father, who often spent Sundays listening to recordings by leaders like Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X or spoken-word artists like Gil Scott Heron and the Last Poets.

So I used to write these speeches (C)  
when I was a little kid and, (O)  
and learn how to tell stories and, and all this stuff and (C)  
and writing poetry and performing stuff, (C)  
and I guess what took me all the way (E)  
to an adult doing performance poetry, and all this stuff, (E)  
and making speeches and constantly running my mouth (E)  
because that was the way I got attention from my father. (E)  
So, um, you know I guess part of it is (E)  
just the son wanting to make his father proud (E)  
and kind of thinking that if, (E)  
if I could keep his attention (E)  
that would stop him from going out (E)  
and getting high, um (E)  
never worked (R)  
but I guess that kind of, um, made up my personality (R)  
(Adisa, interview 1, 114-122)

The influence of his father was apparent in several other narrative segments interspersed through the remainder of Adisa's life history. When discussing his experiences with orthodox Islam, he explained that his father often emphasized African Muslims like Mansa Musa and Sunni Ali as opposed to the Arabic Muslims discussed by

the mosque's Imam (Adisa, interview 1, 185-201). In another segment about the content of his spoken word poetry, he described a poem he wrote criticizing one of his elementary school teachers for not understanding his father's idea that people have a third eye of consciousness (Adisa, interview I, 255-262). He concluded that segment by reflecting on his own conflicted appreciation of his father's teachings:

And um he talks about all of this stuff (C)  
About, um//you know CIA conspiracies (C)  
on bringing drugs into the community and all this stuff (C)  
and, and that's a hard thing, (E)  
the person that you look like, (E)  
that you sound like, (E)  
that you most identify in the world, um, (E)  
becoming a victim to the very thing that, (E)  
that, that they're teaching you (E)  
um, is/is controlling us. (E)  
So, you know how much power (E)  
do I have (E)  
If my hero, um, you know (E)  
dies from the kryptonite that (laughs) um, yeah, that's// (E)  
(Adisa, interview 1, 265-271)

Later, when he talked about attending college at a historically black university, he viewed his professors through the lens of his relationship with his father.

I had some really good professors, and (O)  
and some professors that just came at some different perspectives that, (C)  
that really, really helped me out (C)  
and it was really good just seeing these//these examples of, (E)  
of, of men, of intellectuals that they were like my father (E)  
but not strung out on drugs, so (E)  
so that was, that was really good and, (E)  
and I still keep in touch with some of them, some of them today (R)  
(Adisa, interview 1, 304-309)

At the end of his life history, Adisa concluded with a response to my last, open-ended question that revealed a connection between his status as a new father and his mission with his students.

Rob:

Is there anything else that we haven't talked about, that you think feeds your desire or your commitment or your disposition towards social justice that, that fits in there that we haven't talked about?

Adisa:

Yeah, becoming a father. (A)

You know which is new, (O)

my son is only a year old.//um/// (O)

I know (hh)///my son is beautiful, (E)

you know, smiles, um, just a beautiful spirit, (E)

You know he's saying hi now, says hi, hi./// (E)

He's not a nigger///you know, and// (E)

and I told my kids here, (C)

you know I said (C)

you will never call my son that, so, (C)

you know I'm like// (C)

why//why should I tolerate or entertain (C)

the idea of you calling yourselves that? (C)

//And I had one kid tell me, (C)

you treat us like we're your kids, (C)

and I was like good, (C)

I love my kid, (C)

I love my son//you know, um, so (C)

so yeah, you know maybe I'm talking to you like you're my kid (R)

because I care about you that much (R)

(Adisa, interview 1, 729-739)

In one broad stroke, Adisa connected the values he learned from his father to his love for his own child and his commitment to continue his father's mission of promoting racial pride with the students he teaches. His relationship with his father, troubled as it might have been, proved to be the defining aspect of Adisa's desire to teach for social justice.

#### *Resistance to Parental Influence as a Factor Shaping a Social Justice Identity*

Both Jeff's and Adisa's narratives serve as exemplars for the theme, stories of parents/families, that ran through ten of the thirteen participant's personal narratives. In most of these stories, parents generally served as positive role models who helped align the participants along a trajectory of identification that valued social justice. However,

parents invariably send mixed messages to their children, and eleven participants also discussed conflicts they had with one or both parents regarding issues of social justice. For instance, Sandra's mother stressed the importance of caring for others but also perpetuated a limited view of women that restricted some of Sandra's options in high school (Sandra, interview 1, 55-60, 87-93). Similarly, John's father courageously refused to abandon his neighborhood as white flight occurred but also colluded with some of the negative stereotypes of black youth (John, interview 1, 590-630).

Beyond these conflicts, two participants discussed how their social justice identity emerged from resistance to their parents' ideas and behaviors. Allen described how his interest in social justice issues developed in opposition to his mother's "subtle messages" that colluded with oppression. In the extended evaluative comments that follow, Allen explained that he understood why his mother held such beliefs, yet he struggled to find another way to broaden his perspective. The long pauses at the beginning and end of this segment indicate how difficult it was for him to discuss these "frustrating" experiences.

Rob:

You mentioned your mom, and subtle messages that she gave you, what, what specifically?

Allen:

Uh///my mom's extremely homophobic, (O)  
so things that she would say and still says to this day, (C)  
uh///were really frustrating. (C)  
Uh//things that she would say about other black folks, (C)  
uh, was really frustrating. (C)  
Things she said about white people (C)  
was frustrating. (C)  
It's just like, uh, she grew up in a, uh, in Mississippi (O)  
in, in deep southern Mississippi, uh, (O)  
right across the Louisiana border, (O)  
right from the Louisiana border so, uh// (O)  
(hh)and I know her experiences (E)  
were shaped by, uh, who she was (E)

and the things, you know, what she saw. (E)  
But for me//uh//I don't know, (E)  
I didn't feel like I had to do what she did, (E)  
I felt like I can buck the system and, uh//excuse me, (E)  
I felt like I could buck the system and, (E)  
and, I don't know, it's//// (E)  
it was just frustrating (E)  
that she looked at things so narrowly, (E)  
and I, and I again I knew I was also narrowly viewing things, (E)  
but I didn't have the language or, (E)  
or uh, the critical skill sets to examine what was going on at the time. (E)  
Today I can look back on it and say (R)  
hey, yeah I was just as narrow, (R)  
uh, I don't know. (Co)  
(Allen, interview 1, 123-137)

Like Allen, Craig's father's conservative perspective was often at odds with his developing social justice awareness. When I asked if his family ever discussed the tumultuous affairs of the 1960's during his youth, he shared the following story that demonstrated how he and his father viewed the world differently.

Rob:

...Um, but, was there um, and in your family, was there any discussion of, whether it be the civil rights movement, um, the Vietnam War, all the things that were going on in those socially charged times?

Craig:

Yeah, to the extent that number one they thought I was insane, (E)  
what's your problem? (E)  
Okay, uh and, and, and I'll always remember (A)  
this comment had a huge impact on me. (A)  
And I had to be nine years old or younger, (O)  
because it was when I was still in (city). (O)  
We had a maid/whose name was Nancy (last name). (O)  
Nancy of course was black, and (O)  
uh, she had been with my family since we were little kids. (O)  
So all my life I had grown up with Nancy (last name). (O)  
We were driving her home, (C)  
cause most of the time she stayed at our place (O)  
but she'd go home sometimes. (O)  
And, um, we drove her home one night (C)  
and on the way back my father made the comment/ (C)  
you know/Nancy is really acting crazy (C)

because she's all tied up with all this crazy Civil Rights business that's going on.  
(C)  
That's all, that's, I'll never/forget that conversation (E)  
because when he said it//I mean it, it definitely, I mean obviously (E)  
I remember it to this day, fifty years now, and, and, (E)  
and it, it struck me//well why shouldn't she be that way, (E)  
I mean not with all the complicated stuff that I've got going on about it now, (E)  
but certainly it did affect me and I thought/that's wrong. (E)  
She's doing the right thing, you know. (E)  
And, uh, and, and over the years um, (R)  
you know, uh, and my, my dad uh died uh//in uh '01, (O)  
so it was, you know, eight years ago. (O)  
But until then, I mean we always/you know argued the, the, the politics of what  
was going on (R)  
and uh, uh he, we were always on the opposite side. I mean always. (R)  
(Craig, interview 1, 186-207)

Craig's evaluative comments at the end of this segment revealed how his identification with issues of social justice was shaped independently of, and sometimes in opposition to, his father's values.

The examples above suggest that while parental influence clearly played an important role in laying a foundation for the development of the teachers' social justice identities, it was by no means a necessary precondition. Also, it seemed that parents provided both positive and negative examples that contributed to their children taking up commitments to equity and justice from a very early age. Parents have a unique and powerful capacity to invite their child along a path toward social justice identification, an identity that often "thickens" as their children encounter the world. In the next section I will discuss how such thickening occurs in the context of schooling and learning.

#### Stories of Schooling/Learning

Stories of schooling and learning proved to be the most frequent theme represented in the life history narratives. All thirteen participants mentioned specific episodes in their educational life, and nine participants discussed these experiences in

their response to the first, open-ended question of the interview. While all levels of education were addressed, stories about middle school and high school proved to be the most common. Stories about college were the second most frequent. Participants recalled both positive and negative memories that shaped their current views on teaching and many mentioned specific teachers who made a difference in their lives. Such data reinforce Lortie's (1975) and Britzman's (2003) observations that teachers' identities are formed largely by their personal experiences in schools. However, not all learning experiences occur in schools, and many participants discussed the significance of both books and other educational settings in shaping their views. Therefore, I have labeled this theme schooling/learning to capture the breadth of the educational experiences that were instrumental in thickening the identity of these teachers who teach for social justice. In the section that follows, I present stories from three participants whose narratives epitomize this theme.

*Allen's Story: Learning to Teach from Multiple Perspectives*

*Summary of Allen's Life Story.* At the time of the study, Allen was a black male in his early thirties who taught African history in addition to serving as an administrator at a private high school. He was born in a midsized city in the upper South, and he recalled seeing a young black man hanged in a local park when he was fourteen years old. His mother, who was from the deep South, stressed education but also provided "subtle messages" that Allen believed colluded with the institutional oppression that surrounded him. Growing up in relatively poor neighborhoods, he recalled being frustrated by the depictions of middle class black life shown on the Cosby television show. During his high school years, he connected with a history teacher who helped him grapple with his

emerging questions about inequality. A talented athlete, he ran track in high school and despite some difficulties with the coaches and administration he earned a scholarship to a local university. Allen believed that his emphasis on track kept him from fully focusing on education until he entered graduate studies. However, his love for history led him to pursue teaching, largely in private schools serving black students. At that time he witnessed significant inequities within the institutions where he worked, and his emerging interest in social justice education was nurtured both by a supportive circle of friends and several professional development experiences that raised his consciousness about institutional oppression. At the time of this study, Allen continued to seek opportunities for intellectual and personal growth as he strived to advocate for social justice as an educational leader in a relatively conservative environment.

*Allen's Narrative of Schooling and Learning.* At the core of his identity, Allen is a life-long learner. Throughout his personal narrative he emphasized the role that different teachers and learning experiences played in shaping his hunger for knowledge and his desire to teach from multiple perspectives. He began his story by talking about an inspirational high school history teacher who transformed how he looked at the world.

uh, or I can even go back to high school, (A)  
I had a history teacher that was awesome. (A)  
I hated social studies and history until the tenth grade (O)  
when I had this professor or this teacher who, (C)  
uh, graduated from Yale, small little guy, (O)  
and uh drove a beat up station wagon, (O)  
and when I first walked into the class (C)  
I thought this was going to be a terrible experience. (C)  
But, uh, what ultimately ended up happening, (E)  
he was like a griot for me, uh, you know, (E)  
he told stories (C)  
and I hung onto his every word. (C)  
And, and it wasn't just one story, (C)  
it was multiple narratives, (C)

so I got a chance to see things from multiple perspectives. (E)  
I thought that was really cool. (E)  
So, uh//end up taking all the histories at our school because of that, because of  
that teacher. (R)  
And, and looking for multiple angles (R)  
to look at history through that lens or through different lenses, (R)  
so uh the same story just different interpretations, (R)  
so that was pretty cool. (Co)  
(Allen, interview 1, 39-50)

Allen, who currently teaches an African history class, linked his teacher to the West African storytelling tradition with the evaluative statement, “he was like a griot to me.” Clearly, this short white man with a beat-up station wagon had a profound influence on the development of Allen’s teaching philosophy. In the next narrative segment, Allen explained how one of his graduate professors built upon the foundation established by his high school teacher.

I had a class that, that really helped get me, uh// (A)  
give me the tools uh to do (A)  
what I wanted to do with the class. (A)  
It was uh international organizations course that I had and, (O)  
and the teacher designed it, (C)  
and I ended up basing a class that I did, uh, at the high school level (C)  
on the experiences that I had in the grad school class (C)  
where she took four theories associated with political science, (C)  
international relations, realism, liberalism, Marxism, and feminism to examine a  
way international organizations are created, (C)  
whose interest do they serve?(C)  
and where they are going in the twenty-first century? (C)  
so it’s like, you get to see things from all of these different perspectives (C)  
so, uh, and with, with, with theory. (C)  
And I thought that was important, too, (E)  
for the students to not only see these stories (E)  
but understand them from different theoretical perspectives. (E)  
(Allen, interview 1, 52-62)

In this narrative segment, his evaluative comments demonstrated how the lessons learned from both of these teachers influenced his teaching philosophy and the structure of his courses. Like the little guy from Yale, who he described in his coda to the opening

narrative as his “first and favorite history teacher to this day” (Allen, interview 1, 70)

Allen wanted his students to be able to view the world from multiple perspectives.

Allen referenced his high school history teacher several other times during the remainder of the life history interview. In one segment, he reiterated that teacher’s commitment to teaching from multiple perspectives, but he also discussed how the teacher made himself available outside of the classroom to answer Allen’s emerging questions about equity and justice.

Yeah! I took every class he taught, and, (O)  
and what end up happening, uh, (C)  
when I didn’t take him, uh, pro-(C)  
you know like when I have students come sit in my office now (O)  
that ask me these probing questions after they leave class, (O)  
I would do that with him. (C)  
Or, I would, uh, I don’t know, (C)  
kinda help instill, you know, this love for reading and, (C)  
uh, made it really easy at that point, (C)  
and//I wasn’t//intentionally looking like, (E)  
oh, what was the black experience? (E)  
What was the women’s experience? (E)  
Or what was going on at this time, (E)  
but, uh, I still wanted to know those questions. (R)  
(Allen, interview 1, 238-244)

Allen clearly links his current practice of working with students both inside and outside of the classroom to his own teacher’s willingness to guide his developing intellectual curiosity. This teacher inspired a love of reading and the desire to learn that continues to shape Allen’s professional and personal identity.

That love for learning was evident in Allen’s response to my question about learning experiences outside of formal education. He explained that he attended many different schools before high school and he felt that he had underachieved through most of his formal education.

Because of those gaps in my education, (O)  
I was like, uh, I gotta play catch-up. (O)  
So, every chance I get to read something, (C)  
I want to read it, (C)  
any chance I get for professional development, (C)  
uh, or an opportunity to grow, uh, I wanted to have it, (C)  
so, um, (anti-racism program) was cool. (C)  
Another experience, I went to China for awhile, (C)  
and I had read a lot about China, (C)  
but actually being there (C)  
and seeing so much poverty and the different experiences, (C)  
uh, really shaped that while you may read something in a book, (E)  
uh, it's not always that way, so you, (E)  
you have to look for these experiences, (E)  
look for these opportunities, (E)  
so, uh, I'm always seeking out opportunities. (R)  
(Allen, interview 1, 475-483)

Again, his evaluative comments reflect a profound desire to understand the experiences of other people, a desire that was prompted by his experiences with both his high school and college teachers.

An emphasis on multiple perspectives continued to shape Allen's professional life when he found himself teaching and serving as an administrator in a relatively conservative private school. In response to my last question about anything else that influenced his social justice identity, he reflected on the importance of understanding all of his students, including those from the dominant culture.

I have to step outside of myself and think about, (E)  
so this job has forced me to look at things from other people's experiences (E)  
and try to understand, again forcing me to look from another perspective (E)  
that I, uh, I guess I wouldn't normally look at, (E)  
uh, and working closely with people of the dominant culture group of the school,  
(E)  
so uh////I'm still growing, I'm still learning, (E)  
(Allen, interview 1, 521-525)

Allen's teachers and school experiences provided him with a foundation for viewing the world through different lenses, and that orientation to social justice education continues to influence both his professional life and his desire to keep learning and growing.

*Craig's Story: Learning to Teach Courageously*

*Summary of Craig's Life Story.* At the time of the study, Craig was a white male in his late fifties who taught in an urban high school with a predominantly black population. He was born in a large, rust belt city and grew up in a conservative Jewish family. His interest in social justice was initially sparked by reading John Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage*. However, when his family relocated to California in the early sixties he was exposed to more progressive and even radical ideas. An inspiring high school social studies teacher and the cosmopolitan parents of his girlfriend/wife intensified his commitment to social justice, and that commitment grew deeper as he engaged in the student activism of the era. After he graduated from college in the early seventies he began to work in the stock market. His experience in the market eventually resulted in him appearing on a local radio show in his current hometown. At roughly the same time his interest in government led him to teach a class on media and politics at a local high school. A prolonged legal conflict with powerful individuals who did not like the positions he took on the radio led him to search for a new career in the late 1990's. While working as a teacher in a local charter school, he volunteered his time at one of the city's worst performing high schools and he gained notoriety for coaching a group of students who placed third in a national economics competition. He eventually was hired to teach social studies in the city school district and he was recently recognized with an award from a local, social justice organization.

*Craig's Narrative of Teaching and Learning.* Craig opened his life history by describing how reading John F. Kennedy's book, *Profiles in Courage*, when he was nine attracted him to issues of social justice despite his family's relatively conservative politics (Craig, interview 1, 38-57). In many ways, the importance of taking courageous stands dominated Craig's narrative, and his models for such action came primarily from his school experiences. Like Allen, in his opening comments he introduced me to a specific high school teacher who had a profound influence on his life.

I, like everybody, got that one teacher, okay, (A)  
and this was a guy, his name was Alfred Markenson (O)  
and Alfred Markenson was a very young man, and uh, (O)  
and he just loved teaching, (O)  
he was a ninth grade social studies teacher, (O)  
and all the kids that were a problem/he just brought 'em all in, (C)  
I mean the kids who didn't want to work, (O)  
didn't want to do anything, (O)  
didn't like school, didn't like anybody, fought, everything. (O)  
Alfred Markenson grabbed 'em all in, (C)  
and uh, called-everybody called him Mr. Mark, (C)  
which of course people were upset about (C)  
because you know it's like uh// (C)  
you know you've got to call everybody Mr. (C)  
and whatever their name is business, (C)  
which goes on today and absolutely astounds me, but that's another story. (E)  
But, um, but, but Markenson, uh, he just loved kids (C)  
and he loved school and he loved what he was doing, (C)  
and eventually, after we graduated, uh they finally fired him (R)  
which was inevitable because/he was just too good. (R)  
(Craig, interview 1, 72-83)

In just a few lines, Craig moved from a discussion of *Profiles in Courage* to a portrait of the influential teacher in his life who ultimately was fired for teaching his students in a courageous, non-traditional way. A few lines later, a series of evaluative comments revealed how Markenson's example both intensified his commitment to social justice and prevented him from immediately entering teaching as a profession.

And, and the thing is, here was a guy (E)  
who really connected beautifully with young people, (E)  
but they wouldn't allow it, (E)  
so he had to move on to where he could fit in you know more appropriately. (E)  
And, uh, and, and just his/just//seeing him, (E)  
and how he cared about the kids (E)  
and what he did, uh, just really turned me on tremendously. (E)  
And, and I'd say that, that's really where all this, (E)  
you know, interest in kids and social justice comes from. (E)  
But, the interesting part is/, is (E)  
when I got out of school (E)  
I never had any intention of teaching/none, (E)  
and the, the principal reason was/no money. (E)  
And I figured, uh, I'm not going to waste my time, (E)  
no money, and go and going through the Markenson routine (E)  
where you go and you do the right thing (E)  
and they throw you out. (E)  
So I figured I, I don't even need to do that, (E)  
I've seen how that ends, (E)  
I've seen that story. (Co)  
(Craig, interview 1, 89-99)

Toward the end of his response to my opening question, Craig shared a story about his first experience of teaching one class at a local private high school. At the time he was involved with a local radio talk show and he brought a controversial speaker to campus to address his students. The subsequent conflict with the school's leadership eventually led to him being fired from his position (Craig, interview 1, 101-140). In the evaluative comments at the end of this narrative segment, Craig linked the lessons he learned about courageous teaching from *Profiles in Courage* and Mr. Mark's example to his current philosophy of teaching for social justice.

the lessons I had learned early, (E)  
that if you're a good teacher, (E)  
when I say good in quotes, uh, (E)  
if you're a, a social justice oriented teacher, (E)  
if your a progressive, liberal, (E)  
if you care about the kids, (E)  
if you're interested in education (E)  
and not simply you know multiple choice exams, (E)

uh, you're going to get fired. (E)  
You're going to be in a fight, okay, (E)  
because trying to, uh, to, to develop understanding with kids (E)  
is not what schools are about in this country, not at all, (E)  
(Craig, interview 1, 141-146)

Craig told two other stories during his life history interview that revealed how his experiences in high school and college had shaped his views on taking courageous stands to fight for social justice. He shared the first story in response to my question about what it was like to attend a large university during the late 1960's and early 1970's. He began his response by saying, "You can't ask for a better foundation for being a human being than going to college in that time period..." (Craig, interview 1, 367-368). He then described what it was like to join in campus wide demonstrations.

I remember when we were at (university name) (O)  
and we, the demonstrations, and we'd go to uh to Chancellor (name)'s uh, uh  
house on campus, (C)  
and uh, we'd demand that he'd end racism. (C)  
And, and, and we and I remember saying to my friends, (C)  
you know, it's pretty funny we're all out here yelling for him to end racism, (C)  
we know he can't end racism, okay, but, but, (C)  
but//that was the mentality, (E)  
it was like/let's shut this shit down, okay, (E)  
and um//you know it's just, it-all that's gone. (E)  
(Craig, interview 1, 379-385)

Craig's evaluative comments revealed nostalgia for the radicalism of the sixties, which he did not see in contemporary society. Later in the interview, he shared another story from the sixties about how a media personality had influenced him to lead protests in his high school about the Warren Commission Report. When he and his friends staged a demonstration and invited local media, they were severely reprimanded by the school's administration (Craig, interview 1, 477-495). He reflected on the importance of that experience at the end of the narrative segment.

Uh, but again it was the times, (E)  
and it's like you said, you know (E)  
that the times that you were involved in//(E)  
I mean very, very important, huge influence in all of this because (E)  
uh, because it all connects, (E)  
and so I think back to what I did, you know, (E)  
with (media personality) and all that other stuff (E)  
and I think hey, to get kids today thinking about those kind of things/, (E)  
and that can change kids' lives (E)  
because now they're thinking about something more than getting a job. (E)  
(Craig, interview 1, 497-502)

Craig's exposure to Mr. Markenson's intrepid teaching style and the student activism of the era inspired him to teach courageously. His commitment to social justice, which was initially inspired by Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage*, was thickened by his high school and college experiences.

*Christine's Story: Learning to Teach Stories of Justice*

*Summary of Christine's Life Story.* At the time of the study, Christine was a black female in her mid sixties who taught in an affluent, suburban school district with a majority of white students but a relatively diverse student body. Born into a middle class family in a large, Midwestern city, she was an avid reader and a conscientious student from a very early age. Her interest in stories about injustice and the biographies of people who fought for justice led her to question the inequities she saw around her. In high school she became involved in a variety of politically oriented clubs and activities. Although she attended two relatively conservative colleges, her interest in politics and current events continued to be nurtured by the experiences of her own family, changes in her neighborhood, and the politically charged conversations that occurred in her social networks during the sixties. During her student teaching experience an inspirational cooperating teacher challenged her to teach for a purpose, and from that point on

Christine identified herself as a teacher with an agenda. Beginning in her early teaching career Christine advocated for equity, both challenging the unfair punishment of a black student and refusing to nominate another black student for a cheerleading position just because of her race. Christine discussed how during much of her teaching career she has been positioned and has positioned herself in a middle space between black and white educators who often have different notions about how to address educational equity in an era of school integration and white flight. While she was initially reluctant to identify herself as a teacher who teaches toward social justice, she stated that she had a teaching agenda focused on human agency and the struggle for progress that reflected a commitment to equity and fairness.

*Christine's Narrative of Schooling/Learning.* Like Craig, Christine began her narrative by talking about how reading established a foundation for her current understanding of social justice, and much of her response to my first, open-ended question focused on the twin influences of books and school. Her first story addressed the influence of fairy tales on her emerging sense of right and wrong.

//Um//my sister/was in college to be a librarian, (O)  
and she had an assignment, (O)  
this was when I was maybe third grade, (O)  
after I read some stories on my own. (O)  
She had this assignment (O)  
where she had to read fairy tales from around the world// (O)  
and, being twenty years old (laughs) (O)  
she bribed her little sister to read the stories. (C)  
So I read the stories (C)  
and I would summarize them for her. (C)  
And we did a comparative look at the stories (C)  
and so the whole idea of Cinderella as a Japanese story, (C)  
as one that's been in West Africa, (C)  
so you get this sense of, oh my goodness, people are telling the same stories, (E)  
I didn't know that then, (E)  
okay I'm third grade at that time, (O)

but later on/it's something that I was able to build upon (E)  
as this understanding of/how long people have been//protesting (E)  
the way that people have been treated. (E)  
(Christine, interview 1, 40-50)

In the evaluative comments at the end of this segment, Christine oriented her current interest in social justice with her earliest exposure to the stories of injustice embedded in fairy tales from around the world. After a brief discussion of other books she read, including biographies of Jane Addams and Frederick Douglass (Christine, interview 1, 50-56), she linked her early reading to an influential social studies teacher.

Um, let's see//probably next was my seventh grade teacher// (A)  
her name was Margaret Shannon, (O)  
she was just absolutely wonderful, (E)  
um, she was our social studies teacher. (O)  
And she was responsible for having black history// (C)  
at that time it was Negro history week in (her home state). (O)  
And in class, it was always this focus on/// (C)  
one black history and, and the injustices towards people, (C)  
but also we were made aware, painfully, of people in the Holocaust (C)  
and the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, (C)  
she was just a woman who taught with a lot of passion, (C)  
and it just sort of got right into my kind of feelings of right and wrong, (E)  
and kind of taking life very, very seriously (laughs). (E)  
(Christine, interview 1, 56-64)

Like Allen and Craig, a specific teacher had a profound influence on her social justice orientation.

Her growing interest in stories about right and wrong drew Christine to books with similar themes, and her reading inspired her to advocate for social justice while still relatively young. Christine quickly transitioned from her narrative segment about Mrs. Shannon to another story about the influence of reading on her emerging worldview.

Christine:  
um//then reading again, got into Michener (A)

Rob:  
Oh yeah?

Christine:

Yeah//I grew up Congregationalist, so as a Congregationalist// (O)  
I was painfully aware of the Congregationalist role in the taking of Hawaii, (O)  
and announced to my parents (C)  
that I was no longer giving to the missionary fund. (C)  
My mother, who was often just oh my goodness, where does this child get what  
she gets? (O)  
Uh, my, my mother said just be quiet about it, okay. (C)  
Just, just don't give to the missionary fund (C)  
but just don't make it a big deal, please (laughs) (C)  
so I didn't. (C)  
Um, that sort of, that sort of experience just reading a whole lot, (E)  
reading James Baldwin in high school (C)  
and, kind of, I was, I would tell the neighborhood kids (C)  
about some of the things that were going on in the world (C)  
including homosexuality, and how people are treated and it, that, that sort of  
thing.(Co)  
(Christine, interview 1, 72-83)

The stories she read not only nurtured a concern about justice but also encouraged her to act and advocate for those who were marginalized or oppressed. She continued to talk about the influence of school in her opening comments, explaining how during high school she joined groups like the Human Relations Club and took classes with other inspirational, justice oriented teachers (Christine, interview 1, 99-112). In many ways, she had already become a teacher for social justice, sharing her ideas with both classmates and family. As she admitted later in the interview, “Oh yeah, I knew I was going to be a teacher in third grade, by seventh grade I knew it was going to be social studies” (Christine, interview 1, 262-263).

Christine’s experiences of reading and schooling laid a foundation for a teaching practice that emphasized stories of justice. Later, when she began student teaching, her cooperating teacher helped Christine clarify her identity as a teacher who teaches toward social justice.

So I got to (city), and I started doing my student teaching (A) with the most incredible woman I've ever met in my life. (O)  
Oh my goodness did she teach me a lot. (E)  
And it was about, um, what, what are you teaching for? (C)  
What do you, what do you want to have happen to the students that you teach, (C)  
what kind of impact do you want to have? (C)  
And is it only going to be names, dates and places? (C)  
And so I find, I found a person who was able to, (E)  
who, who taught me how to// (E)  
with the content, bring in the narrative that I wanted to, (E)  
and I, I must say that in the years that I've taught, (E)  
when people talk about an agenda free teacher, (E)  
I'm not, I've never been agenda free. (E)  
(Christine, interview 1, 527-535)

The evaluative comments at the end of this short segment connect Christine's earliest interest in stories of justice with the narrative she seeks to present in her classroom. At the close of the life history interview, Christine further clarified how her interest in stories about the human condition has been instrumental in her teaching agenda.

Rob:

...is there anything else that we haven't talked about today, um, that you think helps form this disposition, this commitment, this desire to teach the way you teach?

Christine

///Huh///I can't think of// (E)  
I just, um, I guess I'm just interested in stories of people, (E)  
I've always been interested in stories of human agency, (E)  
and not really statistics and war and battles and, (E)  
but what caused war? (E)  
What is the aftermath of war? (E)  
What causes peace? (E)  
What, how do we evolve as human beings? (E)  
Those are the things that always interested me, (R)  
um, across time and/space, (R)  
so I, this//it's the way I'm wired. (Co)  
(Christine, interview 1, 708-714)

Christine, like Allen and Craig and most of the other participants in this study, were influenced to teach for social justice by their own experiences as students and learners.

As Lortie (1975) and Britzman (2003) have argued, there is probably no stronger force shaping how teachers teach than their own history of schooling and learning.

*Educational Experiences that did not Align Teachers along a Social Justice Path*

As powerful as schools are in forming the identity of teachers who teach for social justice, not every participant was inspired to teach for equity by transformative teachers like the ones discussed by the participants above. Three storytellers discussed how their negative experiences during high school or college motivated them to teach for social justice. For instance, Sandra described how her high school counselors discouraged her from pursuing advanced math and science classes and how a professor in college questioned her ability to pursue a career in emergency medicine (Sandra, interview 1, 170-180; 309-321). While those negative experiences did not mirror the stories of inspirational teachers shared by several of the participants, her frustration with her own educational experience proved to be an equally influential factor motivating her to teach for social justice. Similarly, in a focus group interview Karen explained how one of her teacher's negative actions contributed to her desire to teach toward social justice.

Karen:

I had mean teachers, (A)  
(name) in the fifth grade, (O)  
man if I saw her today {laughs from group}(E)

Dominic:

She'd be in your trunk, huh?

Karen:

She was mean, just mean you know. (O)  
Because I didn't have the nice clothes (O)  
and my mother had cut my hair (C)  
and I looked like a boy (O)  
so she always referred to me as a boy, (C)  
and those things are traumatic when you're in fifth grade (E)

Goldie:  
yeah, I agree

Karen:  
I got a lot of that. (C)

Dominic:  
jeeze

Karen:  
Um, and so I think my social justice mentality (E)  
comes out of feeling crappy. (E)  
(Focus Group interview 1, 516-525)

Many of the participants also discussed the failure of their teacher preparation programs to address issues of social justice in a meaningful way. Ten storytellers explained that topics about diversity and equity were only discussed in a limited fashion during their pre-service training. For instance, in response to a question of whether social justice was covered in his teacher certification program, Adisa responded, “They try to, but I don’t know if you can bring up issues of social justice when you don’t, when you have very few people, um, in the/, in the program that, that really deal with it” (Adisa, interview 1, 590-593).

However, five of the participants pointed to at least one education professor who had some influence on their thinking. Linda described a woman who taught psychology of the exceptional student. An adjunct professor who also worked in a school for the deaf, she brought the class into contact with a number of practitioners who specialized in teaching children with various disabilities. After praising this one professor she commented, “And so, um, you know I, I think that was, that was a real good-but out of all that, that was it Rob. I, I, I maybe should be more generous, I think, but I really can’t be, I’ll be honest with you” (Linda, 405-407). Like Linda, the other four participants who

discussed an influential teacher educator only described one or two examples of an education course that addressed issues of equity and diversity. By contrast, eleven of the participants mentioned that their history or literature courses in college did speak to such questions.

These data suggest that formal schooling has considerable potential to thicken the social justice identification of prospective teachers. Both positive and negative experiences in school are influential in shaping such a perspective. In addition, non-school learning experiences such as reading or professional development opportunities can contribute to a desire to teach toward social justice. However, teachers and schools who challenge students to question inequity or view historical events through multiple perspectives are not universally available, and questions about diversity and equity seem to be addressed only sporadically in teacher preparation programs.

### Stories of Oppression

Stories of oppression, particularly stories about how participants experienced discrimination based on race, class or sex, emerged as a common theme early in the research process. In fact, during the pilot study in the spring and summer of 2009 the repetition of stories about discrimination based on the participants' targeted identities was so pronounced that I deliberately looked for a white, middle-class, male, heterosexual participant to obtain data that might contradict what seemed to be emerging as an important factor in shaping the teachers' social justice identities. Interestingly, this multiply privileged participant also discussed issues of oppression, however his social justice disposition was influenced by his observations about how others were oppressed rather than any discrimination he experienced. Ultimately, eleven of the thirteen

participants discussed how their experiences with oppression contributed to their social justice identity. In this section I share the stories of three individuals who were targets of discrimination and one participant who was influenced by observing the oppression of others. For each of these teachers, resisting oppression in their own lives provided them with a lens of empathy and a passion for challenging the inequities that continues to influence their teaching practice.

#### *Sandra's Story of Sexism*

*Summary of Sandra's Life Story.* At the time of the study, Sandra was a white woman in her early thirties who taught social studies in an affluent, suburban school district with a majority of white students but a relatively diverse student body. She was raised in a suburban community outside of a midsized Midwestern city, and her mother often took her to volunteer with local charitable organizations. Sandra's extended family was fairly conservative, and she recalled being frustrated with the limitations placed on the women in her family. Although she was talented in math and science, her high school counselor encouraged her to take more humanities and home economics classes. She faced similar challenges in college, eventually moving from a pre-med program to education. While in college she met several progressive women who exposed her to a variety of new ideas. Sandra continued to experience sexism when she applied for her first jobs. When she and her husband moved to a conservative, Midwestern town Sandra had difficulty maintaining an independent identity because the utility companies and bank would not include her name on the bills or mortgage. She found support by establishing a strong circle of friends, and several of the women with whom she worked became both mentors and confidants. While teaching in this community, Sandra encouraged her students,

many of whom were Native American, to research and develop pride in their heritage. She eventually moved to a larger, Midwestern city and taught for five more years. At the time of the study, Sandra moved to another conservative community in the Midwest as a result of her husband's job relocation. As she began looking for a new teaching position she once again faced sexism because her inability to coach male athletics prevented her from obtaining employment in several schools.

*Sandra's Narrative of Oppression.* Sandra responded to my opening question with a story about the oppression she faced because of her sex, and her frustration with sexism permeated the entire life history. Thirteen of the twenty-seven narrative segments in her life history focused on some aspect of discrimination based on her identity as a female. In her first story she recalled how a recent conversation with students in her diversity club had led her to recall the sexism she encountered when applying for jobs in a rural area of a Midwestern state.

And I had another one tell me that, (C)  
oh well, you know, you're not a man, (C)  
you can't coach football (C)  
so we're never going to hire you. (C)  
And those were the first few things (E)  
that really made me start to look at, if nothing else, (E)  
how people perceive you and how, what it feels like/// (E)  
(hh) what it feels like when your not treated for what you can do (E)  
but for what you look like on the outside. (E)  
I was, you know, this young female walking in, (E)  
and so therefore I wasn't going to be taken seriously as a social studies, as a high school social studies teacher. (E)  
That wasn't my place. (R)  
And really, that was the first big thing that came to mind (Co)  
as I was talking with the kids in this group. (Co)  
(Sandra, interview 1, 46-53)

She immediately followed her employment story with another bounded, narrative segment discussing how her parents, whom she loved and respected, provided her

brothers with a greater degree of autonomy than she received (Sandra, interview 1, 54-74).

When I asked her about her high school experiences, Sandra continued to discuss her experiences with sexism.

I do, in high school, I do remember, (A)  
even though I was really good at math (O)  
and I was good at (laughs) science, (O)  
that was never anything, (E)  
and my parents encouraged me to take whatever, (O)  
you follow whatever you want to take. (O)  
But I never got the feeling, you know (E)  
when we'd go to enroll with counselors, you know, (C)  
in fact when I got up past algebra two, (C)  
it was very much why do you want to take more math? (C)  
Well, cause my dad is an engineer and, (C)  
and I want to know more about math. (C)  
Or why are you, why you know I got past chemistry, I got to chemistry (C)  
and they were like why would you want to go on to chemistry two, (C)  
what, what is that going to do you good for? (C)  
And I was pushed more into the literature class and, (R)  
and the home ec classes, and that sort of thing um so (R)  
(Sandra, interview 1, 170-180)

At this point the interview, which took place in Sandra's home, was interrupted by an oven timer indicating that a cake she was baking needed to be checked. We both laughed at the coincidence of speaking about home economics at the same time that she was baking, and when she returned she shared a series of evaluative comments that contrasted the limits she faced in her own high school with her current desire to encourage all children to take challenging courses.

Which I just, I just think is really strange, (E)  
especially coming from//now a teaching perspective, (E)  
thinking you know if a kid really enjoys something (E)  
and is good, and is good at it why wouldn't you//want to say, (E)  
Hey, why don't you try this class? (E)  
Why don't you try the next level? (E)  
Why, and let them see what their full potential is in that. (E)

And so I just, I said I don't, (E)  
I know my brother was pushed to calculus (E)  
but I never was even though, you know, (E)  
we, in fact I think I had better grades than him in math. (E)  
And, that's just, I don't know, that's always struck me. (Co)  
(Sandra, interview 1, 217-223)

As the interview proceeded, Sandra continued to reflect on the impact of sexism on her life trajectory. She noted that most of the women in her extended family were expected to marry and raise families, and that only she and two of her female cousins had attended college. In contemplating why she and another cousin resisted the traditional path, she suggested that both her mother and her uncle might have been more liberally inclined than the rest of the family (Sandra, interview 1, 224-269).

When she and her husband moved to a conservative, Midwestern town, Sandra became increasingly active in resisting efforts to position her as a submissive woman. For instance, she unsuccessfully fought to have her name included on the household bills. A close friend who also struggled to maintain her identity by hyphenating her last name supported her in these efforts (Sandra, interview 1, 388-406). Sandra then connected her own struggle to the experiences of the young women she taught in the local high school.

Rob:

...what did you notice about the young people, were there anything, was there anything going on in the school that took some of these ideas and kept?

Sandra:

Yeah, um, it was, that was one of the hardest things I had to fight, (A)  
or///I had a hard time with when I was there was, (E)  
was that it, it truly was//you know, (E)  
and some of the parents expected their children, (C)  
their daughters to go to college, (C)  
but not necessarily do anything with it. (C)  
Well, they're going to get married, (C)  
I mean I had several who would tell me they're going to get married. (C)  
You know, so, so what if they're not good at history. (C)

Well, I'm like, if they're not good at history (E)  
that's one thing, but if you say so what if they're not good at history (E)  
because they're a {short interruption as she answers the phone] (E)  
and///and that was very difficult for me//(E)  
(Sandra, interview 1, 434-443)

After reflecting on that experience for a short while, Sandra linked her experience with sexism to her commitment to teaching toward social justice in a long string of evaluative comments.

I have never, I've never, I just never have understood (E)  
that you can look at someone and say (E)  
oh, because of their skin color, (E)  
because of their sex, (E)  
because of their, you know their religion, (E)  
oh that means they're going to do x,  
I, I don't//because I know me as a person//(E)  
I don't think that you can look at me and say, (E)  
oh because you're a woman you're going to be good at//(E)  
(hh) thinking! (laughs) or you're going to be good at, (E)  
you know whatever is a, (E)  
gardening or whatever the womanly things are in the world, (E)  
the quote unquote womanly things are (E)  
(Sandra, interview 1, 454-462)

In the later portions of the interview, as she talked about her experiences teaching, Sandra told several stories about challenging students to resist the ways they had been positioned and oppressed. For instance, because she taught in a community with a large Native American population she developed lessons that required the students to research their tribes' histories to help them resist what she saw as racist portrayals in the assigned textbook (Sandra, interview 1, 533-548). At the end of the interview, when I asked her if there was anything else that shaped her desire to teach toward social justice, Sandra shared how one veteran, female teacher had mentored her early in her career and encouraged her to resist the oppression, particularly the sexism, she experienced in schools. When she considered what type of teacher she hoped to be, she stated "I, I still

look up to her as a wonderful role model for the type of person I want to be" (Sandra, interview 1, 595-596). Sandra's commitment to teach toward social justice was forged by her experiences with sexism, and in her current practice she hopes to help her students resist oppression just as her mentors and friends supported her.

*John's Story of Struggling with Oppression and Privilege*

*Summary of John's Life Story.* At the time of the study, John was a white male in his early thirties who taught in an outer ring suburban school district with a predominantly white student body. John's father, who serves as a deacon in the Catholic Church, had a strong interest in social justice and stressed the importance of volunteering and caring for others. For most of his life John grew up in a lower middle class suburb of a Midwestern city, and he attended schools with a majority black population. Although his father resisted the suggestions of their white neighbors to leave their increasingly integrated community, he was also somewhat concerned when John became involved in an interracial relationship during high school. When John left home to attend college he encountered racist white attitudes that reminded him of the brief time he and his family lived in a Southern city. Because of a scarcity of resources, John struggled to pay for his college education and eventually returned to his hometown to complete his education. While he was attending college, John recalled being pulled over by the police in an affluent neighborhood because of the dilapidated condition of the car he drove. John's interest in history led him to examine how inequality, particularly inequality based on class, had shaped both the past and the present. He also took an influential class in his graduate program that challenged him to explore issues of privilege and oppression. John taught World and American history in a conservative, suburban community, and he

found it difficult to raise questions about inequity and privilege with both his students and his colleagues. He commented that he often felt isolated in his current position.

However, he thought that once he obtained tenure it would become easier for him to raise issues of social justice within his school community.

*John's Narrative of Oppression.* Like Sandra's narrative, John's personal experiences with discrimination, in his case classism, were embedded throughout his life history.

However, John also discussed aspects of his identity where he enjoyed privilege, and he wrestled with how he could raise those topics with his students and colleagues. Thus, John's narrative provides an example of how experiences of both discrimination and privilege can overlap to shape a commitment to teach toward social justice.

Early in his response to my opening question, John explained how his interest in equity emerged from his experience with classism and his inability to fund his college education.

but then I think one of the//big eye-opening things for me is// (A)  
when I went to college, (A)  
I mean my parents just, I have three older brothers, (O)  
they went into the army to pay for college, reserves. (O)  
I was not willing to do that./// (C)  
And, uh//I really struggled to get// through (C)  
because I, stuff, I just saw the inequity of like (C)  
I had people in, I knew who were living like I wanted to live when I got out (C)  
and they living better than I ever lived in my entire life. (C)  
Here I'm trying to do the right thing// (C)  
and it's extremely difficult to get through that, (C)  
so//as I sort of grew into that (E)  
I felt like there is not, (E)  
it's one of the first times I recognized there wasn't really/equity/ (E)  
because//never had it before like really// (E)  
it was always material things I couldn't have before, (E)  
but now it was like//the li-literal obstacle to what I'm trying to do (R)  
(John, interview 1, 50-59)

As he pursued a degree in history, John began to link his own experience with poverty to the content he was studying (John, interview 1, 72-83). While in college he also had to deal with the racism of other white students, which proved to be a new challenge to a young man who had grown up for most of his life in integrated communities.

First//I, the first time I really had to deal with racism as a problem (A)  
was when I went to college, (O)  
when I was in much more of a///white dominated/// (O)  
to where I had people who actually started vocalizing//some of the things (C)  
I really didn't think existed, (C)  
some of the more racist attitudes, and some of the more//(C)  
so that's when I//kind of came uncomfortable with race relations, (E)  
it was actually with, you know, majority population (E)  
saying like how am I going to address this, (E)  
(John, interview 1, 151-157)

He later discussed how an influential graduate course allowed him to explore issues of oppression more deeply. (John, interview 1, 233-257). In the next narrative segment, John blended his emerging understanding of discrimination and privilege when he reflected on how his perception of the discrimination he faced as a result of having red hair helped develop a lens of empathy for marginalized students.

I mean, uh, I don't know this might go back to an old, uh, question, (A)  
but I thought about this, too, from//(professor's) class, you know (A)  
that's when I really realized that//you know like, (A)  
I know the first thing that people notice about me// (O)  
you know I know it//it's not the same as skin color (O)  
but I've always like felt that, I've always felt like//a minority, (O)  
I feel like when I'm interviewing for jobs people are like// (C)  
he's got red hair, does that mean he's got a short temper? Does he?//(C)  
And when I dated women they were like, (C)  
do I want red headed kids? (C)  
I-these are all these questions that people have to think about, (E)  
so like when we're talking about issues of race and that (E)  
kind of-I can kind of relate to this because//(E)  
I mean I'm not going to say I don't have the benefits of white privilege or  
anything like that, I definitely do. (E)  
But, I, I can feel that sort of// (E)  
you know, uh, I can empathize I think a little bit, (E)

so, um//I think that class, and then going, then it would build. (R)  
(John, interview 1, 257-269)

The creation of a Gay-Straight Alliance at his school prompted John to talk about his struggles with addressing oppression, particularly issues of privilege, in his relatively homogeneous and conservative school district.

John:

we just finally started a GLB club at//our school and// (A)  
so, you know, I, I wore the buttons and things like that (C)  
and//I was surprised that that came out in the school, (E)  
I really was surprised that that was allowed. (E)  
And I was happy that it was, you know, (E)  
but, I feel like//I would have been uncomfortable going to the administration, (E)  
starting that even though I totally support it a hundred percent. (E)  
I just//how would that label me and how would I be interpreted? (E)  
But again, like I am just not at that point yet in my career (E)  
where I can say, yeah, where I can say like I don't= (E)

Rob:

That's where you are in your career

John:

=really give a rat// (E)  
But I mean, I want, I want to create people who are like that teacher (E)  
who did go and get that started, that's great. (E)  
Like (laughs) I want them to have more courage than I do, (E)  
I want them to, um, and especially these kids are born into privilege, (E)  
a lot of them, and they probably will//stay there. (E)  
Well maybe, I don't know. But I want them to feel//I mean, you know, (E)  
we all have a world view that we're hoping that we're moving towards, (E)  
and, if you, I think if you understand, (E)  
at least my comprehension of//the American narrative, (E)  
you know where I get my sort of patriotism, (E)  
is from//feeling the way you are, (E)  
I mean, we are moving//in the right direction consistently over time. (R)  
I want to be a part of that, eh, you know, so// (Co)  
(John, interview 1, 481-498)

As a young teacher without tenure, John explained that he did not feel secure enough to start a gay, lesbian, and bisexual club even though he supported the cause. In addition, he

struggled to challenge the privilege and oppression that he saw and, to a certain degree, understood from his own experience with discrimination based on class. His extended evaluative comments at the end of the segment above revealed his desire to present a narrative of history that exposed his students to inequities in society and challenged them to confront their privilege.

At the close of the interview, when I asked him if there was anything else that contributed to his commitment to teach for social justice, John once again linked his experience with classism to his empathy for the experiences of his marginalized students.

I remember one time I was with a buddy, (O)  
and//I was like, oh we're about, I saw a cop (O)  
and I said we're about to be pulled over for being poor. (C)  
And uh, whoop, right, I mean as soon as// (C)  
and it's just, you know//I don't know// (E)  
So I, I can empathize with those voices (E)  
or I can give sort of legitimacy to some competing points of view, (E)  
and I can maybe bring that narrative in with my kids and say, (E)  
well, you know, I'm just going to throw this out there, (R)  
but this is what has happened to me in the past. (Co)  
(John, interview 1, 646-651)

In his final comments of the interview, John returned to the theme with which he began. His experience with discrimination over his entire life trajectory, coupled with an emerging awareness of his own privilege, shaped John's commitment to provide a narrative of the past that challenged the assumptions of his privileged students.

#### *Patricia's Story of Multiple Oppressions*

*Summary of Patricia's Life Story.* At the time of the study, Patricia was a black female in her late 30's who taught in an inner ring suburb with a majority of black students. She began her life history by reflecting on the ways she faced oppression based on her race, sex and class. She grew up in a predominantly black community in a Midwestern city,

and after her parents divorced she lived in deep poverty. Her mother stressed education and she first attended a private Catholic elementary school, later transferring to a majority white suburban school district through a desegregation program. White students at her high school protested the arrival of black students, and the oppression she faced at the high school left a deep impression on her. After high school she joined the military and, after serving her term of service, she returned to a university in her hometown to study education with the intention of becoming a high school counselor. While in college she met a number of students and teachers who introduced her to new perspectives on how to achieve change, ultimately broadening her social justice interests. When she began teaching she was struck by the inequity she saw in her classrooms and began to discuss those issues with her students. She has been involved in local professional development initiatives in her school district, but ultimately became frustrated at the lack of willingness of most teachers to address issues of social justice in their classrooms or on a systemic level.

*Patricia's Narrative of Oppression.* Patricia's first response to my opening question abstracted a personal narrative focused on the multiple oppressions she faced during her life.

Um, I think my entire life has led to this disposition. (A)  
Um, I am in a, oppressed groups. (A)  
So I'm African American, (O)  
I'm female, (O)  
I come from an impoverished background. (O)  
(Patricia, interview 1, 31-33)

The remainder of her opening comments included several narrative segments that described the influence of oppression on her life. Her first story addressed her experiences with the contentious desegregation program in her hometown.

Um, but, pretty much when I really felt um the need for social justice, (A)  
I would say high school, participated in the desegregation program. (A)  
So, uh in the 80's it was pretty new, (O)  
I mean it wasn't new legally (O)  
but it was new to the district in which I attended. (O)  
So, in the district it was very clear, (O)  
it was very evident that they did not want African Americans there, bussed in. (O)  
So, um, to the point in my junior year (O)  
they actually had three hundred students that walked out of school (C)  
and had a ra-had like a protest (C)  
saying they wanted the Afr-the deseg program to end. (C)  
And um it made the news and it was, (C)  
things written on the wall like, you know, (C)  
go home porch monkeys and all these very derogatory things. (C)  
And the administration swept it under the rug. (C)  
So, that kind of made me feel like, (E)  
well who does something for these incidences. (E)  
I mean, who//cause not everyone was bad (E)  
but the people who weren't participating weren't speaking up. (E)  
They kind of just, ah I'm not in it, (C)  
you know, you got it, they're a bunch of you know butt-holes or whatever. (C)  
So, you know, you can't worry about them. (R)  
(Patricia, interview 1, 33-46)

Patricia's evaluative comments at the end of this segment revealed her frustration with the failure of those with power to advocate for the safety and opportunity of black students who were targeted by the racism in this suburban school.

Her next story extended the theme of multiple oppressions, and she changed her framework from the racism she experienced in high school to the sexism she faced in the military.

So, in the military, as a woman, (A)  
as an African American, more so at that point for being a woman, (A)  
it wasn't the race thing in the military, (O)  
but it's the gender that I was discriminated against all the time. (C)  
So it's like, okay, now I leave the school, you know, (C)  
and now I'm getting a lot of flak because of my race (C)  
then I go to the military to serve my country (C)  
and now I'm getting a lot of flak for being a woman. (C)  
And, uh, I think being a stronger, more outspoken woman (E)  
was where I caught the flak. (E)

(Patricia, interview 1, 52-57)

When she left the military and started to attend college she came in contact with friends and teachers who helped give her a language to define the oppression she had experienced all her life.

I think this is when divine intervention took place, (E)  
where just key people just started to come into my life (C)  
and kind of, like exposed me to things like white privilege, (C)  
cause I had never heard of that before, until I kind of got into college. (E)  
And, um, people and professors and things (C)  
who were more willing to talk about real issues. (C)  
(Patricia, interview 1, 95-99)

Patricia concluded her response to my opening question with a final story linking her experience with oppression and what she had learned in college to the inequities that she saw in her classroom and school.

So, this leads me to going into the classroom. (A)  
And in the classroom, I could see, (A)  
you could see the dynamics of all these things I was learning take place. (A)  
I mean just, even with the test scores, (O)  
with the way students sat in the room (O)  
if you allowed them to seat themselves, and the cafeteria, um, (O)  
kind of the way they even made fun of themselves. (O)  
Um, so this concerned me, (E)  
so I started having Socratic seminars, (C)  
so I was trained in Socratic seminars, (C)  
and I started having Socratic seminars about these topics, (C)  
but I would use like their data in order to, (C)  
like kind of facilitate the discussion. (C)  
So if we had a test and, (C)  
it was like this percentage of females did poorly (C)  
or this percentage of African Americans did poorly, (C)  
then I would raise that question, (C)  
I wouldn't put people out there, but I would say, (C)  
you know, why do you feel that this group did better over that group? (C)  
(Patricia, interview 1, 104-115)

For the remainder of the interview, Patricia continued to point to her experience with oppression. She discussed the internalized oppression of the black community in

which she grew up (Patricia, interview 1, 134-162) and the profound poverty she experienced after her parents divorced (Patricia, interview 1, 178-193). However, when I asked her about her student teaching experience, she returned to her contentious experience in high school as the most influential factor shaping her commitment to teach toward social justice.

Uh, really my high school experience shaped, (E)  
and I said okay, everything that they did I'm not going to do. (E)  
Every single thing that they did I, (E)  
I know, if I don't know anything else, then (E)  
I know that I'm going to do everything totally opposite of what they did. (E)  
(Patricia, interview 1, 346-350)

At the close of the interview, when I asked her if anything else had shaped her teaching philosophy, she linked her students' feelings of helplessness to her own oppressed past.

Um, I, I think, uh, and I think I kind of touched on it a little bit, (A)  
but, um, mainly just seeing//a lot of the students feel so//helpless. (O)  
And, and seeing the problem, and seeing the things (C)  
but feeling like there was nothing that they can do about it. (C)  
And I know that's true because I was that student, (E)  
so, that really, even if they just had an ally, (E)  
even if they just had someone that they can vent to, (E)  
if they had a situation, and gave them another perspective, (E)  
then, it makes me feel like I'm doing something to help the cause. (R)  
(Patricia, interview 1, 422-429)

Like Sandra and John before her, Patricia's personal experiences with oppression provided her with both the commitment and the tools to teach toward social justice. She has positioned herself to be the teacher-ally that never materialized when she was in high school.

#### *David's Story of Observing the Oppression of Others*

*Summary of David's Life Story.* At the time of the study, David was a white male in his fifties who taught in an affluent, suburban school district with a majority of white

students but a relatively diverse student body. He grew up in a predominantly white, homogeneous, working class neighborhood outside of a large, Midwestern city. His parents were not particularly liberal and his father distrusted the protest movements of the 1960's. However his mother prohibited the use of racial epithets in her home. His father died while David was still in high school and for the next few years he remembers being more interested in social events and athletics than academics. He enrolled in a large, state university and joined a fraternity. While a member of that fraternity he was exposed to virulent racism for the first time in his life. When he returned home on winter break during his sophomore year he read David Halberstam's, *The Best and the Brightest*, which proved to be a transformative moment. When he returned to college he became more serious in his studies and he ultimately entered law school. As a personal injury lawyer he witnessed significant exploitation of economically disadvantaged people. He was also exposed to anti-Semitism for the first time when he married a Jewish woman. Ultimately, practicing law proved to be unfulfilling and David returned to school to become a social studies teacher. While taking his teacher preparation classes he developed a profound interest in black history, an interest he has pursued by attending numerous professional development workshops and institutes. His academic and personal interest led him to establish a minorities or an African American history class in the two school districts where he has worked.

*David's Narrative of Oppression.* David, like the three other participants presented in this section, participated in the pilot study during the summer of 2009. Because personal stories about discrimination emerged so early in my research, I deliberately asked David to participate because his multiply privileged identities might provide a different

perspective about the formation of a commitment to teach toward social justice.

Interestingly, David's narrative also focused on issues of oppression, however he did not tell stories about how he had personally experienced discrimination. Rather, many of his stories addressed his observations about how others were oppressed, and those observations proved to be an important factor shaping his desire to teach toward social justice.

In his first response to my opening question, he set the stage for his entire narrative by discussing the oppression he witnessed during his previous career as an attorney.

I guess as an adult, uh a pretty influential (A)  
was I had a background as a lawyer, (A)  
practiced law from here in (Midwestern city) for twenty three years. (O)  
And in my practice, which was a personal injury practice, (C)  
half of it for defense, insurance companies, (C)  
the other half, last half for plaintiffs, people who were hurt. (C)  
Uh, I think I saw a lot of these issues in, in real life, (E)  
how they affect people, how people who uh are economically disadvantaged, (E)  
that turns into political disadvantage, that turns into life disadvantage. (E)  
So I think that was very influential. Saw a lot of that. (Co)  
(David, interview I, 32-39)

After this brief opening statement, I asked David to give me a concrete example of how he witnessed people being exploited. He described his defense of day laborers who were often injured on the job, but usually did not receive justice because of the lack of stable living arrangements (David, interview 1, 41-75).

As his narrative unfolded, David shared another story about observing oppression when he attended college and joined a fraternity. Early in the interview, he noted that his mother never allowed the use of racial epithets in the house (David, interview 1, 126-

130). However, during the first days of college, his brother introduced him to two other freshmen whose racist language shocked him.

like in the first fifteen or twenty minutes of being around these two guys, (C)  
and one of them, and the guy in particular I'm thinking of, (O)  
was from, went to (name) high school, which might give it away, (O)  
but his father was the Superintendent of (name) school district, (O)  
so he was a very, you know from very privileged background you might say. (O)  
And he just started off with some of the most virulent racial invective (C)  
that I had ever heard, you know. (C)  
And it was just all nigger this, nigger that and, and lazy niggers, (C)  
and you know, lazy old nigger man, you know that kind of stuff. (C)  
And I had never really, I, I'd you know growing up in, around (Midwestern city) (E)  
I had some//not really friends but people I knew in grade school and high school (O)  
who had moved from the city to, um, where I lived. (O)  
And, and I had heard the n-word before on the playground and, and so forth. (C)  
And I had heard stories about, you know, (C)  
danger associated with being in the wrong neighborhoods in (Midwestern city) at the  
wrong time of night and so forth. (C)  
But, this was the first time, in (university), (E)  
where I heard it as virulent as it was. (E)  
And it, and I thought it was virulent, I mean I thought it was, (E)  
and this continued, uh, throughout my experience there. (Co)  
(David, interview 1, 167-182)

David followed this narrative segment with several stories about the racism he witnessed while in college. He discussed a black employee of the fraternity who was treated in a racist manner (David, interview 1, 184-216) and a trip to the local baseball park where he heard fans use racial epithets when referring to one of the black stars of the team (David, interview 1, 216-245).

David continued the theme of observing oppression in the next narrative segment when he discussed his work as an attorney. One of the first stories he shared was about how there were few black attorneys practicing in the lucrative personal injury field.

David:  
And there were other things that happened, too, (A)  
were I was friends, I, I started in a law firm, (O)  
a big law firm downtown, had no Blacks. (O)

Um, and I worked there for two years and left (C)  
and with in a couple years after I left (C)  
they hired their first black lawyer. (C)  
And, uh, the guy that I still know, (E)  
in fact his kids go to (school), you might know him (name)

Rob:  
oh yeah

David:  
Yeah and so (name) worked there for a couple of years (C)  
and then he had a couple of job changes (C)  
and finally started his own firm or has his own firm. (R)  
Um, but I noticed, you know, (E)  
there weren't many black lawyers that were working in kind of the industry. (E)  
(David, interview 1, 245-255)

The frequency of these type of stories at the beginning of his personal narrative revealed the influence that observing oppression played in shaping David's interest in teaching toward social justice. While he did not have to resist discriminatory acts against himself, he demonstrated empathy for others who were targeted by oppression.

Much of the remaining portion of his narrative focused on his experiences in school and in his teaching practice. However, many of the stories he told, and much of his interest in history education, reflected his concern about the oppression of others established in the first quarter of the narrative. For instance, he shared a story about attending a weekend workshop on the history of slavery that ignited his interest in black history.

And I was in a breakout session with (scholar), (O)  
that whole experience really motivated me, (E)  
I thought, man this is really interesting stuff. (E)  
So anyway, I think it was there that they talked (C)  
about how slavery was a topic that, that for years (C)  
had been kind of ignored in, in um in history classes and so forth. (C)  
And I think it was after that I went back (C)  
and looked at my notes from my American history class as a senior in college,(C)

and I looked to see when the first time I had noted anything about slavery was.  
(C)

And I think, you know, I think, and I had my notes, (C)  
I think I had my notes dated, and I think it was in October, (C)  
you know, the class starts in, in August 25<sup>th</sup> or whatever, (C)  
and the first time that I, that I had written the word slavery in my notes, (R)  
I think was in October. (R)  
(David, interview 1, 394-401)

His developing interest in black history, which reflected his general concern about the oppression of others, shaped David's professional trajectory. As his narrative proceeded he discussed how he has developed lessons on sensitive topics like lynching (David, interview 1, 572-716) and advocated for the creation of either a minorities or an African American history class in the two different school districts where he worked (David, interview 1, 756-837; 837-906).

At the conclusion of the interview, when I asked David if there was anything else he would like to add, he returned to the theme of observed oppression, discussing his growing awareness of anti-Semitism after he married a Jewish woman.

Well, right, yeah the other big thing that I haven't mentioned at all, (A)  
uh, which was a, a huge influence in fact on my life (E)  
was that uh my wife is Jewish. (A)  
So I married a Jewish woman and, (C)  
and as I mentioned earlier, I didn't know any Jewish people growing up. (O)  
I didn't really know Jewish people at (college), you know, (O)  
I was exposed to a few more, I knew a couple of, (C)  
I knew a girl, you know, I talked to a little bit. (C)  
Um, but not anything serious. (C)  
But, you know, the whole Jewish history (E)  
and the treatment of Jews, not just in the Holocaust (E)  
but in, throughout history, and throughout US history, (E)  
is something that, you know, has been, (E)  
that preceded my interest in African American history. (E)  
And I did, I did read kind of extensively when we, when we got married, (R)  
(David, interview 1, 912-922)

David continued to share stories of how he warned his son about identifying as Jewish when he traveled to Africa (David, interview 1, 970-980) and how his family was insensitive and did not fully recognize his sons' or wife's Jewish heritage (David, interview 1, 1001-1055). David's final statement in his life history brought his narrative full circle, returning to the influence that observing racism had on his social justice perspective.

Yeah, a, again, I say the, the one thing that really stands out to me is, (A)  
is that, that open racism in (university) (A)  
which I had never experienced before. (E)  
And that, that was really an eye-opening, (E)  
really shocking thing for me and, uh, (E)  
I didn't like it, I know I didn't like it. (E)  
I didn't, didn't do anything about it, (E)  
I didn't tell these guys like hey, shut up you're a racist, (R)  
I just kind of ignored it or, or, or (coughs) or whatever. (R)  
But I didn't like it. (Co)  
(David, interview 1, 1075-1081)

While David failed to act to challenge racism as a young man in college, much of his professional and teaching career has been dedicated to resisting the inequities he witnessed as a young man.

#### *The Varied Influence of Oppression and Privilege on Social Justice Identification*

Not all of the participants viewed their experiences with oppression in a similar fashion. For instance, while all six of the black participants discussed specific experiences with racism, they drew different conclusions about its impact on their social justice teaching practice. For Patricia, as discussed above, racial discrimination proved to be a formative factor shaping her desire to fight for social justice within schools. While Adisa also experienced racism, particularly from police, he did not face the same type of oppression during his youth. The following exchange between Adisa and Patricia during

a focus group interview revealed the varied ways oppression can influence identity development.

Patricia:

Nobody helped me with the, (C)  
I mean I had no family background to know, (O)  
and everything I had to figure out on my own, (C)  
how to apply to college, (C)  
to take the ACT, (C)  
to pay for it myself, (C)  
to get financial aid, (C)  
I had to figure it out on my own at seventeen, (R)  
because I graduated at seventeen. (R)  
I had no one. (Co)

Adisa:

Counselors at school, were they supportive?

Patricia:

Uh uh.

David:

Wow.

Adisa:

You see that's the thing, you see I never, (A)  
the high school I went to was, (A)  
I mean, um, we had a black principal, (O)  
White counselors, tons of white teachers, (O)  
I never had a black male teacher in high school or anything like that, (O)  
but man that environment was so supportive. (C)  
I mean, I put my, I put my high school education up against anyone's, (E)  
and when I went to college (C)  
and these guys were coming from (private school) type schools and stuff like  
that, (C)  
and I was in there, I mean, working with them and if not better than them. (C)  
That's, I just do not, this has been my biggest challenge as a teacher (E)  
to really deal with the inequality of education. (E)  
Academically I knew they existed, (E)  
I saw them on paper, you know but I just, (E)  
I was never truly affected by them, (E)  
I mean, it's, it's new. (Co)  
(focus group interview 2, 854-870)

These different experiences with racism led to slightly different approaches to social justice work within their respective schools. The harsh racism that Patricia faced led her to adopt a stance highly critical of institutional racism in schools.

Patricia:

When I was, when I went into the classroom, (C)  
I was just-in that school, I was just shocked about everything. (C)  
Everything just blew me away. (C)  
I was blown away by the disparity between African Americans in the honors and AP classes and the regular classes, (C)  
that just blew me away because the school is 90% African American (O)  
but they're only making up like 5% of those higher level classes (O)  
(focus group interview 2, 713-718)

Adisa agreed with much of Patricia's critique of institutionalized racism in schools, and he made several back channel comments like "yeah" and "right" as she spoke. However, he tended to take a stance more critical of his students' internalized racism when he discussed his teaching practice.

Adisa:

I just try to let students know that, you know, (C)  
from my experience that um, yes, the things are out there (C)  
and no matter what you do, people are still going to view you this way, (C)  
but bottom line you cannot-(C)  
if someone's trying to hang you, (C)  
you cannot give them a rope to do it with, (C)  
and you cannot be a, a starring role in your own oppression. (C)  
And, and that's the background and that's, (C)  
those are the things that I try to share with them. (R)  
(focus group interview 2, 380-385)

Patricia also agreed with much of what Adisa said. However, both Patricia and Adisa emphasized different approaches to challenging racism in schools, and those approaches reflected the varied ways they were affected by racism in their own lives. Patricia, who experienced considerable oppression in her high school, took a more critical perspective toward the institutional racism within her school. Adisa, who had more positive school

experiences, focused more attention to challenging the internalized oppression of his students.

In addition to varied reactions to oppression, the participants also displayed different responses to the privilege they experienced. While stories of oppression were present in eleven of the narratives, those stories generally were framed from the participant's targeted identities. Very few of the storytellers reflected at length about their own privileges, and even David's stories of observing racism and anti-Semitism did not contain a prolonged discussion about his own privileged identity. Only two participants, John and Christine, addressed how their own privileges might have influenced their perceptions. For instance, although targeted by both race and sex, Christine explained that her relative class privilege provided her a number of advantages. Early in the interview she commented:

Um/let's see//kind of an awareness of growing up (E)  
In a life of relative privilege, (E)  
and that was one in which I lived on the (neighborhood of a city) (O)  
in a neighborhood that was a really nice neighborhood, close to, (O)  
walking distance to (university) (O)  
(Christine, interview 1, 64-68)

Later in the interview, she discussed how class privilege, combined with her lighter skin tone, provided her with distinct advantages in school.

I remember uh talking with some friends, (A)  
we were in college, near the end of college, (O)  
and we realized we had been friends all our lives, (C)  
and how we were the smart kids in school n (C)  
and//probably most of the teachers loved us, yada, yada. (C)  
And then we realized, and then the kids who hated us (C)  
//and we realized we had a lot in common, (C)  
one was the color of our skin. (C)  
We were the lighter kids. (C)  
And/it was one of these things that, you know (E)  
I'm sitting around there and I'm like you know what? (E)

Think about/who the kids were who chased us home (E)  
and we were sometimes not too nice to although/(E)  
I mean, but how we were kind of set up. (R)  
(Christine, interview 1, 113-121)

However, Christine also recalled her parents emphasizing that she should not abuse her privilege but rather be concerned about those who were disadvantaged.

Rob:  
So they would talk about those issues of fairness?

Christine:  
Oh yeah, we'd have, we'd have a lot of discussions around the table (C)  
or people coming into the barbershop and, (C)  
um//the importance about caring about others, (R)  
and on a very interesting level. (E)  
(Christine, interview 1, 210-212)

The relative absence of stories about privilege suggests that narratives about the discrimination one or others faced may be more influential in shaping a commitment to social justice than stories about privilege.

### Stories of Spirituality

Stories that discussed the influence of spirituality or religion on the development of the participants' social justice identities represented the least frequent of the four primary themes, and it was the last primary theme to be identified during data collection and preliminary analysis. In all of the interviews I asked participants about the influence of religion on their worldview, and while eleven participants addressed the topic, six of them were either ambivalent or negative regarding the effect of spirituality on their social justice consciousness. However, the eleventh and thirteenth participants began their narratives by stressing the importance of religion and returned to that theme several times throughout their life history. Thus, I included stories of spirituality as a primary theme since it fulfills the definition of a primary theme as one that was emphasized by at least

two participants in their response to my first, open-ended question and that was repeated with high frequency during the course of at least two life history narratives.

*Dominic's Story of a Spiritual Awakening and Mission*

*Summary of Dominic's Life Story.* At the time of the study, Dominic was a black male of Caribbean descent in his early thirties who taught in a suburban school district with a majority black population. He grew up in a relatively integrated suburb outside of a Midwestern city. He is a third generation educator and his parents, particularly his mother, stressed the history of their native land and challenged him to watch the news and contemplate international issues of justice. He attended Catholic school until his late elementary years and then transferred to the local public school district. He discussed the difficulty of finding an authentic, black identity as he pursued his education in high school and college. An encounter with the legal system during his college years led to a dramatic transformation, and after a period of reading and soul searching he found direction through the spiritual framework of Rastafari. For a short period he lived communally with two other Rasta men and found work in construction and manual labor. Ultimately he decided to pursue a career in education. He earned his degree in African American studies and began working as an intern and provisionally certified teacher in two school districts. In 2004 he obtained his job with his current school district and he has experimented with a variety of strategies to facilitate the education and liberation of his students, the majority of whom are black. Dominic is also a musician, and he has tried to share his spiritual message through his songs and performances.

*Dominic's Narrative of Spirituality.* Religion and spirituality emerged as a central influence in Dominic's life in his response to my opening question. The first story he

shared explained how a Catholic priest's discussion of the passion of Christ made him wonder about fairness and justice.

Uh, the first I would say, experience, actually (A)  
I thought about this uh prior to// (A)  
was I think, the first time I think I realized (E)  
that, you know, there had to be fairness and equity in the way people were treated  
(E)  
was when I was in third grade and I, uh, when I was in third grade (O)  
and uh, it was like the first time// that the uh priest actually told us about the signs  
of the cross. (C)  
And I had never heard the story before, (C)  
I guess, you know, coherently// (C)  
maybe I heard before, maybe it wasn't really sinking in. (C)  
And then, when I saw the outcome of how Jesus Christ was treated/ (E)  
I took it personally. You know what I'm saying, (E)  
I took it personally like, wow you know, (E)  
not just on the level of, you know, any type of spiritual martyrdom (E)  
but I was just like that wasn't fair (laughs), it wasn't fair. (E)  
And that feeling/just/enlivened me to the point to where I was like, (E)  
wow, you know we have to make sure that, (R)  
despite what other people want, (R)  
we have to make sure that everyone has a fair chance (R)  
(Dominic, interview 1, 33-45)

As the evaluative comments at the end of this story reveal, Dominic clearly saw his commitment to equity and justice linked with his understanding of religion and spirituality. That interest in spirituality reemerged at the end of his response to my opening question. After briefly discussing his experience as a musician, he tied his musical performances to his new spiritual framework, Rastafari.

at the same time I'm still, give messages and spread love (C)  
and, and, and peace and joy to people man (C)  
because we need that in so many different ways, um/ (E)  
and, as, as a Rasta man, you know what I'm saying, um//you know cause//(O)  
Rastafari, it applies, uh, a spiritual militancy//(C)  
cause you realize you are at war/ (C)  
you know, but it's not a physical war// (C)  
you deal with you know, it's strictly weapons-spiritual weapons you know, (C)  
the drum, meditation, and education/ (C)  
it's, it's a serious way where you convey your meditation. (C)

You know what I'm saying, it's in one way it's academic, you know, (C)  
but it can manifest in so many different ways so, (C)  
so that's, that's really where I find myself now, (E)  
is just/alright, well you know/as a musician, as an educator, (E)  
I want to continue to/you know teach people how to fish, (E)  
you know/cause giving fish out man, (R)  
it just, just does nothing but create contempt for other people.// (R)  
You know so I'm, I would like to think I'm doing, I'm making progress, (Co)  
(Dominic, interview 1, 110-122)

The evaluative statements at the end of this narrative segment linked Dominic's spiritual connection to Rastafari with his identity as both a musician and educator.

Later in the interview, Dominic explained how his spiritual awakening occurred after an encounter with the legal system forced him to reevaluate both his identity and his direction in life.

I just began to immerse myself//. (C)  
You know I didn't go out anymore, (C)  
I, I, I relegated myself to like eating once a day, (C)  
studying, you know what I mean. (C)  
I, you know, friends would call me on the phone, (C)  
eventually I just put it down, you know (C)  
and I just kind of got my little, my little monk thing on, (C)  
I was like if I'm going to expand// (E)  
then I have to be in tune with who I am naturally, (E)  
and I can no longer pretend, (E)  
because trying to pretend just makes you an (inaud) (R)  
and it leads towards the path of destruction. (R)  
(Dominic, interview 1, 283-289)

The language he used in this section, "I got my, my little monk thing on" revealed the influence of spirituality on his worldview. Eventually, his spiritual quest ended when he was exposed to the ideas of Rastafari through a video about Bob Marley.

But anyway, um///(laughs) I entered into a period, man, (C)  
where I found that, I found that Bob Marley video (C)  
and I watched it, (C)  
and it introduced me to Rastafari, (E)  
like what it was and how//it totally rearranged the concept/of//you know black

spirituality (E)  
(Dominic, interview 1, 314-316)

This new concept of black spirituality emerged as a central part of Dominic's identity.

After a period of meditation and prayer, he came into contact with other Rasta men with whom he lived in a communal setting for a short period. While he valued the spiritual community in which he found himself immersed, he began to have differences with his friends regarding formal education. He eventually returned to college and majored in African American history, and the spiritual tenets of Rastafari continued to shape his development (Dominic, interview 1, 337-484).

As Dominic transitioned to talking about his early teaching experiences, he discussed how his spiritual framework influenced his practice. After sharing some early frustrations, I asked him about why he felt unsupported in one of the first districts where he taught.

Rob:

Was your, you thought that you were going to be in an environment where that was going to be supported and it wasn't

Dominic:

Because//just the concept of, of African consciousness (A)  
is, is/somewhat, can be somewhat threatening, you know what I mean. (A)  
Because//so, people have been taught, (C)  
I believe people have been taught so much negativity, you know, (C)  
so much negative things about Africa, (C)  
people are taught to fear it//you know (C)  
because bottom line it's just antithetical to assimilation, man, uh// (C)  
So, white, black or whatever, you know/ (O)  
people/are trained in the same ways of colonization//you know, (C)  
everyone is, everyone is colonized, everyone is regardless of skin color, (C)  
it's just your role in that colonization that is different, you know what I'm  
saying? (R)

So once I realized that I was like oh, uh (E)  
well uh, you know I'm going to have to figure something else out (E)  
(Dominic, interview 1, 516-526)

Dominic has sought to challenge such attitudes through both lessons and a classroom persona that emphasize liberation (Dominic, interview 1, 531-590).

At the end of the interview, when I asked if there was anything else that contributed to his commitment to teach toward social justice, Dominic returned to the theme of spirituality. First, he shared a story about how Bob Marley was shot prior to a concert, explaining that Marley performed anyway because “the bad guy’s aren’t taking a day off so why should I?” (Dominic, interview 1, 609). He then linked that story to a story from his own childhood.

I grew up as sick child man, with asthma and allergies, (A)  
and uh, when I was about six years old man you know, (O)  
I had been able to reconcile my fear of death, cause I was close to it. (E)  
You know not being able to breathe, and I knew I was close to dying// (C)  
and I was able to accept that, that there was something else beyond this world  
(E)  
because I could feel it, you know, because I was almost there. (E)  
And I realized that, you know, even then, (E)  
there was negative forces playing upon my structure-playing upon me (E)  
because the work that I’m put here to do (E)  
is to be something that, that is formidable, that’s major, (E)  
so//I take that experience that I’ve been, (E)  
I can never take life for granted because I almost lost it, you know, (E)  
and even though I have and many times over, you know uh/ (R)  
what I mean//I’m learning every day. (R)  
(Dominic, interview 1, 612-621)

Like Bob Marley, Dominic’s life has been shaped by a spiritual mission to resist evil and promote greater consciousness. To accomplish that mission, Dominic became a teacher who teaches toward social justice.

#### *Linda’s Story of the Social Gospel*

*Summary of Linda’s Life Story.* Linda was a white female in her fifties at the time of the study who taught in an affluent suburb with a majority white population. She was born in the community where she currently teaches, and although her parents were

relatively conservative, they always stressed the importance of helping others and they became increasingly liberal as the social and political events of the 1960's and 1970's unfolded. Linda and her parents were members of the Episcopal Church, and she emphasized how the church exposed her to the idea of the social gospel, a Protestant tradition that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that emphasized the responsibility of Christians to work for justice and equity in the world (Rossinow, 2005). In high school she had two influential teachers who encouraged her to explore both the humanities and current events. She attended a small, relatively conservative college and planned to study Russian history and culture to facilitate her desire to work for peace in the midst of the Cold War. While in college, she remained connected to the church although she did not find the local organization as liberal as her own church. She also helped establish the first NOW chapter at the school. She later transferred to a large state university and continued to be interested in the events of the day, particularly the emerging conflict in the Middle East. After college, she decided to pursue a teaching career and after gaining provisional certification she began to teach history and literature at her alma mater. In her early career Linda often found herself advocating for marginalized students. To continue this fight for inclusion and acceptance in her school, Linda has sponsored the diversity alliance and she has used her authority as chair of the honors program to challenge the insensitive or oppressive actions of other staff members.

*Linda's Narrative of Spirituality.* Like Dominic, Linda's immediate response to my opening question emphasized the role that religion had played in shaping her worldview. Unfortunately, during the first interview I failed to depress the record

button. To recapture the sequence of the interview, I conducted another life history interview and used my field notes to remind her of her responses to the original questions. In the segment below, Linda recounted the significance of religion and the idea of the social gospel that she had discussed in her opening response during the first, unrecorded interview.

I think very much, as you mentioned earlier (A)  
and obviously what we share in common, the Episcopal Church, (A)  
and I was very drawn, even as a very young child to, uh, the social gospel. (C)  
When, when I would see, (C)  
it wouldn't be just what we were reading (C)  
but it was what we were doing, (C)  
it was imagining um, Jesus embracing Mary Magdalene, (C)  
I mean that spoke a lot more to me than other elements. (E)  
Um/, going to a church where um, going to a church where (artist name) uh, did  
the principal decorations (C)  
and you know using, uh, some remnants from you know weaponry to build our  
original sanctuary, (C)  
I mean just sort of things that reminded me (E)  
of, that's it's not really what we do on Sunday (E)  
it's what we can take and live on a day to day basis. (E)  
And that was very much, um, I think that was role modeled for me (E)  
not only at home but, but equally at church. (E)  
And so that became, that became tangible for me, (R)  
that became something that I could commit to (R)  
(Linda, interview 1, 49-64)

She then explained how the Church's endorsement of women's ordination in the 1970's was particularly influential in shaping her vision of what it meant to be an advocate for social justice.

Um, and then I think I mentioned that one of my youth group leaders (O)  
was one of the first women to be ordained, (O)  
and so I was invited to be an acolyte down at (cathedral name), (C)  
and it was all going to be very exciting, (C)  
and I was going to carry the crucifix from (church name) (C)  
and I was just like, I was so excited. (E)  
And we got there and there were people outside protesting, you know, (C)  
and so it was really my first, uh, again, and, and then I felt empowered, (R)  
it was like okay, I'm, I'm going to be here for (woman's name) (R)

man, this is what we're about, you know. (R)  
And so, uh, and, and to fast forward to, well okay, (E)  
what did that mean, that meant for me even as I went off to college, (E)  
a feeling like/a communion rail should be opened to all. (E)  
Um, the sacraments of the church should be open to all, (E)  
and of course as you know we're still struggling with that, you know, (E)  
in terms of how we're going to treat, you know, our, our gay, lesbian population,  
(E)  
how we're going to honor and not honor, you know, their commitments to one  
another. (E)  
So, I think that was my path, um, (Co)  
but you know, but the work's never been done so it, it's still there. (Co)  
(Linda, interview 1, 74-87)

The sequence of evaluative statements captured Linda's religiously inspired vision of social justice, one where all people were equally welcomed into the church. Linda's participation in the ordination of one of the first female priests in the Episcopal Church empowered her to carry this vision with her as she pursued her education and career.

Linda's interest in peace studies during her college career was also influenced by her experiences in the church. As a young woman in the early seventies, one of the leaders of her church youth group faced the challenge of deciding how he would respond to the draft (Linda, interview 1, 177-184). When she went to her first college, she tried to remain connected to the church, however the local campus ministry was more conservative than her home church and she ended up worshiping with the local Roman Catholic community (322-343). However, she never broke with her denomination, and she even lived in Episcopal housing one summer when she transferred to a larger university.

during the depression, um, the church had built a residence hall (O)  
and so you could, um, you could stay there, (O)  
you know, rent free, you had to, in exchange for work (O)  
and there was a big kitchen at the base (O)  
and we had kind of a co-op cooking situation, (O)  
some people participated and other people didn't, but most of us did. (C)

Um, and it was easy, you know it was just dinner (C)  
so you might take a dinner every two weeks or something is how it kind of worked out. (C)  
Um, but uh, I lived there, uh, the summer between my junior and senior year. Um,  
and that was nice, (C)  
and again it was an engaging community, (E)  
and um, you know perfect, maybe not, (E)  
but um, you know we had, again indicative of (university) as a big university, (O)  
I mean the, there were a number of you know African//Anglicans living there, (O)  
you know so from Kenya, you know from Nigeria. (O)  
Well you see I had not really been exposed to that, (E)  
I mean that's part of what I love about (her current church), (E)  
you know that's that was so, (her current church) we're blessed in that regard,  
that we have that, (E)  
but you know that had never really been part of my, (E)  
you know we didn't even have any black Episcopalian at (original church) (E)  
much less an African Episcopalian, you know. (E)  
Um, and so, and in that regard you know it was nice, (E)  
(Linda, interview 1, 349-365)

Again, in her evaluative comments Linda discussed how much she enjoyed the multicultural nature of her church's community, reflecting her open and inclusive vision of social justice.

This notion of an open and accepting community served as the foundation for Linda's teaching philosophy. When I asked her about her early years of teaching, she connected this sense of an open community to her teaching practice.

Rob:

How did teaching help sort of focus your, you know those first few years of teaching and seeing what was happening to young people, influence your commitment to teaching and being an activist for social justice in schools.

Linda:

Well, that's a good question. Um, I think part of it was, um, (E)  
I, I ultimately know that what has empowered me most as a teacher (E)  
is to remember what allowed me to feel valued in a class, (E)  
and when you feel valued in a class, eh then how did I best learn? (E)  
I mean it was both of those, like when I, when I felt like somebody really cared  
(E)  
if I was there each day, you know made that, made it that big of a deal (E)

that, knew each face and knew about you, (E)  
(Linda, interview 1, 412-421)

Linda continued to explain that her desire to care for and value each student did not mean that she abandoned high standards. In fact, she explained that she is the type of teacher who expects much from her students. However, her care for her students' well-being has led her to advocate for those who feel marginalized. For instance, she concluded her response by discussing her responsibility to challenge a teacher who had made insensitive comments about gays and lesbians.

But the other teacher, who uses it rather often, (O)  
and uses it as kids do where oh, that's so gay, you know, (O)  
she uses it frequently in her classroom (O)  
and she teaches in my program, (O)  
so it's like okay I'm, I'm gonna have to go talk, (R)  
I mean that's what I'm going to do, (R)  
(Linda, interview 1, 471-475)

Linda's religious experiences nurtured a worldview that seeks the inclusion of all people, regardless of their identities, into one community. This vision of social justice, inspired by the social gospel, empowered her to advocate for her students just as it empowered her to participate in the ordination of one of the first woman priests in the Episcopal Church.

#### *The Limits of Spirituality and Religion's Influence*

As I mentioned in the introduction to this section, almost half of the storytellers did not see religion as particularly influential in shaping their social justice orientation. Some participants viewed their religious experiences in a negative light. For instance, Sandra discussed how her church snubbed a black couple that attempted to join the congregation.

there was a, one African American family (O)  
that wanted to join our church. (O)  
And///I , I don't know what happened, I don't know, (E)

but I just know they were just there for one or two Sundays (C)  
and then they never came back. (C)  
And, and///again that was just something that as a kid (E)  
I didn't put a lot of thought into (E)  
but as I got older I started putting the little pieces together (E)  
of things that have been said in church and things, (E)  
the way the minister acts around people, (E)  
that I know can look back and I can assume (E)  
it was because they were African American that they were not welcomed. (R)  
And I just, I have a hard time reconciling that with how I was raised. (E)  
(Sandra, interview 1, 109-117)

While it took awhile for Sandra to process her experiences in church, Christine discussed how her concerns about the role of the church developed when she was a young woman.

Christine:  
I grew up Congregationalist, so as a Congregationalist// (O)  
I was painfully aware of the Congregationalist role in the taking of Hawaii,(E)  
and announced to my parents that I was no longer giving to the missionary fund.  
(C)  
My mother, who was often just oh my goodness, (C)  
where does this child get what she gets? (C)  
Uh, my, my mother said just be quiet about it, okay. (C)  
Just, just don't give to the missionary fund but just don't make it a big deal, please  
(C)  
(laughs) so I didn't. (R)  
(Christine, interview 1, 74-79)

Although Christine continued to respect her mother's wishes and taught Sunday school until she was twenty-four, she stopped attending church once she moved out of her parents' home (Christine, interview 1, 315-320).

Other participants acknowledged that religion supported their emerging social justice identity, but they did not see spirituality as a powerful force positioning them along their trajectory to becoming social justice advocates. When I asked him about the influence of religion, Craig explained that the stories he heard during Yom Kippur services made him feel like he needed to advocate for the oppressed “because that’s what it says, it says you know they did it to us now you go out and find somebody to, to do

what should have been done to protect us, okay, I mean that's the story" (Craig, interview 1, 248-250). However, he concluded with the following response to a question about the influence of religion on his social justice identity:

It didn't, it didn't, I don't think, (E)  
or at least not on a conscious level,(E)  
it didn't push me in the direction that I, that I was in, (E)  
although I certainly knew as a young person that, um, (E)  
that, that uh the Jewish philosophy, uh, was/ (E)  
you know on the side of where I was, okay, at least in theory, at least in theory.  
(E)  
Uh, and I knew that, and I liked that, (E)  
but I wasn't very religious, (O)  
I didn't, wasn't a very observant, (O)  
I wasn't very involved. (O)  
I'd go, sometimes but, and I liked going, but um, (C)  
and I liked the tradition part of it, uh, (C)  
but uh I don't think, I don't, (E)  
it didn't consciously influence me, (E)  
may-there may have been some in there (R)  
(Craig, interview 1, 265-272)

While Craig acknowledged that his religious experiences had some influence, he does not see faith and spirituality as the leading factor in the development of his social justice perspective.

These examples suggest that religion influences the development of a social justice identity in a variety of ways. For some, like Dominic and Linda, religion can be a powerful force that inspires a social justice worldview. For others like Craig, religion can serve as one of the institutions that thickens an already developing awareness about social justice. Finally, by resisting what they viewed as unjust practices in the church, Sandra and Christine positioned themselves along a new trajectory that emphasized equity and justice. All of these experiences indicate that religion and spirituality, while not the most

common of the primary themes identified in this sample, can play a significant role in the development of teachers who teach toward social justice.

## CHAPTER 5

### SECONDARY THEMES IN LIFE HISTORY NARRATIVES

As discussed in the previous chapter, early life experiences proved central in shaping a commitment to equity and justice. The stories the participants shared during their responses to my opening question emphasized the influence of family, teachers, oppression and spirituality on their developing worldviews. While their basic life trajectories were set during their youth, other experiences, many of them occurring later in life, provided these teachers with the opportunity to refine and reframe their perspectives on social justice. The teachers in this study tended to discuss such experiences in the stories they shared later in the life history interview. I argue that these stories, which continue to demonstrate alignment and resistance, provide important data to explain the ongoing development of an identity passionate about social justice. By detailing the maturation of the participants' worldview, we can identify tools that may be useful in promoting a greater commitment to social justice among social studies teachers. I discuss the implications of these interpretations more fully in chapter 8.

In this chapter I analyze the secondary themes identified in the life history narratives. As described in chapter 3, secondary themes were defined as themes that were not emphasized in at least two participants' opening responses or were not repeated with high frequency during the course of the life history narratives. The six secondary themes include: stories of teaching experience, stories of friends, stories of non-teaching work experience, stories of community, stories of media/current events, and stories of creative expression. By labeling these themes as "secondary" I do not mean to imply that they

were not important in either aligning the participants along a social justice path or promoting their resistance to inequity and injustice. They are secondary themes only because they were not stressed in the responses to my opening question or were not repeated with high frequency.

My presentation of the participants' stories in this chapter differs slightly from my analysis in chapter 4. In this chapter I interpret narrative segments from several participants instead of presenting archetypal examples. In a process more similar to content analysis than narrative analysis, I share examples from multiple teachers to support my interpretations, and I do not follow the sequential development of a theme across a participant's entire life history. Since all of participants' stories are interpreted sequentially in either chapter 4 or chapter 6, I decided that a focus on the content of stories in this section was an acceptable deviation from Riessman's (2003, 2008) suggestion that narrative analysis preserve the sequential nature of a story. However, I continue to present direct quotes in a format that allows for structural analysis and interpretation of the evaluative comments made by the participants. The themes are arranged according to the frequency with which they appeared in the narratives, with the most frequent themes presented first. I also include some data from the focus group interviews.

### Stories of Teaching Experience

Every participant shared stories about how teaching shaped their social justice identity. However, they generally did not address this topic until later in the interview when I asked them a question about their teaching experiences, and no participant emphasized teaching at the beginning of their response to my first, open-ended question.

For most participants, their early teaching experiences reinforced a concern about justice that developed through other life events. All of the participants shared stories about injustice and oppressive structures they witnessed in their schools. Their efforts to resist and challenge those inequities helped move them along on their trajectory of becoming teachers focused on social justice.

For instance, Allen questioned the inequitable distribution of resources he witnessed in the parochial school where he began his career.

uh//poor school, extremely poor (denomination) school, (O)  
uh, books students were using in middle school (C)  
I used when I was in middle school. (C)  
And uh, information was just extremely dated, (C)  
and I felt like, (E)  
and the school was all black, (O)  
and I felt like, you know, uh one, parents are paying for this education, (E)  
I thought that was incredibly odd that they would be settling for, uh, twenty year old books. (E)  
Two, I thought, man these students are going to be at a disadvantage (E)  
even though they're at a private school, they're going to be at a disadvantage (E)  
because the information, specifically from what I was teaching, (E)  
uh, social studies, US history to eighth graders, and uh//English, (E)  
I felt like//they're going to be behind the learning curve (E)  
because if this is///I felt like I needed to bring in some outside resources, (E)  
and that's what I did. (C)  
That, that's what teaching is, you know, (E)  
you're not just relying on the books, (E)  
but the books that they're taking home// (R)  
will help put them at a disadvantage I felt like. (R)  
(Allen, interview 1, 428-440)

Allen concluded his story by explaining how he questioned the school administration regarding the inadequate materials. Although he did not obtain funding to buy newer books, Allen did begin to work creatively within the school setting to facilitate greater learning (Allen, interview 1, 440-454). Creative problem solving, particularly within a restrictive environment, is a hallmark of Allen's social justice approach. As he

explained at the end of his interview, he seeks to build coalitions between various groups, and his approach requires compromise. “I’m like, alright//so it feels like//it’s a politics game, uh, because you want to build bridges” (Allen, 516-517).

Whereas Allen noticed the lack of resources in his first teaching position, Karen observed an inequitable distribution of resources when she taught for the first time. She received a one-year appointment to teach government in an affluent suburban school district, and during that year she saw how ability level tracking provided some students with more educational opportunities than others.

Um, and I really felt like (school 1) didn’t meet the needs of their average students real well. (E)

They’re all about honors, and honors this and honors that. (O)

Well I taught regular old government kids. (C)

Sure they’re wealthy, most of them, (O)

but you know they’re not geniuses. (O)

And, I just never felt like I got any help, (E)

I never felt like people understood these kids. (E)

Um, so I had some, again, more political issues with (school 1). (E)

(Karen, interview 1, 307-312)

Karen viewed this attention to only high performing students as inequitable, and her “political issues” with the school district’s priorities led her to take a new position in a working class community (Karen, interview 1, 313-314).

Sandra also became aware of social inequities during her early teaching practice, however her concerns focused more on curriculum rather than resource allocation. A state history course revealed the inability of textbooks to accurately represent the heritage of many of her students who were of American Indian descent. In response to a question about professional development she shared the following story.

I guess, actually, when I noticed that I started becoming more aware (E)

and wanting to really focus and try and do something was actually (E)  
when I was teaching (state) history, um. (C)  
And, the book perspective of (state) history, (C)  
I mean there was only two textbooks you could get, (C)  
and, or two texts that you could buy for high school, (C)  
and they were very///they were very much the white man's history of (state).  
(C)  
Oh! The Native Americans were moved to (state) and they loved it. (C)  
(Sandra, interview 1, 477-482)

Sandra's dissatisfaction with the textbook led her to design a research project that required her students to explore their heritage. That early experience continues to influence her approach to teaching social studies toward social justice as she explained late in the interview.

You have to, you have to do research, (A)  
you have to pick and choose what, (C)  
because then when we learned about, you know, little things, little things like  
Rosa Parks, (O)  
and well she was really old and tired, is what they were told. (O)  
And then when they start researching, (C)  
well she really wasn't that old, she was forty-two. (C)  
Yeah. She wasn't just like tired from a long day of work. (C)  
No. You know, it was, it's just interesting that//I don't know, (E)  
I just, I have always had a hard time with how some history is taught, (E)  
and why you wouldn't tell the truth behind it. (R)  
And that's more//I don't know (Co)  
(Sandra, interview 1, 558-565)

For Sandra, research provided the opportunity to challenge the hegemonic narratives she saw in the standard curriculum.

Some participants described how their interactions with students early in their career helped form their views on teaching. David explained how a lesson about lynching convinced him of the efficacy of presenting emotionally difficult stories, even if students initially resisted. He began his story by describing how one black student did not want to engage with an activity that required him to analyze realistic

accounts of lynching. Ultimately the student had a change of heart and, at the end of the lesson, he complimented David on the unit.

And then after going through the whole exercise to, (R)  
to have that realization and have him acknowledge that, (R)  
you know, that, that he really enjoyed it, (R)  
that he felt like he got something, not that he enjoyed it (R)  
but he really got something out of it. (R)  
This is a kid who is not a high achieving student by any stretch, you know.(O)  
And so that was really a great thing for me as a teacher (E)  
because I thought, well, you know, now as I've said (E)  
I've used that//um, in every class since then, (E)  
even though my first years I taught geography, world culture. (R)  
(David, interview 1, 680-686)

As indicated by the evaluative comments at the end of this narrative segment, David's interactions with students early in his career helped shape his professional identity.

The stories above indicate that the participants' teaching experiences, particularly those that occurred early in their career, proved to be an important factor leading them to resist unjust practices and position themselves as teachers who teach toward social justice. Interestingly, none of the participants shared stories about positive teaching experiences where a socially just school or principal helped align them along a path toward social justice. While Karen, Christine and Sandra all mentioned the positive influence other teachers had on their teaching identity, their narratives nevertheless emphasized the ways they resisted oppressive structures in schools. The lack of positive stories for this theme reflects a chilling reality about the failure of many schools to establish genuinely equitable and just climates. It also suggests that teaching toward social justice often requires an educator to take an oppositional stance within their school system.

## Stories of Friends

Although I asked each participant about their teaching experience, my schedule of questions for the life history interview did not include a specific inquiry about the influence of friends. However, early in the pilot study, stories of friends emerged as an important factor shaping the identity of the participants. While I did not add a specific question about friends after the pilot study, I did remain attentive to comments about friends and would ask probing questions if the storyteller introduced the subject. Ultimately, ten of the participants shared stories about how a circle of friends influenced their development as teachers who teach toward social justice.

Craig's story revealed how supportive friends can help align a person along a social justice path. He described how his early questions about inequality found more definitive answers when he began to date a woman whose parents were involved in the protest movements of the 1960's.

they/were supremely radical politically, (O)  
and I had enormous respect for them, and, and, (O)  
and how they lived their lives, because believe me,(C)  
they truly, they weren't just talking, they were doing. (C)  
They did everything, they were always involved with everything, (C)  
they always stood up for anything that looked like it needed somebody to stand up  
and be supportive, they were there. (C)  
And, uh, tremendous people. (R)  
Uh, so, you know, that was an enormous influence on me, (E)  
and like I said I met them when I was fourteen, but, but, (E)  
so I had already had this inclination (E)  
and then the connection with this family was, uh, was a, (E)  
was a giant thing for me, you know. (E)  
(Craig, interview 1, 301-309)

Although he was interested in social justice, Craig's experience with this family, which he eventually joined when he married his girlfriend, changed that inclination into a central component of his identity.

Like Craig, Allen shared a story about how his commitment to social justice advocacy was inspired by a circle of eight friends who exposed him to new ideas at a transitional moment in his life. After discussing how he came into contact with these individuals, he shared an extended evaluative section explaining their significance on the formation of his identity.

but those eight probably impacted me more so than anybody else. (E)  
Specifically I, I know in my adult life but I feel like in my life, (E)  
but then again that takes some, a lot of reflecting, (E)  
and I'm not in that place to do that right now, uh (E)  
and when I said I don't mean it to, to suggest that other people haven't shaped me, (E)  
but those eight, I felt like, represented not only my identity (E)  
but the possibility of other identities that other things that I could achieve or  
aspire to, (E)  
uh, because when I moved to (city name), even though I was going to graduate  
school, (E)  
I still had no idea, uh, of what I wanted or even who I was. (E)  
Who I was was, who I was at that moment, (E)  
and not who I wanted to be down the line (E)  
or who, how my history impacted who I am today, so, uh, (E)  
it was, uh, very much in the moment of who I was, (R)  
it was like, all right, this is who I am now. (R)  
(Allen, interview 1, 370-380)

Allen also explained that this circle of friends continued to support his commitment to social justice.

Sandra also shared how she found both inspiration and support from a network of friends, both personal and professional, who stimulated her in her desire to teach for equity and justice. A group of girlfriends in college shaped an interest in broader ideas of social justice (Sandra, interview 1, 366-375), and colleagues at her first teaching job furthered that interest (Sandra, interview 1, 579-596). At the end of the interview she remarked how her current department helped her maintain her dedication to treating students in a human and caring way.

I now work with a department of great professionals (A)  
who//you know, eh-throughout the school, (O)  
who exhibit//the way, (C)  
its really just more the way people should be treated. (C)  
And to me, you need to not only be the example of that// (E)  
but you need to, I mean at this, at this age level (E)  
you need to be showing them how that happens. (R)  
(Sandra, interview I, 597-600)

However, not all friends were supportive and caring people who helped align participants along a social justice trajectory. Jeff's experience with friends who acted in oppressive ways led him to question their behavior, and his resistance to their actions ultimately strengthened his commitment to equity and justice.

But what I remember is, they would, (C)  
each freshman, they would take (C)  
and, if you remember like in *Animal House* (O)  
where they would harass, you know, (C)  
they wouldn't physically abuse us, (C)  
but they'd take each freshman and, and blindfolded, (C)  
and they'd just start yelling things at 'em. (C)  
And I, I was a big soul music fan, (O)  
and they knew that I was liberal, you know, (O)  
and then, in the middle of the night during this haze (C)  
and they start yelling at me (C)  
and they start saying what is this thing you have about Blacks? (C)  
Black people, you know, what is it? (C)  
And they'd start yelling at me about this (laughs) (C)  
and I'm thinking//you know I almost laughed it was stupid, (E)  
but that was the mindset, it was 1967, in the fall, you know, (R)  
68 hadn't happened, which was the big year. (R)  
(Jeff, interview 1, 236-245)

Jeff's interest in black culture and social justice, which had been nurtured in his home, grew stronger as he resisted the racist taunts of his classmates in college.

While friends influenced the development of these participants' social justice identities in different ways, John's story revealed how important friends are for maintaining a commitment to fight for equity and justice within schools. He explained

that, at the time of the study, he did not have a network of friends in his school supporting his interest in social justice. As a young teacher in a homogenous and conservative suburban district, he shared feelings of isolation and vulnerability when he described his teaching position.

I don't think a lot of people share the idea of// (E)  
eh, you know, some of these equity issues about, that I believe. (E)  
So, I think you just have to feel people out, (E)  
I'm still at that process where last year, (E)  
I just wanted to make sure I got another contract. (E)  
I guess I want that every year, but I was focused on//(E)  
you know making it through my first year, and//(E)  
now I'm pushing the envelope a little more.// (E)  
But///(hh) it's a challenge, (E)  
I mean I think if you talk to me//five or six years from now you would, (E)  
I would probably feel differently. (R)  
(John, interview 1, 395-403)

Because he lacked the support of other progressive educators, John decided to defer some of his activism until a time when tenure provided him with greater protection.

These stories revealed how a commitment to social justice can strengthen when a person aligns themselves with progressive friends or when they resist the oppressive actions of their peers. However, as John's story suggests, without supportive friends it can be difficult for a teacher to maintain the courage to challenge inequitable situations in schools.

### Stories of Community

Nine of the thirteen participants discussed the influence of their neighborhood on the development of their social justice identity. This relatively high percentage of responses most likely resulted from the fact that my interview schedule included a question about the community in which they were raised. Interestingly, most of the respondents described their neighborhoods but they did not return to this topic during the

remainder of the interview. Only one participant, Goldie, spoke about her neighborhood at length in response to my first, open-ended question. Because the topic was not emphasized in more than one opening response nor frequently discussed in more than one interview, I categorized stories of community as a secondary theme.

For a few participants, the surrounding community helped align them along a social justice path. For instance, Adisa's developing ideas about social justice and pride in black achievement were supported in the two neighborhoods where he lived as a young man.

And//I never felt like a minority, (E)  
part of that is growing up in (city) 95% black, (O)  
going to majority black schools, (C)  
even the high school I went to, (C)  
it was a suburban school in, right outside of (city), (O)  
(school name) where the population was about 75% black (O)  
and because of the area, um most of the black families out there were middle class, upper middle class, (O)  
and my, my parents had divorced by the time (C)  
and my, my mother was renting a townhouse out there, (C)  
so we were okay, I mean it was a struggle. (C)  
I found out how much she, she made, and she made less than I make now (E)  
and I have absolutely no idea of how she raised three kids on that and living in the suburbs. (E)  
But, um, but the white kids at the school were actually the leftovers from when the area was rural. (O)  
So, they were poorer than the black people at the school, (C)  
so you're looking at a school that had a majority black and, and white minority, (R)  
and economically the Blacks were, um, were better off than the Whites there, (R)  
so, so I never got this idea of feeling inferior to, um, um, to, (E)  
to the I guess the dominant race, (E)  
cause I didn't even see it. (Co)  
(Adisa, interview 1, 55-70)

While Adisa's surroundings encouraged his emerging social justice consciousness, other participants discussed how their community colluded with systems

of oppression. Patricia also grew up in a majority black area, but she did not share Adisa's positive memories of the neighborhood.

Um, to be quite honest, um, (A)  
my neighborhood, my church, my school where I grew up, (A)  
now that I think about it, (E)  
they were very racist and most people (O)  
think that okay, well I'll say prejudiced, they were very prejudiced. (C)  
So, think that oh, if you're an oppressed group you can't be prejudice, (E)  
um but they really were, they were very stereotypical of people, (C)  
I lived in an all-black community, (C)  
I went to an all-black school, (C)  
I went to an all-black church, (C)  
it was all in the city of (name) (R)  
(Patricia, interview I, 134-139)

Patricia did not openly resist these negative attitudes when she was a child, and only when she attended college did she begin to unpack some of the negative messages she heard as a youth (Patricia, interview 1, 261-289). However, during the focus group interview, Patricia explained that some of the institutions in her neighborhood also supported her personal development.

Patricia:  
it kind of helped that I lived in a black community (E)  
and went to a black school, (E)  
I went to a black church, (O)  
and I didn't really have to interact a lot with white people (O)  
(focus group interview 2, 487-489)

While this comment appears to contradict her earlier description, it suggests that a neighborhood can both support one's personal development while simultaneously promoting resistance to negative aspects of the community.

Like Patricia, Jeff also shared mixed feelings about his community. When he commented on the majority white municipality in which he was raised, Jeff described it as a conservative community that did not encourage progressive thought.

(municipality) was a nice, conservative community. (O)  
You know I loved it, it was a wonderful place to grow up, (E)  
but it wasn't a place where you challenged things, (E)  
it wasn't a place where you really talked about the civil rights movement in  
school, (E)  
and very, and probably less even in your social life. (E)  
You wouldn't want to talk about it, (R)  
you know, it was outside of (municipality)./// (R)  
(Jeff, interview 1, 208-213)

Like Patricia, Jeff also held positive memories of the municipality in which he was raised and where he continued to live at the time of this study. However, unlike Patricia, Jeff's mother and father had modeled how to resist the dominant values of the area. For instance, earlier in his narrative he explained how his liberal parents supported his sister when she dated a young black man in the 1960's, an act that prompted outright hostility from members of the community.

Moving from one community to another also influenced the development of some of the participants' social justice awareness. When Christine was a young girl her family moved briefly to a small, predominantly white, rural community. She explained how the new location helped form her emerging notions about equity and fairness.

And then I had an experience where, as a sophomore in high school (O)  
I left (city) and became the only black student in a town. (C)  
And it was, uh, it was an interesting experience (E)  
to go from always having black kids around me and a mixture of teachers, (C)  
uh, never having gone to school with white kids (O)  
and now I'm the only Black in town (O)  
because we lived outside the town (O)  
so I had to get on the yellow school bus, (C)  
stand there and wait with the cows, and, (C)  
and it was only for a semester// (O)  
but it gave me time to be alone/and observe the world around me, (E)  
and it was fascinating because I realized that some of the same issues//(E)  
that I grew up with in (city) were issues in this town too. (E)  
That there were cliques, that there were mean girls, (E)  
that there were, um, there was privilege/ (E)  
people, people without privilege. (E)

And the whole idea of white people who were poor. (E)  
And understanding how they were treated (E)  
and then how they would then in turn treat other people, (E)  
because that was the group that I got most of my grief from. (E)  
Um/so, being able to kind of sit back as an outsider and think, (R)  
and make some comparisons was an interesting experience (R)  
and it, and it shaped my life, it really did shape my life. (Co)  
(Christine, interview I, 83-99)

Although she only lived in that community for one semester, the move to a new location broadened her understanding of how oppression operated in American society. While her first neighborhood had supported her development and identity, the new community required her to resist oppressive actions.

All of these examples reveal the various ways that one's community can influence the development of a social justice perspective. For some like Adisa, the environment supported his emerging consciousness. For Patricia and Jeff, their communities did not support their current notions of social justice, and their neighbors attempted to position them as colluders with the dominant system of oppression. With his parents' support Jeff resisted that positioning as a young man whereas Patricia did not find tools to resist her early socialization until she attended college. Finally, Christine's brief move to another region disrupted her life trajectory, exposing her to new ideas that helped thicken her developing ideas about power and privilege.

#### Stories of Non-Teaching Work Experience

Seven of the participants had significant work experience outside the field of education, and they often discussed how their non-teaching work influenced their interest in social justice. For instance, in chapter 4 I discussed how David's experience as a lawyer exposed him to the oppression of others. However, he was the only participant who began his life history by talking about work outside of education. Because others

did not emphasize this theme in their introductory comments, I have identified non-teaching work experience as a secondary theme.

For some of the participants, early job experiences provided them with a framework for teaching social studies with an emphasis on social justice. Before he became a classroom teacher, Adisa worked as a museum educator. Already interested in social equality as a result of his early life, he spoke at length about how his tenure at one cultural museum in the Midwest shaped a lasting interest in telling stories that inspired people to think beyond the traditional, hegemonic narrative of America's past.

it was such a rich environment and um, and, (O)  
and that got me like, I started realizing like yeah, (C)  
like some of the programs I was developing about, um, (C)  
um, I developed a lecture series for C.L.R. James, um the black Jacobins, um, the  
Trinidadian historian. (C)  
Um, I developed a, a workshop series on, um, on the African connections to hip  
hop. (C)  
Um//worked with um/elderly communities creating their own personal stories  
and an oral history, (C)  
so I did just so much, so much good stuff, (R)  
and I didn't know what the hell I was doing, you know, (E)  
no formal training or whatever, just going off my gut instincts or whatever, (E)  
it was so rewarding working with people, um, empowering people, (E)  
you know giving them bits of information, learning from people (E)  
(Adisa, interview 1, 484-493)

Adisa's experience as a museum educator gave him new tools to tell stories that could empower people. Later, when he became frustrated with another museum's reluctance to embrace his approach to programming, he made a relatively easy transition to classroom teaching (Adisa, interview 1, 530-580).

Other participants discussed how their frustration with one career, particularly concerns about social justice issues, ultimately led them to pursue a teaching career. Before he became a teacher, Jeff worked briefly as an attorney and then, for many years,

he managed apartment complexes. Although he expressed an interest in teaching while in college, he ultimately pursued careers that could provide a better living for his family (Jeff, interview 1, 357-368). He continued to maintain his interest in social equality, specifically working hard to ensure that one apartment complex he managed successfully integrated (Jeff, interview 1, 283-343). However, he grew increasingly upset about the industry's collusion with oppression. When I asked him why he returned to school to become a teacher, he shared the following story.

So I kept doing that, but then, (C)  
I just kept running against, there I was in the corporate world, (C)  
and there I was, frankly around a lot of landlords (C)  
who found ways to discriminate and that kind of thing, (C)  
it was a, it was tough, (E)  
And I got fired from my last job, managing (apartment complex) (C)  
Up north// (O)  
and uh/I got fired one day and my boss, (C)  
well I'm going to come up and get your keys and all that. (C)  
I said, okay. I just told my secretary, I said I'm going to lunch (laughs). (C)  
So I went downtown to where my girlfriend at the time was working, (C)  
I was separated//, (O)  
we went to lunch and I took my business card (C)  
and I lit it and burned it in the ashtray at the restaurant, (C)  
and I said, that's it. I'm going to be a teacher. (R)  
(Jeff, interview 1, 368-378)

Jeff's brief evaluative comment, "it was a, it was tough" near the beginning of this story captures his irritation at the oppressive policies of his corporate bosses. In an act reminiscent of the draft card protests that occurred during his youth (Jeff was a conscientious objector), he resolved his crisis by burning his business card and transitioning to a career that might be more receptive to his social justice inclinations.

Non-teaching work experiences also encouraged one participant to make the transition into teaching. Although interested in politics and history as a young man, Craig pursued a career in the stock market because of the low salaries earned by teachers

(Craig, interview 1, 96-97). However, he eventually became a financial commentator on a local radio show, and that opportunity renewed his interest in politics and, ultimately, education.

this has allowed me to be involved in, uh, (C)  
politically more and more and more over time, (C)  
and to express my political views in a public forum (C)  
that doesn't change the world, (E)  
I know that, no one's going to change the world, (E)  
the world's the world, (E)  
but it gives you a chance to do more than just cast a vote, (E)  
to say what you think (E)  
and to have some people hear it (E)  
and have the discussion that, uh, that surrounds it, (E)  
and I've been able/to, to connect kids to this, (E)  
uh, in a way that again goes back to my childhood (R)  
(Craig, interview 1, 466-472)

Craig's work experiences outside the classroom renewed a childhood passion for politics that opened a new direction in his life trajectory.

Adisa's, Jeff's and Craig's prior careers did not create their social justice identities. However, non-teaching work experiences contributed to their evolving life stories in different ways. Adisa underwent a relatively minor interruption in his life's path as he shifted the location of his efforts from a museum gallery to a high school classroom. For Jeff the change represented a more significant break with his previous career, producing a dramatic new arc in his life trajectory. Craig's work on the radio renewed an interest in politics and education that helped him make a transition to teaching. Despite these differences, all of their work experiences emerged from an already established commitment to social justice activism, and their jobs provided them with new cultural tools that they used to refine and reframe their path to becoming social studies teachers who teach toward social justice.

## Stories of Media/Current Events

Seven of the thirteen participants discussed the influence of media/current events on their interest in social justice at length. Of those seven the most frequent comments came from five of the six participants in their fifties and sixties who remembered experiencing the transformative events of the 1960's or 1970's, often as it was broadcast on television or radio. Only two of the participants in their thirties or forties mentioned the influence of media or current events on their social justice orientation.

When he was in high school in 1965, a local radio host inspired Craig to lead a protest against what both he and the media personality thought were the erroneous opinions of the Warren Commission.

(name) was a very popular, uh, uh, not only comedian but also talk radio guy (O) in (city) in 196//5, when I was in high school. (O)

And, uh, he, of course it's only three years after, I'm sorry two years after (O)

Kennedy was killed, and the, the Warren Commission, (O)

and uh, (name) gets on the air and he says, (C)

every student in America should be demanding at their school that there be a re-opening of the Kennedy investigation, (C)

you know, and uh, and so my buddies and I went out (C)

and, well actually, we called (name), off the air, (C)

and said now tell us, what do you think is the best way to go about doing this?

(C)

He came up with some good ideas, and (C)

we, we had a giant demonstration at our high school, (C)

and of course, what he want-what he eventually told us to do, (C)

which is where we got into all this trouble, (E)

is uh he said now make sure you get the newspapers and the TV people out there (laughs) (C)

you know so, you know we did (C)

and they, the administration threw a fit, (C)

and they didn't throw us out or anything, (C)

but they were angry, why did you do this? (C)

You know we don't need this at the school, and so forth. (R)

Which actually, that was '65, thinking back, backward a little bit, (O)

(Craig, interview 1, 477-492)

Craig's life trajectory, which included several decades of serving as a commentator on a local radio show, clearly was affected by his interest in current events and his connection to the media during the 1960's.

Linda also commented on how current events shaped her worldview. Slightly younger than Craig, she discussed the Iranian Revolution that dominated American politics and media in 1979.

well then of course we had everything happen in Iran (A)  
and, you know, um, at (university) there would be demonstrators (C)  
and they would have hoods and it would be like they would, (C)  
it started out small but it got bigger and bigger and bigger, (C)  
it was like down, down, down with the Shah, down, down, down with the Shah.  
(C)  
And I was like (.hh) oh my gosh, okay I've got to learn about this. (E)  
Um, and then I know I mentioned this to you, (E)  
the whole like, we didn't even have anybody in the Tehran embassy who could  
speak Farsi, (E)  
like what, what are we doing here? (E)  
This is crazy, you know. (R)  
(Linda, interview 1, 245-252)

Events like this made Linda skeptical of the government's ability to work for peace and international justice, and at the end of her interview she returned to this theme by discussing her confidence in the current President, Barack Obama, who she believed took a better approach to international events. She stated, "But I believe in his heart he really sees this world as a better place, you know through that, and I'm just invigorated by that" (Linda, interview 1, 515-516). Her experiences in the 1970's framed her perspective on politics and world peace in the early twenty-first century.

When younger participants discussed media, they often referenced various aspects of popular culture. For instance, Dominic first explained how he and his parents would discuss coverage of their native country on television (Dominic, interview 1, 61-68). He

also described how the cartoons he watched as a child reinforced his ideas about good and evil in the world.

You know, and so, and almost even being influenced by like cartoons, (A) cartoons back in the day always propagated this, this consistent sense of the good guys and the bad guys, (O)  
even if they were racist like cowboys and Indians and/whatever, (C)  
but like, even involving like GI Joe, Transformers, that type stuff, (C)  
there was always a good side and a bad side. (C)  
And so you know, that just all of that rubbed off on me, (E)  
so I'm, I feel like I have to constantly//find good in situations and find, you know, (E)  
create good in situations where something wrong has happened, you know, (E)  
and/it's a serious issue in terms of how I even view myself, (E)  
you know, when do I feel like I'm going more on the righteous path (E)  
as opposed to the/negative path, you know, so.(E)  
(Dominic, interview 1, 77-86)

Allen, another participant in his thirties, also addressed the influence of popular culture.

He explained that watching the Cosby show in the 1980's made him frustrated because it did not represent the reality of black life that he saw in his neighborhood (Allen, interview 1, 176-186).

However, interest in popular culture was not exclusively the domain of younger participants. Jeff, the oldest participant in the study, referenced the twin influences of current events and popular culture in shaping his worldview. Early in the interview he briefly addressed viewing the marches on Selma and Montgomery in the 1960's. He immediately linked those dramatic events to another media venue, sports, explaining how his interest in civil rights was also inspired by Curt Flood (Jeff, interview 1, 52-59). In 1969, Flood took a principled stand against Major League Baseball's reserve clause that allowed teams to trade a player without the player's consent. Flood, a black outfielder for the St. Louis Cardinals, refused to accept a trade to the Philadelphia Phillies and likened the reserve clause to slavery (Early, 1998). At the end of his interview, he

continued to link his social justice commitment to media when he answered my concluding by reasserting the connection between popular culture and current events in his life.

And, and, very honest, I'm a big music fan, I love music, (E)  
and music is such a great way to express. (E)  
You know there was the soul music that I loved growing up, (C)  
or the Beatles or the Kinks, my favorite group, (C)  
or Neil Young and some of his stuff, Bob Dylan (C)  
and, wow, what a, what a wonderful period I got to live through so far. (E)  
You know the sixties, and what a dynamic time. (E)  
(Jeff, interview 1, 599-602)

Media and current events were not the most important forces shaping Jeff's social justice identity or the identities of the other participants discussed above. However, the treatment of public events on television and the values expressed by the popular culture of the era helped thicken each of these teacher's emerging ideas about the world.

#### Stories of Creative Expression

Only three participants shared stories about their interest in some form of creative expression, making it the least common of the secondary themes. However, for each of these participants their artistic and creative endeavors provided them a location to contemplate and articulate their developing ideas about social justice.

As discussed earlier, Adisa's interest in spoken word poetry developed out of his desire to connect with his father. However, as he developed his craft he also refined his social justice vision. When I asked him about the substance of his poetry he discussed how his voice had evolved.

Rob:  
...I saw Gil-Scott Heron on your, on your wall over there

Adisa:  
Yeah

Rob:

Was it similar sort of stuff? Last Poets kind of stuff, or was it a new direction?  
Did you, were you talking about the revolution or (laughs)?

Adisa:

(laughs) The revolution, golly I don't even know what the hell the revolution is,  
(E)

love is the revolution, right? (E)

Um, yeah I was talking about all that stuff, um, stuff that I saw, you know (A)

I//some of it, at at first, was, very, you know, very much cliché, (C)

you know Marxist rhetoric and, and, and all of that stuff, but um, (C)

I think I eventually found my voice and just kind of, um// (E)

seeing stuff, I always um you know see the irony in situations, (E)

like I remember I had a line in a poem um, saying, (C)

if they legalize assisted suicide (C)

can my friend get off for possession of crack with the intent to sell?//(laughs) (R)

(Adisa, interview 1, 232-244)

His evaluative statements revealed how art provided him the space to deepen his understanding of social justice issues, moving beyond clichés and toward a more complex understanding of the human condition.

Like Adisa, artistic expression helped Dominic refine his ideas about social justice at a transformative moment in his life. Following his encounter with the legal system, he began to explore new ideas through poetry and music.

So, um, at the same time you know, I'd been writing rhymes, you know (O)  
uh, learning how to rap, I wasn't a very good rapper (C)

because, you know (laughs) the concepts I wanted to, to write, (C)

I just, I didn't have the righteous rhythm with it, (C)

so I got more off into the poetry because I didn't have to be, (C)

I didn't have to, it didn't have to be as musical as much as it was this idea.// (C)

And, it allowed an outlet that helped to justify this new sense of being. (E)

So, you know, I read and I wrote, I read and I wrote, I read and I wrote, I read and I wrote (R)

(Dominic, interview 1, 289-296)

Poetry created the space necessary for Dominic to refine his "new sense of being," and creative expression has become an important facet of Dominic's vision of advocating for social justice.

Although stories of creative expression were not common in the life histories, the arts proved to be an important influence for a few of the participants. None of the themes, either primary or secondary, were absolutely necessary in fostering the development of a social justice identity. However, all of the participants shared stories from a number of different themes as they narrated their life histories. In the next chapter I will examine how these various themes interact over the course of two participants' life history narratives to shape a trajectory that led them to become social studies teachers who teach toward social justice.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE INTERACTION OF MULTIPLE THEMES IN LIFE HISTORY NARRATIVES

In the previous two chapters I analyzed individual themes that influenced the identity development of social studies teachers who teach toward social justice. However, no one theme is solely responsible for the creation of such a disposition. As Wortham (2006) argued, trajectories of identification evolve and thicken as individuals position themselves and are positioned by others within the context of broad sociohistorical patterns, local models of identity, and specific events. In the stories they shared, participants described various experiences that they viewed as instrumental in forming their identity. In each of these instances, they responded to the challenges or opportunities provided within their cultural worlds, and their actions, choices and experiences ultimately contributed to their evolving social justice identity. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) labeled these moments where individuals dialogically negotiate their identity as a “space of authoring.” In each of these “spaces of authoring,” participants appropriated new cultural tools (Wertsch, 1991) that they could employ to mediate future actions. Analyzing the interaction of multiple themes as they emerged in the context of time and place allows for greater understanding about how the participants used this collection of tools to negotiate an identity as teachers who teach social studies toward social justice. As I argued in the previous two chapters, events in the participants’ childhood and adolescence shaped the initial direction of their life trajectory. Over time this path evolved as other experiences led them to refine and reframe their

notions about social justice. By analyzing the ways that participants' identities emerged over time, I hope to present what Holland and Lave (2001) have described as a "history in person."

In this chapter, the last narrative analysis chapter of this study, I trace the influence and interaction of these multiple themes by interpreting the "history in person" of two participants, Karen and Goldie. As I did in chapter 4, I interpret their stories across their entire life trajectory, interpreting the events in the sequence by which they were told during the interview. I also begin each section with a summary of the participant's life story arranged in chronological order to provide the reader with context. While I could have selected any of the participants as exemplars for this section, both Karen's and Goldie's narratives contain qualities that made them well suited for a comparative analysis.

Karen's narrative tended to vacillate across time and theme, and she often jumped from topic to topic as she recounted her experiences. Her story also focused on her resistance to oppressive or unjust experiences. As she remarked in the focus group interview, "I think that most of my social justice thinking comes out of more just wanting to right what I felt were my own wrongs" (Focus Group Interview 1, 512-514).

Goldie's narrative unfolded in a more temporal fashion, and she discussed the interaction of different influences at each stage of her life. Furthermore, Goldie's life history tended to emphasize positive experiences that aligned her toward a social justice identity. Her comments during the focus group interview reinforced the stories she shared about how family, teachers and church all supported the development of her social justice identity (Focus Group Interview 1, 161-165, 203-205, 604-622).

By exploring the interaction of primary and secondary themes, I hope to demonstrate how two teachers developed a commitment to teach toward social justice in distinct ways. As I argue in chapter 8, if we can understand the varied ways that different life experiences both align individuals along a path towards social justice as well as prompting resistance that inspires a greater commitment to equity, we can develop practices that might encourage a similar outcome with other social studies professionals.

### Karen's Life History Narrative

#### *Summary of Karen's Life Story*

At the time of the study, Karen was a white female in her early forties who taught in an inner ring suburb with an almost entirely black student population. She grew up in a working class suburb outside of a Midwestern city and her mother was involved in a number of liberal or progressive movements. After her mother divorced her father, who worked as a foreman in industry, Karen recalled feeling like a lone wolf. A self-described latch-key kid, she began writing fiction in her spare time and many of her stories addressed themes of social inequality. Karen did not particularly enjoy her high school experience. However, her involvement with band introduced her to a group of students who encouraged her to attend college. Her college classes shaped a lifelong interest in black history, feminism, and labor studies. She eventually decided to become certified to teach social studies and after graduation she worked in two suburban school districts, one affluent and the other predominantly working class. Because she did not feel that her undergraduate experience was fully rewarding, she returned to graduate school and earned a masters degree in history. During this period, which she described as one of the best periods of her life, she met her husband who was also interested in issues

of social justice. After a honeymoon in an African country where her husband had served in the Peace Corps, she began working in another affluent, suburban school district. Karen described herself as an anti-establishment type, and in all of her teaching experiences she found herself advocating for marginalized students. She briefly left work when she had her children, and during that time she and a friend formed a company to write and publish curriculum, much of which had a social justice focus. She eventually returned to classroom teaching and continued to challenge her school district's administration regarding unjust policies. At the time of our interview, she and her husband had recently divorced, and she and her two sons lived in a suburban community with good schools and services.

#### *Karen's Narrative of Resistance*

Karen's response to my opening question was much shorter than the opening narratives of most other participants, and she began with the statement "I think it's a mix of things" (Karen, interview 1, 33), which proved to be a prescient abstract for this narrative that tended to mix both time periods and themes. She first commented on her mother's influence.

I think one is my, uh, mother, her influence.(A)  
She's a liberal feminist, League of Women Voters through and through, (O)  
very politically active, very socially conscious, (C)  
does a ton of volunteer work, (C)  
and she's kind of always been that way. (R)  
So I think it's partly her influence.(E)  
(Karen, interview 1, 33-36)

After a brief transition where she discussed her parents' divorce and travel experiences with her mother, she then talked about her unfavorable experiences in school.

I think, uh//another thing would be//my own experiences as a child and in school. (A)  
I, I was never very happy in school, didn't enjoy school that much, (O)

always felt like there was like “the” crowd (O)  
and I was never part of that crowd. (O)  
And even the teachers at my school, I felt like were into “the” crowd (C)  
and the rest of us were just kind of forgotten. (C)  
So there’s always this part of me that’s like, (E)  
it’s a crusader for like that, you know, the underdog. (E)  
(Karen, interview 1, 46-51)

Like many other participants, Karen began her narrative by emphasizing the themes of parents/family and schooling/learning. Of particular importance was her identification as a crusader for the underdog. This self-concept would emerge as a reoccurring metaphor throughout the entire narrative.

I followed Karen’s short opening narrative with a question about the influence of her mother. In her response, and the short narrative section that followed, Karen moved from theme to theme, revealing the complex ways experiences can interact to form identity.

Rob:

How did, how did she raise these issues of social justice with you?

Karen:

I don’t remember.

Rob:

You don’t remember?

Karen:

I just know that I, I just know that she did.

Rob:

Uh huh.

Karen:

I know that we talked about it, (E)  
and I know that, I mean she, I remember her, well I have to go to the League of Women Voters meeting, (C)  
I have to do, you know, this I have to do that. (C)  
She was, you know, when my dad left she had to get a job, (O)  
she was a single working mother. (O)

Uh, I think I started realizing it, (E)  
I didn't really know I was like that until I got into college. (E)  
My high school friends today tell me that I was like that in high school, (E)  
but I didn't know it myself. (E)  
Like I didn't get very good grades in high school, (O)  
I wasn't, I wasn't very studious (O)  
because neither one of my parents had gone to college, (O)  
my mother never graduated from high school. (O)  
My dad was a blue collar, you know, foreman. (O)  
And, uh, none of my sisters went to college. (O)  
I just happened to get into college or go to college (C)  
because I had friends that had parents that went to college and they were going.  
(C)  
I was in band, and band, band kids tend to be pretty motivated kids. (C)  
My mom pushed me into band, forced me to do it, (C)  
and that was the only place I felt kind of welcomed. (E)  
But band kids are always like the nerdy group, (O)  
you know, they're never like the cool kids. (O)  
We thought we were cool but nobody else thinks we were cool. (C)  
Um, but I had friends that were pretty motivated// (C)  
uh, but yet I was always the one who knew what was going on in, in politics, (C)  
and I was always the one that they would come to (C)  
to ask about whatever was going on in the news and, (C)  
so I was always kind of like the//I don't know, (R)  
just like the informed liberal, political one, (R)  
even though I wasn't in the honors classes with them. (R)  
And I didn't know they saw me that way until later. (E)  
And then I went to college and I started taking Af-African American classes, (C)  
classes about, you know, the, uh, civil rights movement, (O)  
were//just, you know, I don't know, just rang true to me. (E)  
(Karen, interview 1, 59-87)

In this short selection, Karen addressed four different themes in a time frame that spans from her childhood to her early college years. The theme of parents/family continued to be an important factor as Karen's mother provided a model of progressive action. Karen also described how her family's class status acted as a limiting factor on her notion of what was possible, and these comments serve as an example of the theme of oppression. Karen found herself caught between the possibilities modeled by her mother and the limitations created by her class status, and that dilemma ultimately was resolved by the

influence of another theme, stories of friends. Her interaction with band students provided her with new tools to contemplate a different life trajectory. With her mother's encouragement and with her friends' support she eventually attended college. This new direction revealed the influence of a fourth theme, stories of schooling/learning, on the development of her social justice identity. In the evaluative comment at the end of this section she explained that she easily identified with the struggles of the black civil rights movement. Her interest in the stories of "underdogs," a central aspect of her self-identity as a teacher who teachers toward social justice, remained closely tied to her own story of being an underdog who resisted a variety of challenges. As she explained later during the focus group interview, "I think I really did think of myself as a victim, um, a victim of terrible parenting, victim of an absent father, victim of horribly mean teachers..." (focus group interview 1, 515-516).

Karen continued her narrative by explaining how the twin influences of her mother and her learning experiences shaped a rebellious attitude that tended to get her into trouble for challenging the status quo (Karen, interview 1, 102-115). When I asked if high school or college represented the first time she got in trouble for taking a stand, she changed the time frame and shared two stories about her actions at two different schools. In the first, she discussed an open letter she recently sent to her school district's leadership.

I wrote a letter, an open letter of complaint, (C)  
and I just sent it to the high school as an email, (C)  
but it was like an editorial but through email. (O)  
And I sent it to the whole high school staff (C)  
and I sent it to the two superintendents (C)  
and I sent it to the President of the Board, (C)  
and you know all of these teachers came to me afterward (C)  
and they were like, god, thank you so much for writing this (C)

and oh my god, you've said everything that I've been thinking for all of this time.  
And god you're so brave, (C)  
and then the biggest thing is I hope you don't lose your job. (C)  
Boy I'd really like to tell you how much I appreciate you (C)  
but I had to tell you in person because I'm afraid to send it through an email (C)  
because I know they're going to trace me back, um, (C)  
you know there is a culture of fear there, (E)  
well I refuse to be silenced. (E)  
This is just my mode of thinking, I won't be. (R)  
(Karen, interview 1, 127-138)

She followed this story, which ended with emphatic evaluative statements about her refusal to back down, with another story about how she challenged racial tracking in a suburban school district where she worked previously (Karen, interview 1, 143-161). Unlike most participants who waited for me to ask about their teaching life, Karen made a temporal jump to introduce a new theme, stories of teaching experience, fairly early in her narrative.

Throughout her entire narrative Karen continued to make similar temporal leaps, connecting her past experiences to her current reality. Such was the case when I asked about her college experience. Karen connected her experiences in college to her childhood as well as to the future opportunities that will exist for her own children.

Rob:

Now, was it just the course work, or did you have circles of friends, um, did you get involved in any campus organizations that, that were dealing with issues of equity for women, for African Americans?

Karen:

I didn't, as an undergrad/// (A)  
not having had parents or any siblings or anybody close to me that had ever gone to college, (O)  
I was always just fumbling through it. (C)  
I didn't even know what a credit hour was until my second semester, (C)  
I was like oh that's what that means, you know. (C)  
So I always kind of sort of had a delayed, (E)  
a delayed understanding of what college was all about, (E)  
which is in part why I went back to grad school full time in 97. (E)

So I can't, after//five, six years actually at (college 1), (C)  
I taught for, no I taught for four years full time (C)  
and then I went back full time to (college 2), to get a masters in history. (C)  
And I did it in part because I felt like I hadn't known enough to take advantage of  
college when I was an undergrad, (C)  
so I wanted to go and kind of do it over. (C)  
And I knew I wanted to get a masters in history (C)  
because I gotten the MAE, I went, I did the five year, (C)  
it took me six, five year program, (C)  
uh but I felt like it was kind of a joke, (E)  
like the Master of Arts in Education program, I was like learning how to laminate,  
(E)  
like it just felt like it was silly, you know. (E)  
And so I wanted to really earn a masters in history (E)  
and really prove that I can do it, and could do it and learn a lot. (E)  
Um, and so in grad school I was more that person, (E)  
not at, I just didn't know enough as an undergrad, (E)  
and now I know a lot, (R)  
my, my own kids are going to be really prepared. (R)  
I just wasn't, so (Co)  
(Karen, interview 1, 226-242)

Orienting her story in the theme of oppression, she explained that her class background as a child did not prepare her for the rigors of college. The subsequent discussion of the theme of schooling/learning described how she overcame this obstacle to obtain a graduate degree in history, and her actions have ensured an easier path for her own children. The boundaries of both time and theme are blurred in this narrative segment that discussed the influence of college on her social justice identity.

Later in the interview, Karen continued to connect multiple themes across different timeframes as she reflected on the genesis of her social justice orientation. After a prolonged discussion about teaching and professional development, I returned to a question about the neighborhood where she was raised. She explained that she grew up in a working class neighborhood, which led to the following exchange

Rob:

Do you think any of those class issues, you know growing up in a working class neighborhood and, and seeing things, um, because you know you've also worked in districts that have tremendous wealth, were any of those issues ever relevant in your life, and especially after your parents get divorced because that puts tremendous strain on it.

Karen:

Yeah, well you know actually now that I think about it, (A)  
I think I was//I think the African American and the women's issues in college came after labor studies. (A)  
I think my first interest was in labor studies, (E)  
because it seems like early, pretty early on, I took a class with a professor that was a big labor union guy, (C)  
I can't remember exactly. (E)  
I remember being very moved by Marx//the Russian revolution, (E)  
and just labor and all of that union///. (E)  
So yeah, I mean I'm, eh// (Co)

Rob:

And, and you know growing up where you did, was there discussions of unions?

Karen:

No///I mean I, I didn't learn that from my parents. (E)  
My parents, even though my mother had sort of this influence on me, in a way, (E)  
and I have all these siblings (O)  
because I'm the youngest of five, all girls. (O)  
Um, I grew up very much alone, (C)  
like I didn't, my mother was off doing whatever she did (C)  
and my dad was absent and my sisters were busy. (C)  
You know I was a latch key kid, (O)  
I came home and I ran around the neighborhood (C)  
and I threw crab apples at the neighbors, you know, (C)  
and ate cereal and watched soap operas until my mom came home (C)  
and then, you know, I mean I don't/I don't remember having a lot of interaction with///you know///yeah, I don't know. (E)  
I mean I didn't, I was very solitary, (O)  
I remember just spending a lot of time in my bedroom with my radio on,  
just drawing or writing, (C)  
And I write a lot, (C)  
I don't know if that has anything to do with it to, maybe it does (E)

Rob:

What sort of things did you write about? Was it fiction or?

Karen:

Yeah, well, I still have some, um, (A)  
as a kid I just wrote a lot of journals, stories, poetry, (C)  
I don't know where it is. (E)  
Um, I liked writing, (E)  
I mean I like writing. (E)  
Even in, even probably since high school (O)  
I've written some novels, children-I wrote a young adult fiction book (C)  
and I never tried to really pushed to get it published, but it was very-(E)  
The young adult fiction book was about this girl, (O)  
actually I had a whole series laid out (C)  
and I only have one book done, (E)  
uh this girl who was, you know, (E)  
just kind of like me I guess, (E)  
sort of an antiestablishment girl, (O)  
then she falls in love with this boy who turns out is gay, (C)  
and then, you know, he's harassed because he's gay, (C)  
so that's what I wrote about. (R)  
(Karen, interview 1, 443-475)

This extended exchange from the middle portion of the interview revealed how different forces interacted in the evolution of Karen's social justice identity. She addressed three different themes in her response to my question about the influence of her working class neighborhood. First, she discussed the theme of schooling/learning when she remembered that her first academic interest in college had been labor history. Then she shared a story of her relatively lonely childhood, which demonstrated the theme of parents/family. She transitioned to the third theme, stories of creative expression, when she explained how the pages of her journals gave her space to develop storylines dealing with questions of social justice, ultimately identifying with the main character. In this series of narrative segments, Karen connected multiple themes as she reflected on the experiences shaping her social justice identity.

While my questions obviously influenced the direction of some of her comments, Karen's memories and associations appeared primarily responsible for the varied

recollections she shared. Analyzing the leaps she makes across time and topic reveals how multiple experiences interact in the formation of identity. While Karen's narrative account of her "history in person" is not always linear, it does give insight to the complex way that various cultural tools are appropriated and combined to create what Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) would describe as a "figured world" of the social studies teacher who teaches toward social justice. For Karen, her experiences resisting injustice throughout her entire life history has forged a personality that seeks to challenge the oppression she has witnessed in the schools where she taught.

### Goldie's Life History Narrative

#### *Summary of Goldie's Life Story*

At the time of the study, Goldie was a black female in her fifties who taught middle school history in an inner ring suburb with an almost all black student population. She was raised in a Midwestern city and she grew up in an integrated neighborhood that ultimately became a majority black community because of white flight. She lived a relatively sheltered life in her grandparent's house. Her grandfather, who fought in World War I and played in the Negro Leagues, owned his own business and was a respected member of the community. Initially, Goldie was confused by the social upheavals of the late sixties. However, her seventh grade teacher challenged her to look more deeply at the history of racial oppression. She began reading voraciously and new representations of blackness in the media helped her form what she called a "militant" persona. She was an accomplished and involved student, but personal difficulties including the death of her mother and an early pregnancy convinced her to pursue work instead of college. She worked in white-collar professions for many years,

and she was repeatedly exposed to both insensitive and discriminatory behavior within corporate America. In addition, her sons also became the targets of police harassment. Unsatisfied with her job, she became interested in teaching after she read an article about illiteracy among black youth. A love of history nurtured by her grandfather's stories influenced her to select social studies as her discipline, and while in college she gained new insight from studying African and black history. At the time of this study, Goldie served as the department chairperson and she had recently been selected as the secondary teacher of the year for her school district.

#### *Goldie's Narrative of Alignment*

Goldie's narrative, unlike Karen's, unfolded in a more linear fashion, moving chronologically from her childhood to her present experiences as a teacher. Also, while she did discuss challenges that she faced, many of her stories emphasized how family and teachers had supported and aligned her social justice perspective. At each stage of this journey, Goldie's narrative revealed how multiple themes interact to shape a social justice identity.

The first portion of Goldie's narrative described her early childhood. After describing her family and her neighborhood (Goldie, interview 1, 34-94), she shared her memories of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination and how it accelerated the white flight that had already begun in the community.

Uh, there was, uh, groups of white families (O)  
living in flats across the street. (O)  
And they moved, (C)  
but especially it became apparent after Martin Luther King's assassination in  
1968, (C)  
because the grocery store, uh, that was white owned was burned. (C)  
Um, I didn't understand what all that was about, (E)  
and my mother wasn't able to speak to it (E)

because she herself was terminally ill and hospitalized at that time. (O)  
So I didn't have a younger person's perspective, (E)  
I could only look to my grandparents (C)  
who were born in the 1900s, early 1900's, 1900 and 1902, (O)  
and get their take on things. (C)  
And, um, I couldn't understand//what was going on, (E)  
I couldn't understand why the militants burned the store that we traded at, (E)  
that didn't make sense to me. (E)  
Um, but what I could understand (C)  
is that this man that was loved, Martin Luther King, (C)  
was assassinated by unknown people//because he was black.(C)  
But he knew it was going to happen. (C)  
My family, um, had a religious background, (O)  
and they more so saw it, okay, here is someone that's fighting against evil. (C)  
And, uh, that was full of courage. And had to take on, on this evil, (C)  
and he was killed for it, so that's more of what I got from him. (C)  
And, I remember, writing a poem about him standing tall, (C)  
and what he got for standing tall. (C)  
And, sharing that with my sixth grade teacher (C)  
and reading it to other teachers (C)  
and having them to applaud me for writing something so profound. (C)  
Now where that poem is today, I don't know, I, (E)  
I haven't kept up with it, (E)  
but I felt really sad, almost depressed, that this had happened. (E)  
Like this world I was living in was a bad place. (E)  
Uh, that people that did the right thing, (E)  
that did courageous acts, for whatever reason, (E)  
that tried to make things better, uh, (E)  
would be killed and, um, (E)  
I couldn't understand, understand that and make sense of it all. (E)  
And at that time, in my grade school in the (district), (O)  
we weren't taught about black, blackness. (C)  
Whatever I got about blackness or being an African American or a negro, (R)  
I picked it up from current events./// (R)  
(Goldie, interview 1, 102-127)

Several times in the segment above Goldie made evaluative comments that she did not understand what was happening. Confusion about social inequality and violence is infused throughout the early portion of her narrative. Multiple themes are represented as she described herself as a young woman struggling to comprehend issues of equity, justice, and identity. She began with a story of community, explaining how

Dr. King's assassination increased the tension between Whites and Blacks in her neighborhood. Stories of family and stories of spirituality are both referenced when Goldie explained how she turned to her family and the church for clarity about these events. Her story about writing a poem introduced a story of creative expression, and she linked it to a story of learning/schooling when she discussed the validation she received from her teachers. At the end of the story she explained that even the schools did not answer all her questions, and she briefly referenced the theme of media/current events when she described how she learned about black identity. Multiple themes interact in the narrative of her early life, and the questions that were raised by these childhood experiences became the inciting incidents that began Goldie's journey to become a social studies teacher who teaches toward social justice. Despite her confusion, Goldie explained that she enjoyed the support of her family, particularly her grandmother. As she explained later, during the focus group interview, "And I remember my grandmother, uh, saying to me and to my mother you are just as good as anybody and better than some. And that was something that resonated with me" (focus group interview 1, 203-205).

The next portion of her life history narrative explained how during adolescence she gained new tools to help her understand the social unrest of the time. An influential seventh grade teacher sparked her new consciousness by telling her that black people had been enslaved. In the section below, she explained how she tried to reconcile his description of historical oppression with her relatively sheltered experiences up to this point.

Uh//you know, but the biggest thing to me was the (laughs) (A) and I'm saying this again so that you can really get the full impact, (A)

is that black people had been enslaved! (A)  
I couldn't believe it! (C)  
Because I did not see, from my vantage point, any racism. (C)  
I was living in a comfortable environment. (O)  
If a white person said something out of line to one of us, in my family, (C)  
my grandmother and my grandpapa would take care of them. (C)  
You know, and the white people I had the interactions with, (C)  
from my vantage point, treated me with respect. (C)  
So, I couldn't understand all the stuff outside of me. (E)  
And, like I said, when Mr. Denham talked about black people being enslaved, (C)  
what the African and what at that time was Afro-American, um//movement was  
about, (C)  
him giving us a lecture, a lecture on that. (C)  
I was just in awe. (E)  
Trying to soak all this in, (E)  
trying to find out and trying to get some sense of it all. (E)  
(Goldie, interview 1, 191-201)

Both her school and her grandparents helped her make sense of the events occurring around her. In the process, she began to form a new identity that was more militant. When her classmates teased her because she was tall and had light colored hair, she described how both books and the media helped her form her new persona.

you're trying to find out who you are, (E)  
you're getting this information about being black, (E)  
so I wanted to be more militant, more out there, (E)  
and I was than any of them. (E)  
I was reading, um, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, (C)  
*Don't Call Me Nigger*, by, um, Dick Gregory, (C)  
and those things, they started coming in, flooding in to our library (C)  
and, uh, reading is fundamental, when I could get free books. (C)  
Uh, those are the kinds of things that I chose to find out more about  
who I was as a person, (C)  
my culture, um, for lack of a better word, my race of people, (C)  
I would always get the things about//Afro-Americans, Blacks, negroes, colored  
people, (C)  
uh, so that I would have more information. (C)  
And, um//that's what kind of changed things for me, (E)  
is when um this flood of media start coming in, (C)  
and by that time *Julia* was on TV, (O)  
the *Mod Squad* was coming on, (O)  
things were changing so that, uh, (C)  
I could see some connectiveness outside of my own community (R)

and outside of my, you know, my own family. (R)  
(Goldie, interview 1, 225-237)

In this adolescent section of Goldie's narrative, multiple themes interacted to influence her developing social justice identity. Her seventh grade teacher made her examine the nature of oppression in her community, and her grandparents' strength supported her as she appropriated new ideas from both books and the media to craft a new, self-described militant persona. Stories of schooling, family, and media combined in a coming of age narrative that resolved some of the confusion Goldie experienced as a child and aligned her along a life trajectory focused on caring, justice and equity.

In the next section of her narrative, Goldie explained how her early interest in activism and education was delayed for much of her adult life because of other responsibilities. When I asked her about her life after high school she started the next portion by saying, "Okay, life happens" (Goldie, interview 1, 396). She then discussed how becoming a mother at an early age required her to get a job to support her family. When she described her life as a white-collar worker, the theme of oppression became more pronounced in her life story. She described how her experiences in the corporate world shaped a new understanding of social injustice.

Me being conscious, as the first black working for an investment firm here in (city), (O)

and white people telling me, well you know you're the first black person. (C)

Uh, we used to have so-and-so, and he was the janitor, (C)

and me thinking this is 2000 (C)

and you're talking about I'm the first black person? That's crazy. (C)

Uh (laughs), going an combing my hair in the lady's restroom (C)

and white women saying//uh, insensitive remarks about my hair, (C)

insensitive remarks about my complexion, (C)

insensitive remarks about, um, what I had on. (C)

And insinuating that I was somehow different than, uh, other African Americans. (C)

Um//made me wonder, was there/injustice, what could I do about it, (E)

because I was experiencing just-injustice in so many ways, (E)  
through gender/I could see, um, socio-economically,(E)  
I could see, uh, and certainly racially, I was wondering, uh, if I was white(E)  
and had//the same intellect, the same, lack of a better word, good looks or  
whatever, (E)  
what would my lot in life be? (E)  
(Goldie, interview 1, 462-474)

When she returned to college to become a teacher, these adult encounters with oppression framed Goldie's educational experience.

Now at (college)//me taking certain classes awakened something in me (E)  
because I became more aware of who I was culturally (E)  
and more of my ancestry and where I was as a person that fit in here. (E)  
And of course by this time I had heard and seen pictures of black men hanging  
from trees, (C)  
and heard about all of the horrible, uh, inhumane things that had been done to  
Blacks, and (C)  
of course *Roots* had come out and, (C)  
I mean I had just been more exposed, (E)  
so I was filtering things. (E)  
(Goldie, interview 1, 484-489)

In her evaluative comments, Goldie linked the themes of oppression, schooling/learning, and media to explain how her adult experiences crystallized her commitment to social justice. As an adult woman, Goldie finally developed a "filter" that helped her understand and challenge the inequities she witnessed and experienced.

It is this filter that drives her to teach for social justice.

Um, but going on to (college) (C)  
and taking the history of Africa and Blacks in American History (C)  
and all of this kinds of things, (C)  
further pushes a need for me to give my children//the students that I teach// (E)  
uh, as much as I can about who we are. (E)  
Not just as teaching African American kids but as American kids, (E)  
and what does that mean to be black in America? (E)  
And letting them define that, you know, (E)  
based on the resources I have that I can give them (E)  
and, and the tools and the resources that they may have outside of what I can  
give them, (E)  
and then coming to some conclusion. (E)

You know, uh///even within the classroom, (R)  
I feel like I'm doing social justice on more than one level. (R)  
(Goldie, interview 1, 529-537)

Late in her life history, these stories about her teaching practice echoed stories from earlier sections of the narrative. Her students, mirroring her own childhood experience, must try to comprehend an often confusing and unjust world. Like Mr. Denham, her seventh grade teacher, she tried to provide them with the tools to understand their community. Goldie's linear narrative provides an opportunity to see the cumulative effects of how a "history in person" thickens the identity of a social studies teacher who teaches toward social justice.

### Conclusion

I asked all of the participants in this study to answer an extremely difficult question, "Why do you teach the way you do?" Furthermore, I asked them to answer this question by telling me their life stories. As Karen and Goldie's different narratives demonstrate, participants found multiple ways to respond to this challenging question. While their stories varied because of factors such as age, race, sex, or geography, for the most part these teachers shared many similar experiences. The life trajectories of these thirteen teachers who teach toward social justice began during their childhoods. In their youth the participants were both positioned by others and positioned themselves along a path that shaped to their current reality. Parents and teachers emerged as some of the most important guides in these early years, but sometimes the participants developed their social justice perspectives when they challenged or questioned the actions of their parents and teachers. Along their life paths, the participants' experiences with friends, communities, religions, media, and work combined to refine

and reframe the contours of their journey. Sometimes those experiences aligned them with social justice values and sometimes those experiences prompted resistance that strengthened their commitment to fight oppression. However, all of these teachers entered the profession with a desire to make schools more just institutions. In the next chapter, I will explore the various ways these teachers pursue this goal in their teaching practice.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### TEACHING TOWARD SOCIAL JUSTICE

In this chapter, I present the results of my content analysis of the second interviews with the thirteen participants in this study. The second interview focused on the participants' professional practice, specifically how they attempted to advance their social justice agenda within their classrooms and schools. Throughout this chapter I compare and contrast the experiences of the participants. Such a comparative process allowed me to identify commonalities among the group while also exploring how differences by race, sex, age and life experience produced variation in beliefs and practices. Not every category or sub-category resulted in varied perspectives between these groups, and I only discuss those areas where differences existed in the data. However, when compared with my interpretations of the life history interviews, these data suggest that life experiences might influence the nature of the participants' social justice practices. Specifically, teachers with targeted social identities or who developed their social justice commitment by resisting oppressive acts tended to adopt more critical stances in their practice.

As discussed in chapter 3, the second interviews usually did not produce data in narrative form, therefore content analysis proved to be a better tool for interpreting the data. Unlike the previous three chapters, the participants' direct quotations are not presented in a series of idea units with one idea per line. Such a format is unnecessary because I am using content analysis rather than narrative analysis. Therefore, all direct quotes are presented in block format. The chapter is divided into several sections

following the general categories based upon the question in the semi-structured interview schedule used with all participants (Appendix D) and established in the code book (Appendix H). In chapter 3, I described how I used the frequency report function included in hyperRESEARCH to compare and contrast the average number of responses by code for each group. Those frequency reports can be found in Appendix I. The categories discussed in this chapter include definitions of social justice, social justice in classroom practice, social justice in the school, social justice in the community, challenges in teaching toward social justice, and successes in teaching toward social justice.

### Defining Social Justice

My first question during the second interview asked teachers to define social justice. Their responses to this question often were the shortest portion of the interview and nine of the participants paused for at least two seconds before they gave their answer. The excerpt below from my second interview with Patricia reflects the difficulty some participants had in defining social justice (backward slashes represent a pause of one second).

Rob:

...So, I want to start with a, um, a basic question. If you had to, how would you define the term social justice?

Patricia:

/////////(laughs)///Okay///good questions (laughs).

Rob:

And just so you know, everybody's sort of like, wow, how do I define that.

Patricia:

How do I define social justice?

Rob:  
So take whatever time you need.

Patricia:  
Um////well I'll start with justice...  
(Patricia, interview 2, 28-34)

The short responses and the pauses that characterized the participants' responses to this question reflect North's (2008) and Gerwitz's (1998) observation that social justice remains an under theorized and often contested notion within education. No general consensus emerged from the data, and responses ranged from the most frequent definition provided by seven participants to the least frequent definition provided by three participants. There was little difference by race, sex or life experiences. Despite the varied and tentative nature of their definitions of social justice, the participants adopted theoretical stances consistent with some of the conceptual frameworks discussed in chapter 2. In the discussion that follows I begin with the most frequent definition of social justice and conclude with the least frequent.

#### *Social Justice as Equality*

Seven participants defined social justice as establishing equality among people, making this code the most frequent response to the first question of the interview. However, some variation existed in how participants described equality. Adisa, Goldie and Sandra framed equality primarily as a condition where people have equal access to material goods. According to Adisa:

You know justice to me, regardless of whatever setting it is, criminal justice, social justice, it's, it's all about, uh/equality, and equality not in the sense that, um, a person needs to have the same amount of something that someone else, but um, the access to resources that they have and what they have fulfills their needs, so if people, um, have a certain need then what they get fulfills that need, so that doesn't necessarily mean that/they'll have the, the same things as someone else or

the same amount as someone else, but they get what they need in order to be the best that they can be in any given situation.

(Adisa, interview 2, 43-50)

Allen and Patricia viewed equality more in terms of cultural recognition. Allen discussed equal representation of people's stories as a central aspect of his definition of social justice.

And, I guess your first question for me, uh, was about how I define social justice. And, uh, to be honest, I'm at a loss when trying to, to, to define it. Uh, I do think it's important, uh, that everyone gets an opportunity to have their story told. Uh, and a lot of times, whether its through, uh, from convenience or from whatever, a lot people's histories are neglected. Uh, so (hh) for me social justice, uh, just means a fair and equitable representation of all people and all peoples' experiences. And that hasn't always been the case, uh, so.

(Allen, interview 2, 42-48)

These two perspectives reflect North's (2008) observation that social justice advocates make different claims for either redistribution of resources or greater recognition of and respect for marginalized cultural groups. However, such claims are not necessarily in opposition. Dominic and Jeff argued for both recognition and redistribution when they articulated their vision of social justice as equality. Dominic explained:

Uh, and the whole goal is to create equity on either side, make sure that everyone is heard, make sure that everybody has, has a fair chance in terms of, you know, the great words of, uh, what's his name, John Locke, life, liberty and property.  
(Dominic, interview 2, 37-40)

Dominic saw equity as a condition where both "everyone is heard" and where people have a "fair chance" to obtain property.

### *Social Justice as Active Citizenship*

Five participants mentioned citizenship education during their interviews, and one participant, Christine, addressed it three times, making this code the second most frequent response defining social justice.

Craig, whose doctoral work addressed citizenship and character education, explained the importance of promoting a humane approach to politics and social interaction.

Well, I think/that it has to do/with the idea/that, as citizens, that we want to be part of a society where people treat each other decently. And, I think that's really the, the key issue to it all. Uh that, that this idea that uh that people often don't treat each other kindly or in a just fashion, uh, and it's, it's important for the students to, to get some concept of what justice and fairness and decency really are, and so I think that's where it is, that's the heart of it/and, and then of course it broadens out into politics and everything else, but I think it's, the heart of it is how we live together in a way where we treat each other right.  
(Craig, interview 2, 36-43)

Similarly, Christine discussed how she emphasized her student responsibilities to both their community and to future generations.

Yeah and eventually you're going to be teachers, you're going to be doctors, you're going to be, uh, business people you're going to be, all (inaud) a mindful person all the time because the actions of, of one person, if you're a construction foreman and you have, you, you decide to have shoddy materials, shoddy workmanship, what's going to be the impact if that falls on x number of people, and their reaction, the reaction against the government, it, it's just really understanding the awesome responsibility that we as human beings have, which I, which is something I just firmly believe. You have an awesome responsibility.  
(Christine, interview 2, 170-177)

Their definitions of social justice reflect Parker's (2003) vision of democratic citizenship education that "predisposes citizens to principled reasoning and just ways of being with one another" (pp. xvii-xviii).

### *Social Justice as Empathy*

Five participants defined social justice as empathy, but only one participant, Karen, mentioned it more than once. Barton and Levstik (2004) have described two different approaches toward historical empathy, empathy as perspective taking and empathy as caring, both of which were reflected in the participant's comments.

Empathy as perspective taking asks students to understand the feelings or emotions that certain groups experienced at different times in the past. Christine and John shared a vision of empathy that reflected this more cognitive approach. According to John:

I would think it's just//being able to interpret//specially in a pedagogical sense for the teaching social justice, teaching, having an understanding and an empathy for a broad, for all peoples. So, having a study for, you know taking away the biases that everyone brings to the table on trying to teach, perhaps looking at its use a different way, developing at least-understanding and being able to empathize, not necessarily trying to drive home a public policy or get them to feel a certain way about a public policy...

(John, interview 2, 58-64)

Empathy as caring envisions a more affective role, where students develop their own feelings about a past event, for the people affected by an event, or to act in a particular way. Dominic described his desire to invoke such feelings through educational travel.

It's about doing work in these communities, and it's really a lot less for, for them, as more, as much as it is more for you, because you actually get to see where people's needs are on a common, human level, but at the same time, again you get to see exactly how good you have it. And as a result, when you come back, when you come back again, what, what are you going to tell somebody else? How are you going to change somebody else as a result of what you've experienced? If you, you know you can't, can't change anybody unless you've walked a mile in their shoes, or unless they're extremely empathetic, and empathy, you know, runs really high with me, you know.

(Dominic, interview 2, 370-378)

These two approaches to social justice as empathy are not, however, mutually exclusive.

Karen's definition of social justice as empathy included both aspects.

...so I try to get them to look at the world and how people live, in a non-judgmental way, in a way that's more open-minded and in a way that helps them kind of put their feet in other people's shoes so that they can sort of empathize, like that's kind of how I look at social justice in terms of teaching, just trying to get it so that//they can feel/that other people's lives matter...

(Karen, interview 2, 41-45)

For Karen, both cognitive and affective domains were important in her definition of social justice as empathy.

### *Social Justice as Critical Pedagogy*

Four participants defined social justice through the lens of critical pedagogy.

Like Apple (1995), these teachers were critical of how power, privilege and inequity are reproduced by educational institutions. For Patricia, raising awareness of such inequities proved central to her vision of social justice in social education.

And, so, the way most curriculums are structured, the way most books are structured, they have, and this is not just for one race, so most social studies classrooms are going to show white men, especially that comes from, uh, higher social economics, um, backgrounds with the power and with having basically//done everything that exists today, which uh is not necessarily true. So, when you bring social justice into that arena then you can show kids their value, because if you're not that person then you're automatically devalued, at least unconsciously.

(Patricia, interview 2, 67-74)

Similar to Patricia, David defined social justice as questioning and challenging what he called the “façade” of history.

Well, the way I look, the way I feel about it is that, with high school students//I like them to think about things and, and, and question them, and look behind, maybe a little bit of the facade, you know, of American history. And so I try to do that, I try to teach the basic stuff but I also try to touch some of those areas that students might not know about, just through reading the standard history textbook. That's my ultimate plan.

(David, interview 2, 43-48)

Patricia and David reflected Ross's (2000) belief that social studies education can serve as a tool “to help students question, understand, and test the reality of the social world we inhabit” (p. 59).

### *Social Justice as Broadening Visions*

Three participants defined social justice as broadening students understanding of different cultures or groups. Jeff explained this approach in his response to my opening question of the interview.

//I, I guess a major part of it is communicating and educating the students about all the aspects of society, different viewpoints of society, and um, when I was going through history we didn't have many viewpoints about African American history or about, uh, you know Mexican-American history or Indian history or anything like that, or even women's history, so uh I think a lot of it is educating, um, so the kids can then, through a process of, of learning and talking about it, uh, have challenging questions then they start to form their own viewpoints on how, how to achieve social justice, um, which//the end result is equal, equal opportunity and equal, uh, uh you know////eq-equal awareness I guess would be a big thing, you know...

(Jeff, interview 2, 30-38)

Jeff's explanation mirrored Banks' (1996) vision of multicultural education as a tool for social transformation. By understanding multiple perspectives and experiences in history, students will have the knowledge to envision and achieve a different, more socially just community.

### Practicing Social Justice in the Classroom

While the teachers were somewhat unsure about their definitions of social justice, they had no difficulty explaining how they promoted social justice in their classroom practice. Their answers to my second question about their teaching practices produced the longest responses during the interview. In the discussion that follows I discuss the participants' general approaches to teaching social justice, the strategies they used, and the way they managed their classrooms. Throughout the discussion I will also call attention to some of the differences by race, sex, age and life experience.

## *Two Approaches in the Classroom: Critical Pedagogy and Multiculturalism*

When asked how they attempted to bring social justice into the classroom, responses coded “critical inquiry” and “multiple perspectives” emerged as the two most frequent subcategories under the general category of classroom practice. As I explain below, these two codes reflect the scholarly traditions of critical pedagogy and multicultural education. Participants employed each of these approaches in a variety of ways, and some noticeable differences surfaced by race, sex and age.

*Critical Pedagogy.* I coded responses as “critical inquiry” when participants discussed classroom procedures that questioned, challenged or explored the operation of power and privilege in society. As such, this code incorporates the ideas of critical pedagogy (Apple, 1995; Cherryholmes, 1983; Giroux, 1998; and Kinchelow, 1993) and critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Ten participants described how they employed such an approach in their classroom, with an average response rate of 2.2. To calculate the average number of times a code was applied to each participant, HyperRESEARCH’s frequency report function divided the number of coded segments by the number of participants (identified as cases in the program, see Appendix I). On average, I coded 26 segments per case, ranging from 18 to 40 codes per participant. The frequency of codes per case ranged from .1 to 2.2. Thus, the average response rate of 2.2 for critical inquiry represents the highest frequency for all of the 40 codes identified in the second interview.

Participants utilized critical pedagogy in a variety of ways. Some used it to present historical narratives that addressed the oppression that affected them personally. John, whose life history emphasized the discrimination he faced because of limited

resources, described how he challenged the traditional narrative of the American Dream in his classroom.

So within that social studies structure, I think you can ask important questions that pertain to labor issues or immigrant issues, looking backwards at the same time looking forwards.... But, this idea of the American Dream, well we know//uh//that that really wasn't always, whether or not its available is a different question than whether or not it's prevalent.... And so I think//that's part of why we s-if we're going to have a shared history, which is one of the biggest, nationalist, patriotic uh, we're going to have that we should, we should know what it is for everyone, not just for the elite structure...  
(John, interview 2, 144-158).

Later in the interview, John explained how he used this framework to question his students' assumptions about why some people are wealthy while others are poor. By critically examining the role of economic inequality in history, John promoted a classroom discourse that reflected his own struggles with classism in America.

Christine also used critical pedagogy as a tool to allow her students to consider how the inequitable distribution of resources influenced history, although she did not personally experience classism.

What, what happens when there's a concentration of wealth and taxation put on the peasants, and then their land's taken, you compare that to Latifundia in Rome, so that whole constant struggle which is very Marxist, I know (laughs)  
(Christine, interview 2, 81-84)

Her reference to Marxism revealed a conscious decision to present a critical narrative to her students. However, her laughter at the end of this sentence suggested some discomfort with using such a controversial approach in her practice. Christine also challenged her students to apply a critical lens to gain a deeper understanding of how power and privilege operated in regards to race relations within their community.

In the current school district that I work in, understanding that (district) was once an integrated community. And, my students know exactly, sometime, when it's appropriate, I bring up the fact that (district) had a black community. And the

decisions that were made, they were all-they were economic decisions, truly economic decisions, gradually moved that community out...  
(Christine, interview 2, 233-237)

Christine, who emphasized citizenship in her definition of social justice, reflected the some of the ideas of critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) as a means to encourage her students to contemplate their role as citizens in a world where decisions are often made to protect the property rights of one racial group.

Although he employed critical pedagogy in his own practice, Adisa worried that too much revisionist history might interfere with his students' ability to develop a sophisticated understanding of the past. First, he described how he used a critical lens to explore historical inequities.

You know we're looking at history and, and, and we're really, and in most of my classes we're talking about the, um, the creation of the Atlantic rim after Christopher Columbus and this whole global exchange and so you see all of these sudden changes in social structures going on throughout the world where, um, you know people who are on the bottom become the top and vice versa, whole races of people subjugated and all of these unprecedented changes in the world by this discovery of, of, of new land and these new needs for labor....  
(Adisa, interview 2, 134-140)

Later, he raised the concern that too much criticism might ultimately distort historical understanding.

...my thing is that//there's been some damage on the other end too because, you know now I've got kids saying Christopher Columbus was a thief and a liar, and I'll say, I'm not quite sure if Christopher Columbus was that either...  
(Adisa, interview 2, 253-255)

Adisa feared that his students might develop inaccurate ideas about past events.

Similarly, Jeff also stressed the importance of evaluating past events in the context of the time they occurred.

I'm very, um, strong in, in emphasizing that you have to remember the times, you know. We look at things now, you know, Booker T. Washington, was he an

Uncle Tom? You know, remember the times, you know, Thomas Jefferson was a slave owner, how could he have done that? Well remember the times and remember the other revolutionary ideas he had and the conflict he had within himself, and, and I think that's important, um, that the kids get a perspective of, you know there are things that were done a hundred years ago, twenty years ago, that we would never think of doing now.

(Jeff, interview 2, 139-146)

Adisa and Jeff struggled to balance the twin demands of historical contextualization (Wineburg, 2001) and the need to interrogate how power and privilege operate in both the past and the present. Only three participants explicitly raised the issue of historical contextualization as a concern. These results suggest that critical pedagogy might interfere with one aspect of historical thinking, contextualization, leading to what Wineburg labels as “presentism” (p. 19), the interpretation of past events from the perspective of contemporary experience.

Critical pedagogy was the most frequently cited technique for promoting social justice in social studies classrooms. However, Adisa’s and Jeff’s observations, coupled with Christine’s somewhat uncomfortable laugh, suggest that some concerns and ambivalence remain about using critical pedagogy as a teaching method.

*Multicultural Education.* I coded responses “multiple perspectives” when participants discussed practices that exposed students to the perspectives and experiences of various social groups, many of whom had been marginalized in traditional historical narratives. As such, this code incorporates the ideas of multicultural education as articulated by a variety of scholars such as Au (2009), Banks (1995a, 1995b, 1996) and Gay (2000). Ten participants mentioned multiple perspectives during the interview. The average response rate for this code was 1.7, making it the second most frequent response under the general

category of classroom practice. As was the case with critical pedagogy, participants incorporated multicultural education into their classroom practice in a variety of ways.

Sandra described an approach to multicultural education that reflected the values of cultural pluralism and liberalism. For her, making students aware that there are multiple perspectives about the past was central to a social justice practice.

I think for//all students involved you have to be able to see multiple sides of the story, that it's not just//one person's story in history because everybody views history differently, every-and everybody views the event that is occurring, even if you all saw the exact same event, your history, your glasses, whatever you want to say, whatever it is that brings you to that point makes you look at that differently.

(Sandra, interview 2, 71-76)

She believed that telling all sides of the story prevented the teacher from “perpetuating a myth” that only one group contributed to the past. However, Sandra tried to adopt a neutral stance in her presentation of these stories and she discussed the importance of helping students recognize that all perspectives have value.

I mean I think showing that there is more than one story also opens up for today, for the rest of their life, for//that even when you go out to do something//your story is important, but it's not more important than anybody else's.

(Sandra, interview 2, 85-87)

For the most part, Sandra’s approach to multicultural education was grounded in the traditions of liberalism and cultural pluralism, where a teacher brings multiple voices into the classroom but does not necessarily endorse a particular viewpoint. However, she admitted that at times she took a slightly more critical approach, particularly when discussing women’s or Native American history.

Many participants blended critical pedagogy with their discussion of multicultural education. In fact, the interviews of eight participants included codes for both “multiple perspectives” and “critical inquiry.” In his African history class, Allen described how he

used multiple perspectives as a tool to critique how the media has framed recent events on the continent.

...it's an eye-opening experience to start to look at these things and with the classroom, just trying to provide an opportunity like I had to look at things from multiple perspectives. That it's not always cut and dry...what happens when, uh, governments are, are, are//are undermined. Or, are uh, why Mugabi feels the way he does about the West and some of the things that are going on. So it's not as simple as Mugabi's a dictator or Muhammad Adid was just the warlord and everything from that point on is, uh, the fault of Africans.  
(Allen, interview 2, 81-91)

Allen encouraged his students to consider African perspectives to challenge the media's neo-colonial discourse about African politics. This more critical approach mirrors Au's (2009) and Kincheloe and Steinberg's (1997) contention that multicultural education should be viewed as a part of a more concerted attack on oppression and injustice.

Participants did not limit their discussion of multiple perspectives to only curriculum and content. Patricia explained how she used multiple perspectives as a tool to promote energetic discussions. Like Sandra, Patricia generally adopted a neutral stance in her classroom. However, she encouraged her students to openly express their own opinions during discussions.

I do not let any of my beliefs come out in the classroom, which also is protection for me. So, I try to always have students, uh, to look at both sides. That's why it's important for them to learn how to look at different parts of a question and different arguments and be able to do it themselves because in every classroom, ev-students do not think alike. So, although this person, ninety percent of the classroom may agree, may have the same belief I have and they don't know it, but you're gonna have one, two, three, four or five students that are gonna come from a different perspective. So if it's a open forum where they can, where they can get their point across, like I don't agree with that this is how I look at it, a lot of times if it's, if you allow them the freedom then the kids will just be mind blowing.  
(Patricia, interview 2, 123-132)

For Patricia, encouraging and respecting multiple points of view during discussions was an essential component of her democratic and socially just classroom. Like Hess (2009), she viewed ideological diversity as a critical component for facilitating discussions on controversial issues.

*Differences by Race and Sex.* All of the transcripts included references to either “critical inquiry” or “multiple perspectives,” and eight participants mentioned both subcategories during their interview. However, there were differences in the frequency with which some identity groups discussed those topics. Black participants were far more likely to discuss critical pedagogy with an average response rate of 2.7 compared to 1.9 for white participants. Inversely, white participants more frequently talked about multiple perspectives with an average response rate of 2.3 compared to 1.0 for black participants. Likewise, male participants mentioned multiple perspectives more often, with a 2.1 response rate compared to 1.2 for females. Females reported using critical inquiry an average of 2.3 times, which was slightly higher than the male response rate of 2.1. One possible explanation of these trends is that participants with targeted identities (Blacks and females) were more inclined to take a critical approach to the subject matter as a result of their experience with oppression. However, further research is required to support this preliminary contention.

#### *Instructional Strategies and Resources for Promoting Social Justice in the Classroom*

The second most frequent type of response to my question about classroom practice addressed specific instructional strategies and resources that teachers used in their classroom. Teachers reported employing alternative resources, student-driven

inquiry, discussions and current connections as a means to promote social justice in the classroom. Some of the participants' responses varied by sex, age, and life experience.

*Student-Driven Inquiry.* Seven participants emphasized the importance of students developing their own opinions and knowledge. Patricia explained that as citizens, her students needed to develop the capacity to think for themselves.

Yeah, but I, I leave it to the students and what, and the students ask all the time, we want to know what you think. What I think is not important because that should, well, I tell them that's the problem, you're used to other people forming your opinions when you're at a point where you have to form your own opinion.  
(Patricia, interview 2, 139-142)

Patricia utilized discussion and Socratic seminars (discussed below) as a tool to accomplish this goal. Other teachers employed different approaches to encourage student inquiry. Although she sometimes used more teacher-directed methods with younger or immature students, Sandra favored using student-driven research as a tool.

I make sure I, I either bring that out depending on the grade level and maturity of the students, I either bring that out and show it to them or I lead them to, you know, I let them go along and read information on their own and do the research and come to the point where they go, hey, that book wasn't right that we just read, the textbook isn't, isn't correct. And let them discover that knowledge for themselves...

(Sandra, interview 2, 106-110)

David utilized writing, particularly journal reflections, as a means to encourage students to form their own opinions about questions of social justice.

I like the writing though. I like it when kids write about what they're thinking about. Because, uh, that shows me that they're really, that they really are thinking about it. You know, not everybody feels comfortable speaking or, or talking about things, or opposing somebody.

(David, interview 2, 253-256)

Earlier in the interview, he described how he used personal written responses to a film about the Palestinian/Israeli conflict as a means to elicit his student's own ideas about this controversial topic (David, interview 2, 204-222).

Craig favored field trips and experiential learning as a means to promote student-driven inquiry. He described one field trip where he took a group of students to an academic conference at a local college.

I try/to find these, as and, and create them, the situations for the learning in, in as many/uh, uh opportunities with the kids that I can. And just this last week, uh I, I took a group/to a, a, uh a conference at (college), and the conference was about democracy and civic engagement.

(Craig, interview 2, 46-50)

While organizing such trips proved to be challenging in the urban school district where he taught, Craig valued the authentic learning that resulted from the experience. Students were able to "not only to experience something, not only to write about it, not only to feel it in their bones, but also to then have the opportunity to go out and talk to people about it...." (Craig, interview 2, 99-101).

All of the strategies outlined above reflect a constructivist tradition that has its foundation in John Dewey's (1916) conception of democratic education. Of the seven participants who talked about student driven-inquiry, teachers whose life histories recounted a high degree of resistance were more inclined to emphasize this strategy. "Resisters" had an average response rate of 1.2 compared to .5 for participants whose life history was marked by a high degree of alignment. Perhaps those participants whose social justice framework emerged from resistance to injustice placed a greater value on student-driven inquiry compared to those whose social justice identity was guided by the supportive actions of others.

*Textbooks and Alternative Resources.* Of the seven teachers who discussed textbooks during their interviews, five were either critical or ambivalent about the value of textbooks as a resource. Sandra, John, and Adisa all criticized the textbooks they used, with Sandra and Adisa both using the word, “sanitized” to describe the master narratives presented by these books. Dominic and Craig were more ambivalent. They replied that they did not find textbooks helpful therefore they did not use them in their classrooms. David also displayed a degree of ambivalence, explaining that he used the textbook simply as a starting point for his instruction. Only Jeff made a positive comment about how textbooks had improved over the past two decades.

Given the participants’ general disenchantment with textbooks, it is not surprising that seven teachers discussed at length how they employed alternative resources in their classroom instruction. Dominic, Craig and Adisa replaced the textbook with more scholarly articles. Dominic, mirroring comments made by both Craig and Adisa, explained that while the articles were initially difficult for his students to understand, they eventually benefited from reading more challenging material.

I use a lot of readings, uh, that are either collegiate readings, those are definitely higher level which is somewhat, uh, intimidating to the kids at first, but especially by, like close to November they’re like alright, I’ve got this, I know exactly what to do.

(Dominic, interview 2, 127-130)

Jeff, David and Dominic all discussed the importance of bringing various media such as film and music into the classroom. Jeff, who was the only participant who spoke positively about textbooks, still employed a variety of media in his classroom.

I myself am, as you know, a great fan of using songs and using movies, commercial movies, foreign films, whatever, that are out there and just showing those snippets out sometimes to, to kind of prod thinking by the students and by

the class, so.  
(Jeff, interview 2, 66-69)

Patricia and Jeff also talked about using primary documents as an alternative resource, and they both emphasized the importance of allowing students the opportunity to draw their own conclusions from original sources. However, Patricia also noted that using primary sources provided her with a degree of political protection when she raised issues of social justice in the classroom.

So I bring all these different things in and, it protects me because they're, they're actually legal documents so the parents can't say I have, um, like kind of interpreted it or I'm trying to be one sided, it's like no this is a legal document, so they're meeting several of the um (state) standards by reading it,...  
(Patricia, interview 2, 102-105)

Thus, while participants generally stressed the potential of alternative resources to expand social justice discourse beyond the limited confines of the textbook, Patricia's comments revealed that other reasons might also influence their decisions. Also, while over half of the interviews were coded for this sub-category, male participants were far more likely to discuss using alternative resources with an average response rate of 1.6 compared to .2 for females. Further research is needed to determine if this trend from a small sample represents a general difference among social studies teachers and, if it does, why does such a difference exist.

*Classroom Discussion.* During both the interviews and the focus group sessions, all of the participants referenced classroom discussions. However, five participants spoke at length about their use of discussion as an instructional strategy during the second interview. Patricia explained how one specific and highly formalized discussion format, Socratic seminars, served as her basic instructional strategy.

So I take a lot of time in just asking questions and making them think. So I play devil's advocate, and normally the kids will tell you what you think, what they think you want to hear, and then I'll counter with another question giving them another way to look at it. So then they have to think, and then the more they think and get, um, accustomed to that then the more they're used to, when I come to Miss (name)'s class I have to look at this a whole lot of different ways. So once they get that type of, um, I don't want to call it programming but, once they learn how to do that, then I actually focus on having discussions that deal with these issues. So we, um, have Socratic seminars, we have um, uh daily questions when they come in the class in which they have to discuss that...

(Patricia, interview 2, 87-96)

Patricia stressed the importance of preparing students, developing their discussion skills to implement this strategy effectively. In addition to building student skills, Jeff addressed the need to create an environment where students felt safe discussing controversial subjects. He went as far as to close the door to promote an open discussion about cheating.

So I close the door and just tell the kids whatever you say in here is safe, and that's, that's really important, uh, that they feel that whether it's a controversial opinion or just saying yeah, I cheated once, that kind of stuff, so.

(Jeff, interview 2, 122-124)

John described another ingredient needed to promote rich discussions on controversial subjects: diversity of student opinion.

Yeah, that's the benefit, I think too, of being in a public school. You don't, you don't really have a monolithic//group of people.... In public school, even though we are in a high socioeconomic area, there's also pockets of diversity, and there's also//um, you know, yeah, I mean you see//haves, have-nots, whatever you want to call it, different circumstances for people to deal with, so//you can have those discussions, I mean it helps,

(John, interview 2, 179-186)

Patricia's, Jeff's and John's approach to discussion mirrored Hess's (2009) vision for promoting democratic education through controversial classroom discussions. While David agreed that classroom discussion were a useful strategy for addressing social justice, he also commented on some of the method's limitations. He explained that "not

everybody feels comfortable speaking or, or talking about things, or opposing somebody” (David, interview 2, 255-256). To compensate for this limitation, David implemented reflective writing to help students articulate their ideas about controversial topics.

*Current Connections.* Five participants addressed the importance of making connections between the past and the present in their classroom. Adisa explained how using current events helped make the subject relevant for his students.

I can kind of sense the mood of a class... Eh, you know I’m teaching social studies, so you know how do we study a society? If, if I can’t teach that through their everyday lives then, then what am I doing?  
(Adisa, interview 2, 108-117)

Adisa compared this style of teaching to the improvisational art of a hip-hop or jazz artist. He explained, “if you can’t freestyle, then you’re not really doing jazz, you’re not really doing hip hop” (Adisa, interview 2, 103-104). This reference to jazz and hip-hop culture reflects the idea of culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000), and for Adisa, addressing current events helped make the curriculum pertinent for his students.

Christine also reported using current events in her classroom. However, she linked the past to the present in order to examine contemporary problems with a more critical lens.

I mean, both in taxes today, uh, who pays a good percentage of the taxes? Who can afford to pay (laughs) taxes? What’s the impact on people? So that they realize that this just didn’t, this did not happen in China, uh, a thousand years ago, but the same behavior as the upper one percent are able to keep the bulk of taxes off of them and instead put them on the bulk of, or the majority of the people, what’s the impact of that? And then we look at the United States, we look at the world today, whose, whose got the burden?  
(Christina, interview 2, 121-127)

It is hardly surprising that Christine, who emphasized both citizenship education and critical pedagogy during her interview, introduced current events in her classroom as a strategy to develop more critically minded citizens.

#### *Classroom Environment and Teacher Neutrality*

The third most frequent type of response to my question about classroom practice addressed issues of classroom environment and the question of teacher neutrality. Teachers discussed building relationships with students, promoting positive classroom communities, and their positions on disclosing their beliefs and values to students.

*Building Relationships with Students.* Three participants, all of them female, discussed the importance of developing relationships between teachers and students. Goldie, who was the only participant who taught at the middle school level at the time of the study, discussed this topic four different times during her interview. She frequently referenced her role as a mother when describing her interactions with students.

All I can say is that for me,/and I tell the students, number one, even before I'm an educator/I'm a mother, okay. And even though you have a mother or may not have a mother, I'm not taking that person's place, but in my classroom it is, uh, very important that you understand that I'm a protector, that um I'm a, uh, coach, I'm a mentor, I'm your teacher, um, if you like me great, but if you don't that's good too but you have to respect me...

(Goldie, interview 2, 79-84)

Her maternal approach included an element of loving firmness, what some might call tough love. However, she also placed a heavy responsibility on herself to act as the responsible party in cultivating positive relationships. For instance, when disrespected by a student, Goldie explained that she first examined her own behavior.

Well, number one I try to be fair, uh and I try to examine my behavior, what did I do, was there anything that I did or say, to cause a student to treat me with disrespect?

(Goldie, interview 2, 131-133)

While Christine did not reference her role as mother, she too emphasized the importance of building relationships with her students. Like Goldie, she manifested a tough love approach in connecting with her students. A rigorous teacher with high expectations, she explained how she established relationships with students who faced challenges outside of the classroom or who tried to resist her teaching.

I don't care why the kids are like that because sometimes, just telling them, letting them know that, you know, I'm not going to, I care about you too much to let you do that to yourself. And I will tell students, struggle, I can't do much about you if I let you do that to yourself. And I can't fix what's going on out there. I can only give you something in this classroom, and I-you have to trust me that taking off that hat, taking off the hood, taking off all that stuff is one step to you accepting being a part of a classroom situation, an academic situation.

(Christine, interview 2, 363-369)

Both Goldie and Christine emphasized the importance of care as an aspect of relationship building. They demonstrated the receptivity, availability, and attentiveness that Noddings (2002) argued are the hallmarks of a caring personality. Additionally, Noddings suggested that women are more prone to develop an ethic of care compared to men, possibly explaining why only females were coded for the category "classroom relationships." However, like Noddings, I do not intend to make an essentialist argument that women are naturally more caring than men. However, the lack of male responses in this category raises interesting questions for future research.

*Classroom Community Building.* Four participants, two male and two female, discussed how community building in the classroom was an important component of their social justice practice. Again, the only middle school teacher in the study, Goldie, stressed the importance of community building in her interview on three different occasions. She explained that students needed to feel safe in her classroom.

Well one of the things I think as teachers, regardless if we're teaching the content or not, is to ensure that the environment in where students learn/is one where students feel safe. That they are protected, for lack of a better word, from um, feeling or being put down or belittled, uh, or feeling like they don't have a voice, or that their voice would not be heard, because others can speak better, clearer, have more knowledge, have a great ability, whatever.

(Goldie, interview 2, 62-67)

For Goldie, community building was a necessary precondition to leveling the playing field and letting all students participate in class on an equal basis.

Like Goldie, Jeff sought to promote a respectful and equitable classroom environment, and he placed the responsibility for building community squarely on the teacher's shoulders.

...teachers have so much power, you know, it's, it's the Ginott<sup>1</sup> quote I have on my podium about, you know, and I think about that a lot how, the-I really do influence so much what they're thinking, how their day is going to go and everything.

(Jeff, interview 2, 101-104)

Jeff's took this responsibility seriously, and he designed his classroom to promote such a positive environment. Colorful movie and music posters covered both the walls and the ceilings. A reclining chair was placed in the center of the room and each day Jeff selected a random student to sit in the comfortable chair (Field Notes, 11/24/2009).

Clearly he invested a considerable amount of time, energy and resources into establishing a physical environment that would promote the classroom community he desired.

Marri (2005) argued that community building is an essential component of classroom-based multicultural democratic education. During their interviews both Goldie and Jeff affirmed that establishing a positive environment was a necessary precondition

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<sup>1</sup> Haim Ginott was a teacher and psychologist, the quote referenced begins: "I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather...."

for their social justice practice, and they emphasized the teacher's role in promoting a safe and equitable classroom climate. Similar to cultivating relationships, this practice reflects Noddings' (2002) ethic of care. Unlike the results for the code, "classroom relationships," an equal number of males and females discussed creating a caring classroom community during the second interview. However, the two females mentioned community building more often than the two males, and the average response rate for females was .7 compared to .3 for males. Further research might reveal if this trend exists for a larger sample and, if so, why males and females take different approaches to demonstrate care in the classroom.

*Teacher Neutrality.* Ten participants discussed the issue of teacher neutrality, specifically the difficult decision of whether they should disclose their opinions on controversial issues of social justice in the classroom. For these teachers, addressing social justice issues raised the possibility of having an undue influence on their students' opinions. As Jeff explained,

...as professionals in the social studies area, it's our obligation to, I think, throw things out there, not necessarily to push a certain viewpoint, and I think that's what some people get doing and, and it can be dangerous and I hope that the kids really never know a lot of my opinions.  
(Jeff, interview 2, 69-72)

Jeff, who stressed the importance of classroom community in his social justice practice, believed that teacher disclosure could negatively affect that community. However, Jeff also admitted that he would, on rare occasions, share his opinions with students. Jeff was one of two teachers who voiced fairly strong opposition to disclosing their opinions in class. However, the remaining eight participants all described some form of disclosure when they discussed their stance on teacher neutrality.

Like Jeff, John did not think it was appropriate for a teacher to present his or her opinions in a classroom setting.

So, um, I, I think it has to be just giving them a variety of things to interpret, but you can't get up there and say, here's what I think. Um, not only is that ethically probably wrong, but it doesn't help them construct it for themselves, which is what, you know, they're just going to regurgitate that on a test or something because they think that's what you want them to say, and it doesn't really hold a lot of water.

(John, interview 2, 108-113)

John expanded Jeff's argument against teacher disclosure. Beyond the ethical question of indoctrinating students, John also worried that sharing his opinion might interfere with student driven-inquiry (as discussed earlier under instructional strategies). Additionally, both Jeff and John characterized their school districts as conservative, and Jeff specifically linked his position on non-disclosure to the political climate of his community.

Well, very honestly I'm, I teach in a fairly conservative community and I would be classifying myself as very liberal, and uh as a result I know, practically speaking, I'm going to alienate a lot of families...

(Jeff, interview 2, 90-92)

The fact that the two participants most adamant about maintaining neutrality both worked in conservative communities suggests that political considerations also influence a teacher's stance on disclosure.

Eight other participants were more willing to share their beliefs with students. However, they described various motivations for disclosing their opinions. Some, like Linda and Sandra, only shared their beliefs when they thought it was necessary to alert students about the teacher's biases. Linda explained her decision to disclose her values in the context of a field trip she led to study church architecture. One of the destinations on the field trip was the church she attended.

I immediately say you know this is where I go to church, you know I have a bias, I can't stand up here and teach you about Christian art and you not to know  
(Linda, interview 2, 164-166)

Karen described tension between her desire to disclose more frequently and her decision to try and remain neutral. When I asked her why she tried to remain neutral in the classroom, she replied, "I've just been told that's what you do." After a brief pause, she continued to describe her choice.

It's not necessarily because I want to do it, I'd really love to be a liberal, you know, bastion of, but um, I just think that it's//better to have them come to the realities on their own...

(Karen, interview 2, 124-128)

Karen, however, tended to disclose her opinions fairly frequently. She discussed sharing her point of view on topics such as the graduated income tax and gay marriage. She reported that abortion was the only topic where she refused to disclose her beliefs, and even in that case she told students that they could inquire about her opinions at the conclusion of the course.

Christine voiced the strongest opinion against teacher neutrality.

I tell them at the beginning of the year that one, I do have an agenda.... And I know there are teachers who brag about the fact that they don't go into the classroom with an agenda and I do. I tell them, I have an agenda, I want them to be able to make the world that they live in and I live in a better place, and for seven generations from them a better place, and they can use history as a tool to do it.

(Christine, interview 2, 131-137)

Despite her strong position against neutrality, Christine still sought to maintain a classroom environment that respected all points of view. Like all of the other participants who discussed teacher neutrality, she believed it was unethical for a teacher to impose their beliefs on a student.

These results mirror what Hess (2009) described as a continuum of teacher attitudes regarding disclosure of opinions. The teachers in her study ranged from “firm non-disclosers” to “explicit disclosers,” with a large number of “occasional disclosers” in between these two poles (p. 100). The central issue influencing these teachers’ decisions was their concern that they might impose their views on impressionable adolescents. My smaller study revealed a similar range and nature of responses. However, eight of the ten participants who discussed teacher neutrality during the second interview believed it was appropriate for teachers to share their opinions in some instances. These results are slightly higher than the 55% of teachers in Hess’s study that agreed that it was acceptable for teachers to share their opinions in the classroom. Therefore, social studies teachers who teach toward social justice may be more inclined to reveal their opinions to students.

#### **Working for Social Justice within School Systems**

The third question of the second interview asked teachers to explain how they worked to promote social justice in the broader school community. Teachers reported a variety of ways they sought to affect change within their school systems: they took leadership and advocated for change; they collaborated with others to build networks of allies; they sponsored social justice related clubs; and they organized events that addressed issues of social justice. In some of these endeavors, differences emerged based on life experience, sex, and age.

#### ***School Leadership and Advocacy***

Every participant in the study discussed school leadership and advocacy for social justice during the second interview. As I discuss below, this leadership manifested itself through both formal and informal roles. However, not every participant felt comfortable

taking a leadership role, and two participants described a more ambivalent perspective about leadership for social justice within the school setting. The participants' approaches to school leadership seemed to be influenced by both life experience and age.

*Formal Leadership.* Eleven of the participants described how they exercised leadership and advocated for social justice through either an official position or formal organizations. They exercised this leadership on school committees, as leaders of teacher organizations, and as administrators or department chairs. Allen, who carried the dual roles of teacher and assistant principal, described his responsibility to lead the school's social justice efforts.

So, uh, those are some of the things, challenging the status quo, and challenging the status quo along the lines of curriculum, hiring practices, admissions policies, uh//it's, it's a tough job.

(Allen, interview 2, 173-175).

Later in the interview, he explained that this position was a "tough job" because he had to balance the interests of a wide variety of constituencies. He shared one instance where he had to refuse a conservative teacher's request to show a movie that portrayed Muslims in a negative light.

And, uh//and I had to let him know I'm, I'm the director of diversity, not liberal diversity, not conservative divers-not divers-liberal thought or conservative thought, just the director of diversity. And I want to make sure that everyone is represented, uh, not necessarily in a positive light but it's a fair representation of people. And, and you know, I'm not going to present, uh, a film that uh, and a lot of critics and in a lot of scholars' opinions is propaganda, and it uh denigrates uh people of Arab and Muslim descent.

(Allen, interview 2, 147-153)

Working within the school's formal organization, Allen felt somewhat frustrated at times. However, he remained optimistic that as he became more fully involved in the entire school community he would become more successful in his role.

Patricia advocated for social justice as a leader in a teacher's group organized outside of the official structure of the school district. She explained the mission of the group, Teacher Activists United (TAU) "was to try to//have teachers, without administrative control, actually create a link between the school board, the students, the administration, um, the community" (Patricia, interview 2, 171-173). Members of the group attended board meetings, met with the Parent Teacher's Organization, and created materials to promote social justice within the school district. However, Patricia ultimately distanced herself from the organization because other teachers in the group became too negative in their philosophy and approach.

*Informal Leadership.* In addition to exercising leadership through formal organizations and positions, some teachers also demonstrated their influence through informal roles. Christine, who held formal leadership on several committees, also tried to advocate for change by speaking informally to both groups and individuals within her school. She recalled one moment in a faculty meeting when, concerned about the proliferation of abusive language among students, she challenged her colleagues to interrupt oppressive language.

I talked about that with the faculty, at one of our first faculty meetings years ago. And the "n" word was getting crazy at (school).... and I talked about how that, and the importance about having the courage to take on the responsibility of being an adult.

(Christine, interview 2, 429-434)

Christine, who was a well-respected teacher in both her school and the community, leveraged her informal influence to change teacher behaviors.

Like Christine, Goldie held a formal leadership role in her school. However, at times she also advocated for social justice as an individual.

In the school district in which I work, a couple of years ago, there was a demonstration. It was an orderly demonstration, uh, by people in the community, and some, I think I was the only one (laughs) uh in favor of our superintendent being given a contract. And I stood up at a meeting in front of administrators, board members, and said this person needs to stay.//Okay, and I don't think, I thought about, I'm the only teacher doing this, okay.  
(Goldie, interview 2, 320-325)

In this instance, Goldie was not speaking from her position of formal authority. As such, she was somewhat vulnerable. Explaining why she took this risk, she commented that "things have happened to me in my life lets me know that I have to take a stand, or if I don't then I'm going along with something I don't believe in" (Goldie, interview 2, 335-336).

*Ambivalence Toward Leadership.* Two participants presented a more ambivalent attitude toward school leadership. For example, as a relatively new and isolated teacher in a conservative school district, John was reluctant to take an active role advocating systematic change at the time of the interview.

... maybe I can, when I'm less busy (laughs), try to facilitate something even district wide or something within, you know that's something I've thought about in the long term trying to//And framing that's difficult too because it's a loaded word for a lot of people, yeah  
(John, interview 2, 273-278).

While John was reluctant to accept a leadership role at the time of this study, he did envision taking a more active role later in his career.

*The Influence of Life Experience on Leadership.* Participants who experienced more resistance during their life history discussed leadership and advocacy more frequently during their interviews with an average response rate of 2.4 compared to 1.5 for those teachers whose life history aligned them toward social justice. In addition to talking more often about leadership, "resisters" tended to take a more confrontational approach

within the school system. Karen explained that she did not believe that school leaders had a clear view of how to lead for social justice.

I think there has to be a lot more thinking outside of the box. I think that people are trapped in the old systems/and that you really need to just shake stuff up and turn it around, and almost like clear the slate and start all over in some respects, and I don't think that's ever going to happen...

(Karen, interview 2, 375-378)

Despite her pessimism that authentic change will occur, she continued to fight for change. During her life history interview, Karen explained how she sent an open letter to the superintendant and the school administration to oppose a particularly oppressive evaluation system (Karen, interview 1, 127-156). Karen began the letter by taking an oppositional stance.

I am writing this open email as a formal complaint. I am writing this not as a response to something specific, but moreso as a result of many months of my own personal frustration. I do not claim to speak for anyone but myself, but I am certain that there are many others just like me who echo my sentiments.

(Karen, personal communication with the author, 11/16/2009)

Similarly, Craig reported constantly resisting attempts by school leaders to name one of his programs as “character education” when he believed it needed to be labeled as “character and citizenship education.”

Um//and let me say this about it, first of all everyone calls it character education and I insist on over and over saying that it's character and citizenship education, and even though I say that they always call it character ed, they just leave out the citizenship part. It's very interesting to me that they leave it out even though I repeatedly put it there and on all the information that I put out, I always put character and citizenship and they still leave it out.

(Craig, interview 2, 304-310)

The frequency with which “resisters” discussed leadership and advocacy as well as the nature of their comments suggests that those who developed their commitment to social

justice by resisting oppression may have a more confrontational approach to advocating for social change as teacher leaders.

Conversely, teachers whose life history aligned them along a path toward social justice tended to have a more positive outlook on the capacity of school systems to change. For instance, Linda described how her leadership on hiring committees had promoted a greater commitment to social justice within her school.

I really feel like the way that maybe I've made the biggest contributions school wise is, is really um being involved in committees, but in particularly committees that have hired people, because um, I think you can root that out, I think you can kind of find somebody who you feel like that's going to be, this person's going to value that, you know, and I want that person either teaching in my department with me or I want that person, you know, in a principal's position.  
(Linda, interview 2, 220-225)

It is possible that “aligners” tend to have more faith in the possibility for institutional change because their own life experiences have promoted a more optimistic outlook.

*The Influence of Age and Tenure on Leadership.* The two participants who demonstrated the greatest ambivalence toward accepting leadership roles, John and Adisa, were also among the youngest participants, and they were the two teachers with the least experience. As mentioned earlier, John described the difficulty of leading for social justice as an untenured teacher in a conservative school district. For Adisa, teaching and family obligations prevented him from taking a more active leadership role.

Um, so there are several things in this school district that they're doing to try and address some of these social issues and I've been asked to be a part of just about all of them, and I have, I have respectfully declined all of them because right now I think that, um, that being in the classroom on days, the best thing I can do/that's going to improve the world is to be a good husband and a good father, so, I know that sounds crazy.  
(Adisa, interview 2, 375-381)

However, Dominic's experience revealed that once young teachers obtained tenure and became comfortable in the classroom, they might be ready to accept more formal and informal leadership roles. In his eighth year of teaching, Dominic described how he was beginning to take a more active role advocating for change.

I'm actually beginning to, uh, right now I'm an alternate for the curriculum committee. I figure you know that's, that's one of the major places that change can take place

(Dominic, interview 2, 225-227)

Like John and Adisa, at the time of the study Dominic was in his early thirties. However, because he had more teaching experience and was also tenured, Dominic was beginning to take on more responsibility to lead for social justice.

#### *Collaborating with Others*

Seven participants explained that another way they attempted to promote social justice was by building networks of allies through both formal and informal collaboration. Patricia described how she worked to build a network of support in her school.

a lot of times, though, it's more in the background with, um, I'm, I have the type of personality where I can get along with a lot of different groups of people. And so, people will come and talk to me about things, and usually if I can form a, a relationship with them we can have an open discussion, we can talk about stuff, I've gone to lunch with people, I have talked to them on the phone, we've had meetings, we've had small groups.

(Patricia, interview 2, 163-168)

Christine discussed how she used a similar collaborative approach to build stronger relationships between white and black teachers.

I've always been in a situation where there were only a few of us, quote unquote black folks. I've made it my business to always be part of the bigger group. And I/I've gotten a little flack from that because when I first started teaching in (former district), there was certainly a cohort of black teachers who were tightly them and us. And they blah, blah, blah, blah. I said you know, go hear what they

are talking about. Oh no, they don't want us out there. Well, unless somebody hangs up a sign, (name) you cannot come in (laughs), so I've always tried to, simply because I like people, I really, I just love to be social, and I'm going to connect with as many people that I have common interests with as possible.  
(Christine, interview 2, 531-539)

David also tried to build relationships across the racial divide by working with a formally organized group of teachers who met to discuss racial issues.

...a few here and there, kind of formed a, a continuing group that has met several times over the past couple of years///, uh at least once a semester//to talk about issues, uh, uh, race and power and inequalities and, and that kind of stuff. And, uh, I mean it's been wonderful/  
(David, interview 2, 117-120)

Like Patricia and Christine, David saw collaboration as a means of promoting social justice, specifically by addressing the racial divide within their faculties.

#### *Sponsoring Student Clubs*

Six participants reported that they sponsored student clubs focused on social justice topics. Jeff's description of the diversity club he sponsored typified the variety of activities undertaken by most of these clubs.

I sponsor the diversity club, and we um, we do things, we do you know black history month activities, we do uh women's history month activities, uh, Hispanic, uh Latin history month activities. We've done, um, movies where we'll go to a movie like *Milk* or *Slumdog Millionaire* and we go and we try to go to a restaurant, like an Indian restaurant or whatever, and then we talk about it and we'll have, you know we may have ten kids that show up, we're trying to do some more this year, we've been to wor-places of worship to just kind of experience that. Uh, we do um, Mix-it-Up week through diversity club, we do hit and run mix-it-up lunches where we just take bread and peanut butter and jelly to the cafeteria and make sandwiches and people just sit with other people that they never sat with, so those kind of activities are really fun.  
(Jeff, interview 2, 183-193)

One of the clubs Christine sponsored also worked actively in the community to celebrate and recognize the efforts of social justice pioneers.

So, started an organization called (club name), and they're interviewing people from as many decades as we can, from (city), and they're learning about people like (name), (name) was a teacher at (school) in the 1940's, 50's and, well she was 50's, 50's and very early 60's. And she was an activist, and she was one of the founders of CORE, she and her husband were one of the founders of CORE, she had the uh, um, human relations club at school...  
(Christine, interview 2, 282-287)

While almost half of the participants sponsored such clubs, female participants were much more likely to discuss their leadership of a student club or clubs. Only two of the male participants discussed their role as a club sponsor, and the average response rate for males was .3 compared to 1.0 for females.

#### *Sponsoring School Events*

Only three participants, Jeff, Christine and Linda, reported that they sponsored school wide events or celebrations as an aspect of their social justice practice. Jeff, who was the most active in planning such events, joked that "the staff kids me because I, I tend to try to plan a lot of assemblies, you know, and programs" (Jeff, interview 2, 161-162). All three of these participants were in their fifties or sixties at the time of the study, and they all had considerable teaching experience. These results might indicate that sponsoring school wide events requires seniority and experience within the school. However, the data might also suggest that celebrations were considered a more important tool for an older age cohort and were not as important to younger teachers. Further research is necessary to assess the reasons for this difference.

#### *Working for Social Justice in the Community*

After the participants discussed their work for social justice within their school systems, I asked them about their involvement in social justice related programs in the community. Unlike their responses to my questions about social justice practice in

classrooms and schools, the teachers did not speak at length about their community involvement. Often, participants explained that the majority of their social justice energy was consumed by their professional practice. As Allen commented, “You know the job here does take up a lot of time. I’m not as engaged as I would like to be...” (Allen, interview 2, 324-325). Despite the demands of teaching and family, eleven of the participants described some sort of social justice action outside of school settings. Their involvement included leading programs that addressed social justice, actively participating in community organizations, or occasionally volunteering their time to social justice programs. There were no major differences by race, sex, or life history regarding the participants’ involvement in the community, although there was one difference based on age and family situation.

### *Community Leadership*

Five participants responded that they organized and implemented programs or events that addressed issues of social justice in some ways. Three of the participants took leadership in sports activities that included a social justice objective. Goldie helped organize soccer teams in a predominantly black section of her city, David led a community baseball program that explicitly included a diverse population, and Patricia taught yoga classes to diverse groups. Patricia explained her vision of how yoga can promote social justice.

To have people of different races come, do that, we can breathe we can stretch, and we can release tension and toxins, and we all feel better. And, we feel like at least now we have something in common. So if I see you I can talk to you as opposed to like, I don’t know her or I don’t have anything in common with her. So, that’s another way. It might not be the traditional way but.  
(Patricia, interview 2, 261-265)

Dominic also discussed how he envisioned his music as a form of social justice. As the leader of a band that played music of the African Diaspora, he explained how performance gave him the opportunity to communicate a social justice message.

...to me music is just one of those things that can heal the most, you know and so I use that as a format to touch people so that when they walk away they know, they weren't just listening to somebody, they have an experience...  
(Dominic, interview 2, 272-275)

In addition to musical performance, Dominic also joined with other Rastafari individuals to form a spiritual group that meets regularly to promote both personal healing and social justice.

Linda took leadership in both her community and her church to promote social justice. She remained highly involved in both the school district where she lived, which was distinct from the school district where she taught, and her neighborhood organization. In her faith community she was instrumental in developing a feeding ministry at a sister church near an impoverished area of her city (Linda, interview 2, 346-349).

#### *Active Participation in Community Organizations*

While not all participants led community events, four participated in ongoing community programs focused on social justice. Christine served on the board of a local theater company and she participated for five years in a community-based program that brought people of different races together for dialogue (Christine, Interview 2, 544-582). Through her church, Goldie worked with a local community center that provided programs for latch key children (Goldie, interview 2, 411-417). Patricia explained how her son's involvement with a local social justice program had engaged her as well.

Right, well, I'm working with (organization name), a program my son is in, and that's, their whole mission is to create troublemakers of the best kind. So, um, I'm very active in the parent part of their organization, where I go to the meetings and we have discussions, and they're facilitated and your interacting with, um, uh, in this case Jewish and white parents, African American parents. So I'm doing that.

(Patricia, interview 2, 245-249).

Therefore, even though these teachers were extremely busy in their professional practice, they found time to maintain an ongoing commitment to various social justice organizations.

#### *Occasional Volunteering*

Three of the participants reported volunteering in the community, but they did not stay involved with one organization consistently or for an extended period of time. John explained that he and his wife occasionally volunteered at food banks or attended fundraisers. Adisa described that he often assisted at his wife's church when they asked him to make a presentation. Like Adisa, Allen was often called upon to make presentations for community organizations. He stated that he willingly volunteered his time or recommended another speaker, even if he could not make an extended commitment to the organization.

...when people call me and say, hey we need a speaker or hey, uh we'd love for you to help us with this brainstorming, I'm engaged in that way or I make recommendations in that way so if I'm not at every event for folks, to support and, and have those conversations, it's fine because, uh, I don't know, I'm helping out in other ways.

(Allen, interview 2, 334-338)

Allen, Adisa and John were three of the youngest participants in the study and all of them were beginning their families at the time of this study. In addition, Karen explained that her status as a single mother prevented her from being involved in community programs despite her previous history of community activism (Karen, interview 2, 230-232).

Therefore, age and life situation influenced the degree to which a teacher who teaches toward social justice can lead or participate in community-based social justice programs.

### Challenges in Teaching Toward Social Justice

In the penultimate question of the second interview, I asked participants to reflect on the challenges they experienced as social studies teachers who taught toward social justice. Participants described a number of challenges including fellow teachers, administrators, students, stereotypes, personal issues and community opposition. Identity influenced the nature of the challenges that participants experienced, and there were noticeable differences by age, race, life experience, and sex.

#### *Challenges from Fellow Teachers*

Ten participants reported feeling frustrated by fellow teachers in their schools, making it one of the two most frequent responses to my question on challenges. Sandra captured the essence of this challenge when she stated:

Um, in the wider school, (hh)//I think it's more difficult, especially when working with adults//In part because they are so set, they are more so set into their beliefs. And it's difficult to change an adult's perception about//what is happening.  
(Sandra, interview 2, 275-277)

The pauses and audible aspiration in her response revealed a deep frustration with the reluctance of adults to change their habits and practices. Patricia and Craig expressed their belief that teachers' fears played a large role in preventing them from working toward a more just and equitable school. Craig detailed the number of ways teachers lived in fear.

Uh, but the uh, the teachers resisted, uh, fear of a job, uh fear of the unknown. And also one other thing that I've talked about a lot with the kids, and it's a very important concept, I think, in teaching social justice. And that is adults fear students/on a lot of levels.  
(Craig, interview 2, 179-182)

John shared one final challenge he faced, envy and jealousy from his fellow teachers.

I think because I have like more advanced education than a lot of the other people that are more senior and different experiences, I think a lot of people//are threatened a little bit//I mean maybe I'm wrong but I get that impression a little bit.

(John, interview 2, 252-254)

Males, younger teachers and “resisters” were more inclined to report that fellow teachers posed a challenge to their social justice practice. Younger teachers responded with this code an average of 1.4 times compared to .8 for older teachers. In fact, younger teachers reported a higher frequency of responses for all of the codes under the category challenges, suggesting that the more experience a teacher accumulates the less he or she feels challenged by others. The male’s average response rate of 1.4 compared to .8 for females might indicate that female participants, who were more apt to stress community building in their classrooms (see above), had more positive relationships with fellow teachers. Finally, resisters had an average response rate of 1.8 compared to .8 for aligners. This difference might reflect a tendency by resisters to view colleagues as potential sources of opposition because their life experiences often were shaped by adults who did not support their perspectives and beliefs.

#### *Challenges from Students*

Nine participants also discussed the challenge posed by students who resisted or did not understand the social justice concepts introduced in class, making it the second most frequent response to this question. Three participants, Adisa, Linda and Jeff, spoke about the affect of socio-economic class on their students’ willingness to grapple with difficult questions of equity and justice. For Linda, who taught in an affluent school

district in a suburb on the far edge of the metropolitan area, affluence and isolation were substantial barriers to student learning.

I think what I know in my school that I would say is my, my biggest challenge, is that um, eh, I overwhelming teach um very affluent and yet um relatively//provincial kids, so that uh, you know their, eh, bubble of existence, I mean you know the vast majority of my Art History kids have never been to the (city) Art Museum... so, um, challenge, I think that's important is the challenge of privilege....

(Linda, Interview 2, 362-369)

Adisa also discussed student socio-economic status as a challenge. However, as a teacher in a working class suburb, he discussed a provincialism that resulted from limited resources.

But also trying to change their mind about what they really want to do, you know, but then they're just, some of these kids, they're homeless, we've got kids that are hopping from home to home, their, their, their life situations around here are so complex.

(Adisa, interview 2, 544-547)

For these participants, the socio-economic status of their students created a limited worldview that restricted their ability to fully appreciate the issues of social justice they presented in the classroom.

Three other participants also discussed the challenge of broadening students' limited perspectives. However, they attributed that difficulty to the developmental level of adolescents as opposed to socio-economic status.

I think we get in, when you're young like that get an ab-you kind of get into absolutes a little bit, and it's through our experiences as we're going along, that we moderate those questions because, maybe-you know, life is not always, even on an even keel it's up, it's down, so you can get a broader sense of things. Well, some kids have that, a lot of kids don't. So that's a real challenge because you're trying to give some nuanced points about living in the world and kids really haven't lived in the world, in a sense.

(John, interview 2, 362-368)

Like John, both Sandra and Karen reported that their students' limited life experiences produced biases and limited understanding that required them to adjust their teaching methods.

The last three participants, Christine, Goldie and Craig, discussed various student behaviors as obstacles to their social justice practice. Christine talked about her refusal to let students become defensive and disengage from the instruction process.

They sit there with their armor on, protection. I insist that a kid take off a coat, take off a hat, take off all that stuff, because you're not going to let that get in the way, so that's my first step in getting in there and getting to you.  
(Christine, interview 2, 332-334)

Like Christine, Craig and Goldie also described how they challenged student oppositional behaviors both quickly and compassionately. As I explained earlier, younger participants more frequently reported students as a challenge with an average response rate of 1.3 compared to .8 for older participants. Some of this variation resulted from the fact that two of the younger participants, Adisa and John, discussed student resistance multiple times. Older participants only mentioned student resistance once, and they usually ended their comments with an explanation of how they addressed that challenge. Therefore, age and teaching experience might minimize the extent to which teachers view student resistance as a significant challenge to their social justice practice.

In addition, aligners tended to see students as more of a challenge with an average response rate of 1.4 compared to .8 for resisters. Because they were positioned along a path toward social justice by supportive adults, it might have been more difficult for aligners to understand why students resisted their good faith efforts to embrace these ideas and values.

### *Challenges from Administrators*

Nine participants discussed administrators as an obstacle to their social justice practice, particularly regarding their efforts to advocate for systematic, school-wide change. Karen, who commented on this subject four times during her interview, summed up her frustration when she said, “unfortunately there’s no support from the administration...” (Karen, interview 2, 200-201). She even contemplated the possibility that administrators deliberately opposed systemic change because they benefited from the dysfunction in her school.

...one of the things that my co-workers keep telling me when I have these conversations with them, and they’re-I find this to be very cynical but I’m starting to think that they’re right/is/that the leadership in this place wants chaos, they, they want chaos, they want dysfunction, they want there to be fights, they want- because, and some people believe that they want all this because then they get money. The more fights you have the more money you get for security, the more you know dysfunction you get the more money you get for professional development, whatever, whatever it is, you know.

(Karen, interview 2, 330-337)

Karen explained that she was not prone to conspiracy theories, however she was beginning to agree with her co-workers opinion.

Other participants registered their frustration with occasional challenges posed by administrators. Linda discussed how one principal tried to dissuade her from sponsoring a Gay-Straight Alliance in her high school.

I knew he was a homophobe, I mean we knew about him you know, so I was like you know I’m, I’m a tenured teacher I’m, I’m feeling pretty secure you know. Well then my principal at the time, you know (current principal) has been quite an improvement...

(Linda, interview 2, 275-278)

Unlike Karen, Linda did not see a systematic failure of administration. Rather, her frustration resulted from the individual actions of one problematic person, a problem that was resolved when a new administrator was hired.

Patricia suggested that the hierarchical structure of her school district created a culture where teachers “become afraid of//what can happen to the person, from the person above them that they don’t want to take a lot of risk” (Patricia, interview 2, 214-215). John’s experience in a different school district seemed to support Patricia’s observation. Three times during his interview, John discussed the challenge of advancing a social justice agenda in a conservative school district where administrators might not support his actions.

I mean like if I said to my principal, I would like to teach//I’m going to try to teach a little bit from a social justice perspective and I’m going to bring this in, well what does that mean? I mean that’s a fair point//um//what would I say without sounding ideological?  
(John, interview 2, 285-289)

Similar to other areas of challenge, the fact that John is a young and untenured teacher may make administrator opposition particularly pertinent. In fact, young teachers were more likely to discuss the challenges posed by administrators with an average response rate of 1.4 compared to .5 for older teachers. Additionally, resisters were more inclined to say administrators posed a challenge with an average response rate of 1.4 compared to .8 for aligners. Again, like their tendency to see fellow teachers as a problem, resisters like Karen may be more inclined to see school leaders as impediments to social justice in schools.

### *The Challenge of Stereotypes*

Four participants discussed how stereotypes posed a challenge to their social justice practice. Three black participants, Adisa, Allen and Christine, reported that both co-workers and students expected them to fulfill preconceived notions of how a black teacher should act. Allen explained that he felt limited as a result of those expectations.

A, a specific challenge for me has been being pigeonholed and stereotyped by not only the, uh, my colleagues and the administration but also by the students, the expectation that, because I was an African American male that I'm supposed to be a certain way, and if I didn't do those things than I wasn't a real black person...  
(Allen, interview 2, 224-228)

Christine discussed her frustration with white co-workers who believed she had a special ability to work with black students.

Yeah, or um, just things like um, the idea of teaching students who don't look like you. I challenge that with the staff because I haven't taught a two headed, five-leg kid.

(Christine, interview 2, 391-393)

All three of these black participants resisted the efforts of their co-workers and students to place them in a racialized box.

Sandra also discussed how stereotypes about female behavior posed a challenge to her social justice leadership. She described how others responded to her when she advocated for students in meetings.

...when I use the loud voice, when I use the assertiveness, it's not, eh, and I find it interesting, cause you know, men, that, it (hh) I find it interesting because when I use that same tactic, I'm not considered being strong and assertive//eh I've (hh), through the grapevine I've heard, not from our department, but through the grapevine I've heard gosh, she was, she was a, excuse my language, she was a bitch at the meeting.

(Sandra, interview 2, 380-385)

Sandra, like the three black participants discussed above, was limited by stereotypical expectations about her behavior. The experience of these four participants suggests that

teachers with targeted identities face an added challenge of overcoming stereotypes when they work for social justice within schools.

### *Personal Challenges*

Six participants also discussed personal limitations as a challenge to their social justice practice. Two participants, Adisa and Jeff, described the difficulty of balancing family commitments with social justice work. Adisa used Malcolm X and Steven Biko to demonstrate the difficulty of being both an activist and a family person.

But I just, I just resigned myself to um, you know/to//to not turning into Malcolm X in the sense that how good was his relationship with his daughters? You know, or um, Steven Biko, you know with two wives and a mistress and you know kids that he didn't even know. You know you see all these revolutionaries and, and, you know, these people that are doing all these wonderful things and you're like, I've never seen 'em in a family shot.

(Adisa, interview 2, 461-466)

Both Adisa and Jeff emphasized the role their fathers played in shaping their social justice perspective during the life history interview. It is not surprising that they prioritized their own role as fathers when discussing the challenges that teaching for social justice posed to their time and energy.

Sandra and John discussed how their own limited perspectives created challenges to their social justice practice. Sandra explained how her middle class background made it difficult to understand fully the challenges faced by students with limited resources.

I grew up, we weren't wealthy, we were a typical middle class home. And so that's all I know, I don't know what it means//to not have. You know, if I really needed something my parents found a way to get it. Um, so it, it is difficult//to remember, especially for me, the cla-more of the class and economic struggle.

(Sandra, interview 2, 440-444)

John described his limited teaching experience as a challenge. He stated that as a new teacher, "I don't know what's even, um//what's even possible..." (John, interview 2, 446-

447). Both Sandra and John articulated their desire to overcome these obstacles by continually reflecting on those experiences that challenged their perspectives.

For Karen, the emotional toll of teaching for social justice in an oppressive and dysfunctional school district was a significant personal challenge.

I mean I feel like I'm just becoming the teacher that I never wanted to become, which is/I mean I wouldn't say that I'm grumpy, you know, I'm not like that old grumpy, worn out teacher, but/I really feel like I'm going to have to start looking at it as a job you know, just go in, not that I'll slack off, but I'm going to go in, just do my job, do the best-you know, the time that I'm there do the best I can do/and just leave it.

(Karen, interview 2, 452-457)

Karen worried that self-preservation might require her to abandon some of her social justice goals because, as she conceded near the end of the interview, "I think it's killing me,/I think it's physically killing me, and mentally killing me" (Karen, interview 2, 463-464).

#### Successes in Teaching Toward Social Justice

Karen's comments above reveal the potential danger that burnout and emotional exhaustion pose to teachers who champion social justice. To explore what experiences might support a commitment to teaching for social justice in the face of such challenges, my last interview question asked participants to describe successes in their practice. The teachers reported that student growth, student appreciation, peer appreciation, intellectual growth and systemic change were areas where they felt successful.

#### *Student Growth*

Eight participants described their students' growth and development as a success, and it represented the most frequent code in this category with an average response rate of .8. Craig described the reward of watching his students, many of whom were targeted

by race and class, develop confidence in their ability to speak and participate in the democratic process as active citizens.

There's, there's one success that I've had over, and over again, and it is when these young people become so confident in speaking to other groups about what they're doing and what they're thinking that, when they get invited, which they do, they get invited all the time when people find out that, that there, here are kids that are willing to talk/they, the kids just go crazy, they want to do it. They want to speak, they want to tell what they think, they want to speak on who they are and how they feel and what they're doing and that is 100% success, that's it, every time they do that, that's success.

(Craig, interview 2, 401-408)

Sandra viewed student growth more at the level of classroom instruction in what she characterized as small successes.

Honestly, I like the small successes. I like the little ones in the classroom. The big ones outside are great, I can't say that have lots of, or at least I don't see myself as having lots of big ones, I like the little ones in the classroom where//kids//when you talk about Reconstruction or you talk about the Civil Rights Movement or, you know, pick your time period, um immigrants coming in and the Chinese, whatever it might be, I like the little ones where the kids go, oh my gosh, is that really?//And they actually go home and do more research and come back and go, I read online, I didn't know.

(Sandra, interview 2, 454-461)

Regardless of whether the growth occurred at the macro or micro level, these eight participants all reveled in the personal and intellectual development of their students. Interestingly, none of the participants mentioned changes in adult attitudes or beliefs as a success. Allen's response to this question may explain why such a discrepancy existed.

I've seen more successes with students than I have some of the adults that I've worked with. And, and that's fine, too, I mean, uh//these issues didn't, didn't happen overnight, so they're not going to be solved overnight. And I, I personally prefer to work with the students more so than the adults because there's still hope for the students a lot of times, uh, this school and the previous stop I've seen students get it, and once they start working for social justice or working to make sure everyone is included, I feel like alright and//so it's one student at a time for me, that's the way I measure success.

(Allen, interview 2, 286-293)

These results suggest that teachers who teach for social justice draw considerable energy from seeing changes in the young people with whom they work.

### *Student Appreciation*

Eight participants described instances when students thanked them as evidence of their success. Six of the participants shared specific stories where students either visited them or sent them letters to express their appreciation. Goldie recalled a story about a former student who visited her class and gave her a card decorated with her favorite symbol, a butterfly.

So anyway he gives me this card and the card says something to this effect, Dear Miss (name), you are a beautiful person, I thank you for all that you've done for children, not just for me but for everyone that comes through your classroom.... And he said, and just like a butterfly I want you to know that I love you or something to that effect. And I was thinking, oh, it just immediately brought tears to my eyes because I had had, as God would have it, one of those most awful days.

(Goldie, interview 2, 524-531)

Dominic shared a similar story of receiving an appreciative letter. He reflected that he might not reach every student, but the letter reminded him that “you never know how that one person might be budged into doing something, you know uh, somewhere on, on down the line” (Dominic, Interview 2, 419-421).

Three participants, Christine, David and Jeff, all mentioned the particular success they felt when a student thanked them and shared that they had decided to become a teacher. Christine's response was filled with emotion.

Oh////////{said with voice trembling and a tear in her eye} when kids call you up and say I'm teaching//and I'm going to be in town and I want to talk to you, I can't//that's it.

(Christine, interview 2, 607-609)

The high frequency and emotive quality of these teachers' responses about student growth and student appreciation reveal a core motivation of teachers who teach toward social justice: they clearly hope to affect change among young people.

#### *Peer Appreciation*

While twelve participants discussed either student growth and student appreciation in response to my last question, only four teachers discussed the importance of peer recognition. Jeff described a feeling of personal satisfaction that came when his colleagues thanked him for coordinating a recent assembly.

Um, staff and your peers when they recognize you and thank you for putting things on or for, or they'll listen to you about some things, you know. Um, I had the superintendant come in the, yesterday morning, came in and shook my hand and said that was such a great speech, you just have a gift for speaking. And you know to have a superintendant come in and do that, (.hh) there's, there's so many rewards, and I get paid to do this.

(Jeff, interview 2, 304-309)

Likewise, Allen described the satisfaction he took from peer recognition.

For me personally, some of the successes I had an opportunity to///be recognized by my peers as being someone who does diversity work, and that's really important, diversity and social justice.

(Allen, interview 2, 295-297)

While Allen appreciated this recognition, he still claimed he had "seen more successes with students than I have some of the adults that I've worked with" (Allen, interview 2, 286-287). Therefore, while he appreciated the recognition of his peers, he still viewed his work with youth as the area where he experienced the greatest success.

Only one female, Goldie, discussed peer appreciation as an area of success. However, females were slightly more inclined to discuss student appreciation with an average response rate of .8 compared to .6 for males. The difference between these responses suggests that males might be more disposed to seek approval of their peers.

However, with such a small sample, further research is necessary to determine if sex and gender influences the motivations of teachers who teach toward social justice.

### *Intellectual Achievement*

Three participants discussed the intellectual and personal stimulation they experienced when teaching and working for social justice as another area of success. Jeff described the joys of discovering new resources in his last comment of the interview.

But uh it's, it's good and, what's really cool is/to find a resource, oh my gosh, I didn't know this was here. Or you know if it's a, just an excerpt from a movie or you find this letter/that you can use that the kids get, you know, or you know I think I'm going to have them do this in the hallway and, you know, and it's the individual kids reacting that really makes it worthwhile, so.

(Jeff, interview 2, 314-318)

However, reflecting the interpretations discussed above, Jeff's intellectual stimulation was linked to the more prevalent response: student growth and appreciation.

### *Systemic Change*

Only two participants, Allen and Patricia, expressed a belief that their efforts had successfully produced systemic change. Patricia described some of the positive developments she saw occurring in her school district.

I see teachers more willing to have discussions. I see our district really taking a, a, they're really trying to create this, these discussions for the whole community. So they have community forums where you can discuss different things, they bring facilitators in, which is amazing for our district.

(Patricia, interview 2, 229-233)

Likewise, Allen described his recent promotion to Assistant Principal as proof of his school's growing commitment to social justice.

...that's an institutional stand saying hey, this is valuable to us, and, and obviously things are gonna, I have an opportunity to effectuate change on a level larger than the classroom. And that was one of the main reasons I ended up leaving the classroom, as a full time teacher to take this role, because I wanted to

see that happen. And I finally, I think, its going to start coming to fruition so.  
(Allen, interview 2, 307-311)

While both Patricia and Allen point to positive, systemic changes, both of their comments revealed that these changes were still at an early stage. They both used qualified words like “trying” and “going to start” to indicate that these developments were still relatively new developments. However, new was better than nothing for both of them.

### Conclusion

While it is slightly discouraging that only two participants discussed systemic change as an area of success, those two responses suggest that change can occur. The interpretations above reveal that there are many ways that social studies teachers take up the work of social justice in their classrooms, their schools and their communities. In many ways, the participants’ diverse practices and beliefs reflected the varied life trajectories they took to become social studies teachers who teach toward social justice. Those who experienced oppression as a result of their social identities or who developed their social justice lens through resistance to unjust practices seemed to take a more critical approach in their practice. In the next chapter, I will discuss what lessons can be learned from their stories and practices that might encourage and support other social studies teachers to teach toward social justice.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### DISCUSSION

I began this study with two central questions: What experiences lead secondary social studies teachers to become passionate and committed to teaching toward social justice? How do these teachers conceptualize and practice teaching toward social justice in the social studies? I have pursued these questions with the hope that a deeper understanding of the factors that develop and sustain a commitment to teach toward social justice might promote more critical, equitable, pluralistic and democratic practices among social studies teachers. In this chapter I review my interpretations, discuss practices that might encourage a greater commitment to social justice in the social studies, examine the limitations of this study, and make suggestions for future research.

#### Gumbo

As the child of two excellent chefs and an aspiring cook myself, I have always been fond of great food. One of my favorite dishes is gumbo. This rich and spicy stew serves as a wonderful metaphor to describe both the development and practice of social studies teachers who teach toward social justice. Gumbo emerged from the culinary melting pot of New Orleans, one of America's most culturally diverse cities, and its exquisite taste comes from a combination of ingredients and cuisines that could only emerge in such a multicultural community. Blending African, French, Native American and Spanish cooking traditions, gumbo is a complex mix of broth, vegetables, seafood, poultry, and smoked pork served over rice. However, there is no single way to make gumbo, and different chefs use different ingredients to give their dish a distinctive taste.

Some cooks swear that gumbo must include okra while others proclaim the virtues of filé powder. Regardless of how they are made, all great gumbos please the pallet with their multilayered flavors.

Like gumbo chefs, the participants in this study concocted their flavor (social justice identity) from a variety of ingredients (life experiences). While no two participants developed their social justice identity in exactly the same way, they all shared similar types of experiences. For instance, just as every gumbo has a rich stock, all participants discussed how their families played an important role in shaping their life trajectories. Different family experiences resulted in different perceptions just like a seafood stock produces a variety of gumbo distinct from one made with chicken stock.

While gumbo is usually served in a bowl, different chefs choose different styles of dinnerware to present their creations. Likewise, all of the participants in this study served their gumbo in similar dishes (classrooms, schools and the community), but the shape, color and style of those bowls varied from participant to participant. In the discussion that follows, I will review some of the lessons learned from the experiences of the thirteen participants in this study. Together they comprise a cookbook and serving guide that might help us think about ways to promote a greater commitment to social justice within social studies education.

#### Becoming a Teacher who Teaches Toward Social Justice

Throughout this study, I have interpreted data through the lens of a sociocultural framework (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998; Holland & Lave, 2001; Wertsch, 1991, 1998; Wortham, 2006). From this perspective, identity development occurs as participants dialogically negotiate the diverse and often conflicting influences in their

lives. All of the participants in this study faced both support and opposition along their journey to becoming social justice teachers. As shown in the presentation of Goldie's and Karen's life histories in chapter 6, sometimes life experiences aligned the participants with social justice values and sometimes those experiences prompted resistance that strengthened their commitment to fight oppression. Each of the themes discussed in chapters 4 and 5 demonstrated the capacity to operate in both of these ways. However, some themes tended to promote alignment while others encouraged resistance. Also, some themes, like the primary themes identified from the participants' responses to my opening question, occurred earlier in their life trajectories. By reviewing the way these themes operated for a majority of the participants, we can gain a better understanding of when each "ingredient" is added to the recipe and how it contributes to flavor the gumbo of their social justice identification.

### *Families*

In discussing their family history, most of the participants described how parents aligned them along a path toward social justice early in their lives. While this trend was not universal, it seems that most of the participants in this study adopted values and beliefs that remained consistent with those of their parents. The positive influence of parents was so strong that some of the participants found it difficult to explain incidents when their parents deviated from an otherwise socially just orientation. Given the power of families to provide the foundation for a social justice identity, it is natural to wonder if any training or interventions can promote a commitment for equity and justice among teachers who were not raised in such families. However, as demonstrated by the life

histories of Allen and Craig, family history is an influential but not a necessary requirement for the formation of a social justice identity.

### *Schooling*

Like families, a vast majority of the participants described the positive influence of teachers who inspired their interest in issues of equity and justice, and most of the participants referenced specific middle school or high school teachers who aroused their passion for social justice. The preponderance of this theme supports Britzman's (2003) and Lortie's (1975) observation that a teacher's personal experience in schools serves as the major influence shaping their teaching practice. While a few participants discussed influential college professors, their most enthusiastic recollections were reserved for their secondary teachers. These data suggest that adolescence might be an ideal time to encourage students to consider questions of equality, privilege, power and justice as they engage with the social studies. It is also important to note that only a few of the participants discussed education professors as particularly influential in shaping their perspectives. However, the participants who mentioned education professors reported being deeply influenced by their experiences with that teacher. Therefore, teacher education programs have what seems to be an unrealized potential to promote greater interest in social justice within education as I discuss later.

### *Oppression*

A majority of the participants discussed incidents when they were targeted by oppressive acts or policies, and their resistance to this oppression fueled their passion to fight for social justice. The few multiply privileged participants in the sample also developed a similar commitment to social justice by witnessing acts of oppression against

others. The intensity of the oppression seemed to influence the degree to which participants felt the need to challenge power and privilege in their teaching practice. Those participants who resisted the most severe oppression were often times the most adamant in their critique of power and privilege in both their classroom instruction and their work as change agents within school systems. While almost all of the participants described the influence of experiencing or witnessing acts of oppression against targeted identities, very few discussed their experience with oppression as a member of a privileged social group. These interpretations mirror Freire's (1970) observation that reflection about one's experiences as a target of oppression can serve as a powerful tool to arouse a desire to fight injustice.

In addition, it may be possible for those with privileged identities to use the oppression that they have witnessed as a tool to promote greater empathy or concern about injustice experienced by others. While critical race theorists have dismissed such an approach as the "empathetic fallacy," the results from this study suggest that while empathy may be "in short supply" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.28), it nevertheless exists. For instance, David, who was multiply-privileged, developed an empathetic perspective after observing the oppression of others when he worked as a lawyer. Likewise, although Karen was privileged by race and Allen was privileged by sex, they both developed empathy for those targeted by race or sex through reflection on their own experiences as targets of oppression. As I will discuss later, exploring the intersections of privilege and targeting may provide a tool to promote greater empathy among teachers.

### *Spirituality*

Unlike the other three primary themes, there was no clear consensus on how religion and spirituality influenced the development of a social justice identity. Only two participants stressed this theme in their life histories, and both discussed the influence of religion when they were young. During the focus group discussion several other participants acknowledged that religion played an important role in shaping their vision of social justice. Thus, there is some evidence to suggest that religion can be a factor that aligns people toward social justice. However, several other participants spoke strongly in both the interviews and the focus group session about how their negative experiences with religion prompted them to resist what they viewed as unjust practices. A third group of participants demonstrated an ambivalent attitude regarding religion and spirituality. Given these varied experiences, those seeking to reference religion to add spice to their gumbo should be prepared to address the multiple ways individuals view the connection between religion and social justice.

### *Teaching Experience*

All of the participants discussed their frustration with the inequitable practices they witnessed as beginning teachers, an experience that occurred later in their life trajectory. Their resistance to these inequities deepened their commitment to work for more equitable practices. Participants were troubled both by the hegemonic narratives presented in social studies curriculum as well as the challenges of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism that they witnessed in the school settings. Many of the teachers described how they witnessed these unjust practices during their student teaching experience or early in their career. These data suggest that reflection on

injustice and inequity during teacher preparation and early in one's career might encourage the development of a deeper commitment to social justice.

### *Friends*

Most of the participants described how friendships with people who valued equity, diversity and justice helped align them along a life trajectory that emphasized social justice. Only a few of the teachers discussed how resistance to the oppressive actions of some of their friends helped shape their attitudes about social justice. The participants also emphasized relationships that developed during their college years or when they entered the professional world, suggesting that friendships tended to refine and reframe notions about social justice later in their life trajectories. The potential of supportive friends to promote a social justice perspective was also reflected in participants' enthusiasm about participating in the focus group sessions. Only three teachers did not attend one of the two sessions, and all three wanted to participate but could not because of personal conflicts. For instance, one participant had moved out of town and another called on the day of the session because his daughter was giving birth. The importance of supportive friends in developing a social justice identity and maintaining social justice action suggests that the creation of networks among teachers who teach for social justice might facilitate a deeper commitment to equity and justice in education.

### *Community*

Most of the participants who talked about their childhood neighborhoods did not think they promoted a social justice outlook. While a few teachers discussed how their community aligned them with social justice principles, the majority described either

negative or ambivalent perceptions about their communities. For some of the participants, resistance to those negative perceptions influenced their commitment to social justice. A few were supported in that resistance during their childhood by either parents or friends. Others developed a deeper understanding about their communities during their college years when they obtained language to explain the environments in which they were raised. Given that both race and class often segregate communities in the United States, aspiring teachers probably enter the field with similar perceptions about their childhood communities. Reflection on how these neighborhoods mirror some of the larger divisions in our society may help facilitate a deeper understanding of inequity and injustice.

#### *Non-Teaching Work Experience*

Many of the participants entered education late in life, and their experiences in other occupations generally exposed them to inequitable practices that spurred both resistance and a deepening interest in social justice. Only one participant discussed how his early work experience supported his interest in social justice, and when he changed jobs within that profession he witnessed unfair practices in his new location. In fact, many second career teachers in this study entered the field because they saw it as a potential site to promote the equity they saw lacking in their previous profession. However, most of these professionals had already developed a commitment to social justice before they enrolled in a teacher education program. Nevertheless, teacher-training programs may be able to leverage past work experience as a lens to consider more socially just practices within school settings.

### *Media*

Over half of the teachers also described the influence of media on their social justice identity, although the majority of those who discussed this were over fifty years old. Most of the participants explained that media both aligned them toward social justice as well as exposed them to unjust practices that they felt they should resist. With the preponderance of different forms of media in contemporary society, it was interesting that only two of the younger participants discussed this topic at length. Greater reflection on media's power to both promote and undermine social justice during teacher training might promote a thickening of social justice identification among preservice teachers of all ages.

### *Creative Expression*

While this was the least frequently discussed theme during the life history interviews, three participants did describe how various forms of creative expression such as writing and music aligned them along a path that emphasized social justice. Therefore, encouraging multiple forms of expression during teacher training and professional development might provide a tool that can deepen the commitment of some educators to equity and justice.

### Teaching Toward Social Justice in the Social Studies

In addition to taking various paths toward becoming social studies teachers who taught toward social justice, the participants also demonstrated a variety of ways to work for social justice within school settings. In the following section I will review my interpretations about the participants' social justice practices, connecting them to literature on both the social studies and social justice.

### *Practice over Theory*

Most participants were hesitant to define social justice. Their tentative definitions of social justice reflected a variety of scholarly traditions such as critical theory (Apple, 1995; Cherryholmes, 1983; Giroux, 1998), critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), multicultural education (Au, 2009; Banks, 1996, Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997), and democratic citizenship education (Hess, 2009; Parker, 2003). Some also referenced the importance of promoting empathy through the social studies (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Davis, 2001). Conversely, all of the teachers spoke at length about their specific practices within the classroom and the school community.

The participants' relatively short and varied responses to my questions about theory confirmed Gerwitz's (1998) contention that social justice remains an under theorized concept within education. In addition, their longer answers to my questions about practice reflected Kincheloe's (1993) and Giroux's (1988) observation that teacher training tends to emphasize pragmatic, how-to questions instead of deeper, more theoretical questions about the role of power and privilege within educational systems. Thus, practice tends to take precedence over theory among social studies teachers who teach toward social justice.

### *Critical Pedagogy and Multicultural Education*

Critical inquiry and multiple perspectives represented the two most frequent categories of classroom practice discussed by the participants. As detailed in chapter 7, critical inquiry reflected the scholarly ideas of critical pedagogues (Apple, 1995; Cherryholmes, 1983; Giroux, 1988) and critical race theorists (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) who urged a critique of power and privilege both

historically and in contemporary society. Multiple perspectives mirrored the multicultural tradition in education (Banks, 1996) that endeavored to expand the curriculum to include the voices of social groups who have been previously excluded from the national narrative. Many of the participants discussed both approaches, reflecting what Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) defined as “critical multiculturalism.” However, black and female teachers were more likely to discuss critical inquiry when compared to white and male teachers, suggesting that personal experiences as a target of oppression might produce a greater tendency to teach with a critical lens.

#### *Democratic Citizenship Education*

Most of the participants discussed classroom practices designed to encourage their students to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to participate in a democratic society. They described strategies such as open discussion, independent research and experiential field trips that encouraged students to develop their own perspectives about controversial issues. These practices point to the influence of Dewey (1916) on social education, and the participants’ practice also mirrored Parker’s (2003) vision of a democratic citizenship education that emphasized cultural pluralism and equality. Like Parker, most of the participants did not view citizenship education as a value neutral activity. According to Parker, “democratic education is not a neutral project, but one that tries to predispose citizens to principled reasoning and just ways of being with one another” (pp. xvii-xviii). While participants were distributed all along what Hess (2009) described as a spectrum of teacher attitudes about neutrality and disclosure, most of the participants discussed their willingness to share opinions with students.

### *Community Building, Relationships and Collaboration*

Dewey (1916) also stressed the importance of building community in the classroom, and Marri (2005) argued that community building is a necessary component of classroom-based democratic education. However, only four participants discussed community building as an important element of their practice. Furthermore, only three teachers described their efforts to build caring and positive relationships with students, all of them female. A slim majority of teachers discussed the importance of collaborating with other professionals. In all of these areas, female teachers more often discussed the benefits of such relational and community oriented practices. These results reflect Noddings' (2002) observation that, as a result of societal expectations, women are often more prone to demonstrate a caring or nurturing role in educational settings.

### *Alternative Resources and Historical Context*

Over half of the participants discussed the importance of bringing alternative resources, particularly primary documents and scholarly articles, into the classroom to enrich the students' learning experience. Three participants also referenced historical contextualization (Wineburg, 2001) when contemplating the danger of critical pedagogy interfering with a more dispassionate understanding of the context in which historical events took place that allows for a more objective analysis of primary documents. Males, however, were far more likely to discuss both the use of alternative resources and historical thinking when they described their classroom practices. Comparing these interpretations to the results from the previous category of community building and student relationships, it seems as if stereotypes about sex and gender roles may influence

some of the ways teachers take up a social justice practice in their classrooms and schools.

### *School-wide Leadership and Advocacy*

The vast majority of participants took some type of leadership role to promote social justice in their schools, whether through their formal roles as committee members and club sponsors or through informal roles such as networkers and malcontents. However, some participants were more prone to discuss their leadership roles. Older participants and resisters more often described activism and leadership within school settings while two of the youngest teachers discussed their ambivalence or fear of taking too strong of a leadership role.

### *Maintaining a Commitment to Social Justice in Education*

The vast majority of participants described three main challenges that impeded their efforts to teach toward social justice. In roughly equal measure the teachers discussed their frustrations with fellow teachers, administrators and students who opposed or did not understand issues of equity and justice within both their social studies curriculum and the hidden curriculum (Giroux, 1988) of the school culture and climate. In addition, three black participants and one female participant discussed how racial and gender stereotypes often interfered with their social justice practice. In the face of these frustrations, all of the participants stressed the joys of working with youth as the primary motivation for maintaining their commitment to social justice education. However, a few participants also acknowledged the satisfaction they felt when their peers recognized their efforts.

### Thickening the Gumbo

Clearly there are a variety of ways to make and serve the gumbo of social justice in the social studies. However, scholars have noted the reluctance or failure of many social studies teachers to adopt social justice practices (Epstein, 2009; Jenne, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Lewis, 2001; Matthews & Dillworth, 2008; Ross, 2000). If we hope to promote a greater commitment to teach social studies toward social justice, we need to find ways to thicken (Wortham, 2006) social studies teachers' commitments to social justice. Again, the metaphor of gumbo provides an apt analogy. All gumbos get their full-bodied consistency from a roux, a mixture of flour and oil that serves as a thickening agent. To encourage increased attention on issues of social justice, we need to consider interventions and techniques that can act as a roux.

However, we must acknowledge that our ability to affect sweeping changes in a teacher's life trajectory is limited. As Lortie (1975) and Britzman (2003) argued, teachers enter the profession with a lifetime of experiences that shape their dispositions. Clearly we cannot change a person's family background, the community in which they matured, or their early experiences in schools. Both preservice teachers and veteran instructors alike use their "history in person" (Holland & Lave, 2001) as a tool to mediate their current and future actions. However, adjusting practices in both teacher preparation programs and within professional communities may have the potential to serve as a roux, thickening the commitment of social studies teachers to teach toward social justice.

#### *Suggestions for Teacher Education Programs*

As discussed earlier, most of the participants in this study criticized their teacher education programs' failure to address issues of social justice. One way to correct this

shortcoming is to require students at the undergraduate level to take a course dedicated to issues of social justice. McDonald (2005) found that a teacher preparation program that offered a “Multicultural Foundations Course” facilitated the acquisition of practical tools for addressing race and ethnicity in school settings. A social justice foundations course should intentionally cultivate a safe and supportive environment, encourage both emotional and cognitive reflection, expose students to multiple theoretical frameworks, and value personal growth as an important learning outcome (Adams, 2007). Such an approach will encourage students to develop the reflective action, or praxis (Freire, 1970), necessary to transform the inequities that exist within schools.

However, social justice should not be confined to a separate course alone. To promote a greater commitment to equity and justice, all methods courses should include components that promote the development of a social justice praxis. Preservice teachers at all levels should be encouraged to consider how race, class, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and other aspects of identity influence both the nature of school systems and classroom experiences. While much of this instruction will include a sociological analysis of educational inequity, aspiring teachers must also reflect on their own identities and their relationships to power and privilege. As Lewis (2001) noted, most preservice social studies teachers come from white, middle class backgrounds. As detailed earlier, participants in this study more readily discussed their experiences as targets of oppression as opposed to their experiences with privilege. Given this reality, I suggest that teacher educators begin with personal reflections that explore how an individual has experienced discrimination or targeting. Such reflection can be leveraged to explore the intersectionality of various forms of oppression. This task may be difficult

for multiply privileged individuals. However, even white, middle class, heterosexual, Christian, able-bodied males in the United States have usually faced some form of discrimination based on age. Instructors can also ask privileged students to consider incidents when they witnessed the oppression of others. This technique mirrors the experiences of some participants whose social justice identification developed, in part, through such reflection. While critical race theorists (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) remain skeptical about the use of intersectionality as a tool to promote a commitment to equity, the data from this study suggests that these techniques might serve as bridges to help privileged individuals better understand the experiences of targeted groups.

Teacher educators should also encourage their students to reflect on issues of social justice observed during their various field experiences. A majority of the teachers in this study described how their initial exposure to inequities in schools increased their commitment to teach toward social justice. By asking preservice teachers to assess their field experiences in journals, blogs, discussion boards or papers, instructors can cultivate the critical and analytical lens necessary for effective social justice practice. However, Matusov and Smith (2005) cautioned that field experiences alone do not necessarily promote a more equitable or inclusive perspective. They noted that instructor intervention, clinical experiences and personal activism all influence a students' ability to develop a more authentic understanding about issues of social justice.

Instructors of social studies methods courses can utilize a number of techniques to encourage greater commitment to social justice within the social studies. First, they can review the long history of progressive and reconstructionist thought in social education (Evans, 2004; Nash, Crabtree & Dunn, 2000; Zimmerman, 2002) and encourage their

students to consider the transformative aspects of social education (Banks, 1995a) that are rooted in Dewey's (1916) approach to democratic education. They can also expose students to scholars who endorse a more critical approach to social studies, history and citizenship education (Epstein, 2009; Hursh & Ross, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Loewen, 2007; Parker, 2003; Stovall, 2006; Zinn & Macedo, 2005). Like their colleagues in other education courses, they should encourage students to reflect on how personal identity relates to social studies education. For instance, more black and female participants in this study discussed the use of critical pedagogy in their teaching practice. By reflecting on the connection between identity and pedagogy, preservice teachers from privileged backgrounds may develop a deeper understanding of critical multiculturalism (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997) and democratic citizenship education (Marri, 2005; Parker, 2003) that will promote a more energetic dialogue about controversial issues of equity and justice within social studies classrooms (Hess, 2009). In the field of history education, instructors can employ sociocultural approaches (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Epstein, 2009; Polman, 2006; Wertsch, 1998; Wertsch & Polman, 2001) to help their students recognize that historical narratives are not neutral and that the nation's dominant narrative has the potential to perpetuate cultural hegemony.

The recommendations listed above should not be confined to secondary social studies methods courses alone. As revealed by the participant's responses to the opening question of the life history interview, childhood and early adolescence represented important years in the development of their social justice perspectives. Therefore, educators at the elementary level could have a profound influence on the cultivation of

their students' ideas about equity and justice. Obviously, social studies content in the elementary grades might serve as a useful location to introduce such concepts.

I realize that the political climate in 2010 makes the implementation of these policies on university and college campuses somewhat problematic. Progressive approaches to social education have been under attack for decades (Evans, 2004), and conservative critics of multiculturalism recently warned that "in the field of social studies itself, the lunatics have taken over the asylum" (Finn, 2003). However, schools of education can answer these critics by explaining that social justice education benefits all people in society by liberating them from oppressive practices that cause harm, albeit in different ways, to both privileged and targeted groups (Bell, 2007).

#### *Suggestions for Professional Communities*

Teaching can be a lonely profession, and teaching for social justice can be particularly isolating. Britzman (2003) noted that a dominant teaching myth positions the instructor as an individual expert practicing their craft in a secluded classroom. She argued that this myth reinforced the tendency of schools to reproduce social inequities because teachers lacked the collective energy and support to question and challenge inequitable policies and practices. Some of the participants in this study described similar feelings of isolation. However, most participants were engaged in some sort of collective or collaborative action within their schools to promote social justice.

Given the need for collective action, social studies teachers should develop professional networks in their communities that encourage collaboration. Educators in a variety of cities have established networks to promote more equitable, just and democratic educational institutions. For instance, the Literacy for Social Justice Teacher

Research Group of St. Louis, Missouri, demonstrated that collaboration between K-12 teachers and university educators can promote innovative practices that advance the cause of social justice (Rogers, Mosely, Kramer & The Literacy for Social Justice Teacher Research Group, 2009). A similar network for social studies educators would allow them to share best practices, discuss theoretical and practical issues regarding issues of social justice in social studies, and possibly engage in action research to evaluate the influence of teaching for social justice. Given the enthusiasm with which the teachers in this study participated in the focus group sessions, there seems to be an untapped desire among social studies teachers who teach toward social justice to work collectively for social change.

A variety of tools exist at the national level that can also be utilized to disseminate information and practices that promote social justice within the social studies and promote greater collaboration among teachers. For instance, the Zinn Education Project provides a website that includes links to resources and lesson plans dedicated to issues of social justice (Zinn Education Project, n.d.). In addition, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History sponsors summer seminars with leading historians, some of which address a variety of social justice related topics including slavery and the civil rights movement (Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, n.d.). Even Teaching American History Grants, although explicitly designed to promote “traditional U.S. history” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) can be used to increase knowledge about social justice content if that content is framed within traditional frameworks such as liberty, equality, freedom and democracy.

On a more local level, social studies teachers who teach toward social justice can serve as mentors to younger teachers in their individual departments. Many of the participants in this study described how friends, both personal and professional, helped align them along a social justice trajectory. In particular, Karen mentioned the influence of her colleagues during her first teaching position. Remarkably, when Karen walked into the focus group session she immediately saw her mentor from that school, Christine, who had supported her early in her career. Clearly, mentors can have a profound influence on the development of a teacher's practice, and veteran social studies teachers who teach toward social justice must encourage and support younger teachers to develop practices that promote equity and justice in classrooms and schools. Without such support, teachers like John will remain isolated and vulnerable in their schools.

#### Limitations of the Study

While qualitative research has the power to provide a rich description of human experience, it cannot presume to offer a comprehensive explanation of the subject. The small sample of participants selected from one Midwestern community prevents me from making any sweeping generalizations about social studies teachers who teach toward social justice. While these interpretations were developed through an empirical process consistent with the canons of qualitative analysis, the ideas presented in this dissertation must be viewed as tentative explanations about how one group of social studies teachers developed their commitment and passion to teach toward social justice. For instance, the group of educators sampled for this study discussed social justice primarily as it related to race, ethnicity, class and sex. There were only a few comments about sexual orientation and no discussion about physical or mental ability. Thus, another sample of participants

with dissimilar life experiences might have produced much different data regarding the broad topic of social justice.

I must also recognize that my use of narrative analysis for a group of educators resulted in a broad but shallow set of data that required me to accept the participants' narratives at face value. The advantage of this method was that I collected data from thirteen different participants, facilitating comparisons and contrasts among the group. However, the limitations of time prevented me from conducting deeper investigations of each participant's life history. More follow-up interviews and interviews with family members, friends, and colleagues might have produced richer data that would have complicated and deepened the stories presented by the participants in the life history interviews and the focus group interviews.

Another limitation results from the individual nature of a dissertation project. Even though I sent copies of my transcriptions and preliminary interpretations to the participants, and I shared portions of my raw data with three other doctoral students with whom I collaborated in a writing group, the bulk of the interpretations resulted from my sole analysis of the data. While I employed an inductive approach to both narrative and content analysis to control for my biases and I tried to be honest and open when describing all phases of the project, I must recognize that some of my own ideas have influenced my interpretative decisions. Also, despite my best efforts to share the authentic voices of the teachers in this study, I must acknowledge the reality that my perspectives and values, essentially my voice, blends with the voices of the participants.

My preexisting relationship with eleven of the thirteen participants also is a limitation of this study. While I endeavored to control for the influence of my prior

relationships during data collection, specifically through the use of Witzel's (2000) problem centered interview, my knowledge about the participants' lives did occasionally affect the questions I asked during interviews. For instance, near the end of David's first interview, I referenced a comment he made during a workshop we both attended a year earlier. Thus, the collection of data was, at times, influenced by previous knowledge of the participants' life experiences.

During data collection I asked the teachers to select the location for our interviews. While I followed this procedure to increase the participants' comfort, their tendency to choose public locations such as coffee shops and restaurants affected the breadth and quality of the data I collected. Twenty-two of the twenty-six individual interviews occurred in public locations, and often background noise made it difficult to transcribe the interview. Several interviews include inaudible portions because of competing sounds. In addition, the four interviews that occurred either in the teacher's office or classroom provided an opportunity to gather extra data about how the participant chose to represent himself (they were all male) to his students. For instance, Allen's office was filled with posters of notable activists such as Malcolm X, Che Guevara, and Martin Luther King. However, because I did not collect data about the instructional spaces designed by all of the educators, I could not systematically analyze this data.

A similar limitation resulted from my inability to conduct classroom observations. As a full-time, practicing teacher, I had hoped to obtain a sabbatical from my school district to facilitate such observations. Unfortunately, budget cuts resulted in the elimination of the sabbatical program and I was unable to leave my classroom to conduct

observations. Observational data would have provided greater triangulation of data, particularly from the second interview that addressed teaching practices.

I did try to obtain documents to triangulate data. Unfortunately, I was not particularly successful in this endeavor. Many of the participants were unsure of what type of document to share, and in the rush of trying to schedule interviews with busy teachers I often failed to follow-up on my initial requests for documentary evidence. As a result, I gathered a large number of documents from only one participant, Karen, and a short document from Craig. My failure to obtain a broader array of documents prevented me from conducting a systematic analysis of these documents that would have helped triangulate my interpretations.

During the focus group interviews, I did not obtain a second investigator to assist me in recording the interactions of the group members as suggested by experts in this method (Kruger & Casey, 2009). As a result, the data collected from those interviews did not have the rich description about interpersonal interactions normally produced through a focus group interview.

Finally, while I was able to obtain a relatively diverse sample in regards to race, sex, age, and type of school, my sample of secondary teachers remained heavily slanted toward high school practitioners. Only one participant, Goldie, taught social studies at the middle school level. The lack of broader sample of middle school teachers prevented me from exploring some interesting differences that emerged between teaching levels, particularly the possibility that middle school teachers might have a tendency to emphasize community building more often than secondary teachers.

## Suggestions for Future Research

Several interesting questions emerged from this project that could be explored in more depth. First, it appears that the degree to which a participant's life experiences aligned them toward social justice influenced the nature of their social justice practice. For instance, Karen's life history did not align her on a life trajectory that emphasized social justice, and she tended to employ a more critical approach in both the classroom and the school community. Conversely, many of Jeff's life experiences aligned him on a social justice path. He tended to stress multiple perspectives as opposed to critical inquiry in his practice, and he worked more cooperatively with his school's leadership. Because the concept of "alignment" and "resistance" emerged near the end of my analytical procedures, I was unable to ask specific questions about this relationship and I was not able to develop convincing interpretations about the relationship between life experience and the nature of social justice practice. A second study might reveal if my tentative conjectures can be supported, particularly if the study focused on only one or two teachers and included richer data obtained from follow-up interviews, interviews of the teacher's family and friends, documents, and observation of their classroom practices.

The study also exposed some possible differences in teaching practice relating to race, sex and age. However, because my small qualitative sample was diversified by race, age, and sex, the subgroups for each identity category were too small to support generalizable conclusions about those differences. For instance, one difference that emerged was the relationship between targeted identities and critical pedagogy. While my study suggests that a participant with a targeted identity may be more inclined to critique relationships of power and privilege in both the curriculum and the school

system, these interpretations are speculative at best. A larger, quantitative study that sampled a variety of teachers about their teaching practice might confirm if such a difference exists in the larger population.

Another study might explore the effects of social justice practice on student learning. Specifically, does teaching for social justice make a difference in student attitudes? An ethnographic study of one or two of these teachers' classrooms over the course of a year might provide insight to the capacity of a social justice teacher to influence his or her students' perspectives.

### Conclusion

I began this study as a result of my frustrating experiences facilitating training programs designed to promote a greater commitment to socially just practices among my fellow teachers. Too often only those teachers receptive to the message of the workshop seemed inclined to engage authentically with the work. Since the failed dismantling racism workshop I described in the introduction, I have not facilitated another session within my school district. Similar frustrations with preservice teachers' resistance to social justice issues in a social studies methods course I co-taught at a local university deepened my concern. I have worried that professional development workshops and teacher preparation programs do not have the power to overcome the years of socialization that shape teacher attitudes.

At the end of this project, I remain unsure about the extent to which universities and professional development workshops can promote full acceptance of social justice practices in classrooms and schools. However, the stories of these thirteen participants reveals that teachers who teach toward social justice are made, not born. From a

sociocultural perspective, these teachers negotiated their identities by responding to the various events and experiences in their life histories, sometimes resisting unjust actions while other times being positioned along a social justice trajectory. They have used their own histories as a tool to mediate a better future for their students. Britzman (2003), in her study of student teachers, argued that biography can serve as a tool to encourage preservice educators to adopt socially just practices:

In the case of student teachers, understanding the contradictory dynamics of their own biography can help them to determine interventions necessary to move beyond the sway of cultural authority. The concern should be with how we become entangled in and can become disentangled from the dynamics of cultural reproduction (p. 232).

The thirteen remarkable teachers in this study have used, and continue to use, their biographies to “become disentangled from the dynamics of cultural reproduction.” As such, their experiences and perceptions provide us some hopeful directions for how we might learn from their examples.

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**Appendix A:**  
**Participant Invitation Letter/Email**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Rob Good, a doctoral student at the University of Missouri—St. Louis, and I am currently conducting research on social studies teachers who teach toward social justice. You have been identified as such a teacher. For the purpose of this study, I have defined teachers who teach towards social justice as having one or more of the following characteristics:

- They maintain a critical perspective toward the operation of power and privilege within institutions.
- They are self-reflective about their own identity and their relationship to power and privilege.
- They organize classroom experiences that encourage students to examine questions addressing social justice issues.
- They work within the school community to promote equity, inclusion and democratic practices.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. The study seeks to describe the life experiences that contribute to the formation of teachers who teach for social justice. By examining what helps form such a disposition, this study hopes to suggest ways the social studies profession can foster experiences in communities, schools, and universities that promote a greater commitment to social justice.

The research will utilize a life history method. Life history is a collaborative process that envisions research as a partnership between the researcher and participants. Because you are sharing your life stories throughout the project, it is vital that you have the opportunity to read, review and comment on the transcription, interpretation and representation of your stories. The research process will include two interviews, each approximately 45 minutes long. The interviews will include questions about past experiences that led you to adopt a social justice orientation in your practice as well as questions about your current conceptualization of social justice in social studies education. You will receive copies of all transcripts and preliminary interpretations of your interviews for your review, comments and corrections. Also, to maintain your confidentiality, I will ask you to select a pseudonym that I will use during all phases of the project.

If you see yourself as a social studies teacher who teaches for social justice and you are willing to participate in this study, please contact me either by phone or email. My contact information is:

Rob Good  
rgood@ladue.k12.mo.us  
314-781-3176 (H); 314-920-6439 (C); 314-993-6447 (W)

Once I have received confirmation of your willingness to participate in the study, I will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time and place to conduct the interviews. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to working with you on this project.

Sincerely,

Rob Good

## **Appendix B: Informed Consent Forms**



### **Division of Teaching and Learning**

One University Blvd.  
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499  
Telephone: 314-516-5791  
Fax: 314-516-5348  
E-mail: rgood@ladue.k12.mo.us

#### **Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities**

“Social Studies Teachers Who Teach Toward Social Justice: A Collective Life History”

Participant \_\_\_\_\_

HSC Approval Number \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator

Robert Good

PI's Phone Number 314-781-3176

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1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Robert Good with the supervision of Dr. Joseph Polman. The purpose of this research is to describe the experiences that lead social studies teachers to become professionals who teach for social justice. By examining what helps form a disposition toward social justice, this study hopes to suggest ways the social studies profession can foster experiences in communities, schools, and universities that promote a greater commitment to social justice.
2. a) Your participation will involve
  - being contacted by the researcher to arrange a convenient time and place to conduct the interviews.
  - being interviewed twice by the researcher. The interviews should last approximately one hour each.
  - having the interview digitally audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher.
  - sharing documents that you deem relevant to your social justice identity.
  - possible participation in a focus group interview with other participants.
  - receiving copies of transcripts and preliminary interpretations of your interview answers for your review, comments and corrections.

Up to 30 teachers may be involved as participants in this research.

- b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately two hours for the interviews, possibly one and a half hours for the focus group interview, and one to four hours (at your determination) to review interview transcripts and preliminary interpretations.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research. However, life history research can occasionally raise memories that produce discomfort.
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, many participants find sharing their life histories to be a rewarding and enjoyable process. In addition, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about social justice in social studies education.
5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.
6. I will do everything I can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study. All digital information will be kept in a password-protected file and all printed materials will be kept secure in a locked file cabinet. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your data.
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Robert Good, 314-781-3176 or the Faculty Advisor, Dr. Joseph Polman, 314-516-4804. You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 516-5897.

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.**

---

Participant's Signature

Date

---

Participant's Printed Name

---

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

---

Investigator/Designee Printed Name

### Appendix C: Participant List

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Race Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Teaching Position</b>
1	Sandra	white female	Early 30's	Taught high school history in an affluent suburban district with a majority of white students but also considerable diversity
2	Allen	black male	Early 30's	Teacher/Administrator at a private high school with predominantly white student body from the entire metro area
3	John	white male	Early 30's	Teaches high school history in a suburban district with a predominantly white student body
4	David	white male	Mid 50's	Teaches high school history and sociology in an affluent suburban district with a majority of white students but also considerable diversity
5	Patricia	black female	Late 30's	Teaches high school history and government in a diverse suburb with a predominantly black school population
6	Karen	white female	Late 30's	Teaches high school history and government in a working class suburb with a predominantly black student body
7	Jeff	white male	Early 60's	Teaches high school history in a small, suburban district with a majority of white students but also considerable diversity
8	Goldie	black female	Mid 50's	Teaches middle school history in a suburb with a predominantly black student body
9	Craig	white male	Late 50's	Teaches high school history, psychology and government in a large urban district with a predominantly black student body
10	Adisa	black male	Early 30's	Teaches high school history in a suburb with a diverse, working class population
11	Dominic	black male	Early 30's	Teaches high school history in a suburban district with a predominantly black student body
12	Christine	black female	Mid 60's	Teaches high school history in an affluent suburban district with a majority of white students but also considerable diversity
13	Linda	white female	Early 50's	Teaches high school history in a suburban district with predominantly white student body but also black students who are bussed to the school

## **Appendix D: Interview Schedules**

### **Interview 1: Life History Interview**

#### **Pre-formulated question:**

You have been identified as a social studies teacher who emphasizes social justice in your practice. Could you please tell me about what experience or experiences led you to adopt such an approach to teaching social studies?

#### **Ad-hoc questions**

Based on responses from the pre-formulated question.

#### **Specific explorations (semi-structured questions):**

When you were a child, what messages about social justice did you learn from your family? From your community? From religious organizations?

Were issues of social justice discussed or raised in the k-12 schools you attended? If yes, how?

Were issues about equity and social justice addressed during your preparation to become a teacher? If yes, what do you think you learned from those discussions or experiences?

When you began teaching, did you have to confront any issues addressing social justice? If yes, what were those issues and how did they influence your approach to teaching?

Has your district provided any professional development addressing issues of social justice in education? If yes, what is your opinion about those programs?

Have you been involved in any initiatives to make schools more inclusive and just? If yes, please describe those initiatives?

## **Interview 2: Social Justice Practice**

### **Questions**

How do you define the term “social justice?”

In what ways do you think social justice issues are relevant to social studies education?

How do you try to incorporate social justice themes in your classroom?

In what ways do you try to address social justice issues within your school community?

In what ways do you try to address social justice issues in the broader community?

What challenges have you experienced when teaching or working for social justice?

What successes have you experienced when teaching or working for social justice?

### **Focus Group Interview Questions**

1. All of you discussed how teachers influenced your emerging social justice perspective. What were the characteristics of those teachers who sparked your interest in equity and justice?
2. Many of you discussed the influence of your parents. What type of parenting behaviors do you think were most influential in promoting your commitment to social justice?
3. Many of you discussed your personal experiences with oppression, either being the target of discrimination or observing others being discriminated against. In what ways do you think those experiences have influenced your teaching practices or the narratives you choose to present in your classroom?
4. All of you discussed how your teaching experiences have influenced your perspectives. Based on those experiences, if you could change one thing in education to advance the cause of social justice what would you change and why?
5. There was considerable variation among participants about the role of religion and spirituality in their lives. In general, do you think religion or spirituality encouraged your commitment to equity and justice? Why or why not?
6. Many people discussed how friendships influenced their perspectives. What is the most important thing your friends have done to encourage or support your commitment to social justice?
7. Many of you also discussed your childhood neighborhoods during the life history interview. How important do you think your neighborhood was in shaping your social justice perspective and why do you think that?
8. If you were advising a young social studies teacher who wanted to emphasize social justice in their practice, what is one recommendation you would give them.

Appendix E: Sample Life History Transcript (Jeff)

- 1 Transcription of Jeff's Life History Interview (Interview 1)**
  - 2 The participant is a white man in his early sixties, he is a high school social studies**
  - 3 teacher at a small, suburban, public school**
  - 4 The interview took place at a restaurant on October 16, 2009**
  - 5 The interview was conducted by Rob Good**
  - 6 The recorded interview lasted 49 minutes and 38 seconds**
  - 7 The interview was transcribed by Rob Good from October 17-24**
  - 8 The participant was sent the transcript for their review on October 24**
  - 9 The participant approved or made corrections to the transcript on November 20**
- 10
- 11 Key**
    - 12      ♦ P is used to indicate turns taken by participant
    - 13      ♦ R is used to indicate turns taken Rob
    - 14      ♦ Backslashes // are used to indicate pauses, each slash indicates one second
    - 15      ♦ Transcription inaudible is indicated by (inaud)
    - 16      ♦ Halting or abrupt stops are indicated by a dash –
    - 17      ♦ Stopping falls in tone are indicated by a period .
    - 18      ♦ Continuing intonations are indicated by a comma ,
    - 19      ♦ Rising inflection is indicated by a question mark?
    - 20      ♦ Audible aspirations are indicated by (hh)
    - 21      ♦ Audible inhalations are indicated by (.hh)
    - 22      ♦ laughter is indicated by (laughs)
    - 23      ♦ Brackets [ ] are used to indicate overlapping utterances
    - 24      ♦ {} are used to describe external stimuli that effects the interview
- 25
- 26 R: //And it is running. Um, so I'm here with (name), it is October 16<sup>th</sup>, and um it's the
  - 27 first interview in, um, this research project. And so my first question is kind of an
  - 28 open-ended question. You've been identified as a social studies teacher who teaches
  - 29 for social justice. What experience or experiences do you think really helped shape
  - 30 and lead to you, lead you to adopt that kind of practice in your teaching?

31 P: When you first contacted me, one of the first things I was thinking about was my  
32 dad/, um, my hero. And a great influence on my life, my dad was very active in the  
33 local civil rights movement. Um, very much of a thinker and we would talk about a  
34 lot of social issues as I was growing up, and he led by example in so many ways. My  
35 mom did too, when she was in college, I know back in forties she was making  
36 speeches about the, uh, the “negro problem” as they often referred to it back then.  
37 And, uh, shocking the Republicans up at (college 1), so. My mom and dad really had  
38 a big influence on me and, uh, and I think, I think that uh, experiences that went  
39 through childhood and through college, um, really did influence me in that  
40 sense.//Specific uh experiences//, you know it may sound funny but my dad and I  
41 shared a love of baseball. He's, uh, passed on now but, and we would always go to  
42 the old (name) Stadium at (street) and (street), and I remember//as we would drive by,  
43 into (neighborhood), and we would talk about what the houses were like and why,  
44 and the negroes who lived there and uh some of the social situations and, so uh, we  
45 would, we would take an outing that was pretty much pleasure, baseball, and we'd  
46 talk about other issues, and, and I still remember that very clearly in my mind.  
47 Another experience, frankly, was in high school when my older sister um at (school  
48 1) was dating a, a young black man, which never happened at (school 1) in 1965.  
49 And so it was//I knew it was a very tough experience, and my dad and mom were  
50 very liberal and//there were a lot of repercussions, you know people driving by and  
51 yelling, and my sister being shunned and, and I guess people shunning me because I  
52 was the younger brother and, so I remember that. And then, um, watching the  
53 marches on Washington and Selma, and what that, what that meant, um, in my life.  
54 Is it okay to just keep going like this?

55 R: Yeah, just keep going, it's wonderful, yeah.

56 P: I, um, being a baseball fan, one of my heroes is Curt Flood, who-I, was a great player  
57 but of course his stand against the owners and his stand for uh the ability to move  
58 around where you want to, and uh, I've read many books about him. And, and, and in  
59 69 when he was traded, uh, that all kind of brought baseball, civil rights, human rights  
60 into play together, so it was a, a very interesting and I've kind of followed up since  
61 then on some of his legacy, and teach that to my class some, about him. Um, I was

62 raised as a Christian Scientist, a minority, a religious minority who were, uh, very  
63 hard to understand their religion if you're not a Christian Scientist. I'm no longer a  
64 Christian Scientist but, I can remember being, um, laughed at and being, uh, hum,  
65 persecution is too strong a word, but just not understood and, uh, avoided because of  
66 that, um. I remember when one of my cousins died and, uh, {waiter comes, we say  
67 we are okay} was uh, did not go to get medical treatment and I remember getting a  
68 phone call from a friend of his, basically lashing out at//me and Christian Science,  
69 how could you let him die like that, and. And so I kind of understood the religious  
70 minority thing even though it's not a//it's not persecuted too much, but uh.  
71 Um//college, of course, going to college in the late sixties and early seventies, all of  
72 the protests and, and um, Vietnam War, and having to make the decision what should  
73 be my military status. I, I ended up filing for a conscientious objector status cause of  
74 my beliefs based on religion and philosophy, mostly philosophy I think, and so all of  
75 those conflicts, they come in. Um, I got into um//appreciation of, I guess you could  
76 say, the gay movement, the gay rights movement when I worked, was in Denver,  
77 Colorado, for a year. And I worked in a store that was owned and run by gays, and I  
78 was one of the only straight employees. And it just, I became familiar with the gay  
79 community in Denver and, and it really opened my mind up to, uh, to a whole another  
80 part of society that was being persecuted and, so I, I began, very much um, I guess in  
81 tune with that movement, which was an interesting conflict with my father. My  
82 father//one of the old line liberals, kind of a Hubert Humphrey liberal, and so the civil  
83 rights movement and, um, uh, for blacks was, and women, was understandable for  
84 him but, I think a lot of them had trouble understanding the gay rights movement  
85 because so many of them had a personal, um, problem with, with the lifestyle. And,  
86 uh, he and I would talk eh, and by the time, you know, in his later years he  
87 understood, because uh, one of my nephews came out of the closet, and uh, and I  
88 think he realized that, well this is a great kid, and I need to fight for him too, so. So, I  
89 had, you know, all through life you just keep coming into contact with persecuted  
90 people, and whether it's in your family or your church or your school, so um, those  
91 are some of the experiences that I guess have, have driven me {Rob makes a note and  
92 the participant picks up his phone}

93 R: I'm just jotting down an idea here.

94 P: Okay

95 R: Um

96 P: I just got a call, [if you want to shut that off for a minute]

97 R: [oh, go ahead, oh yeah] I can, I can stop it for

98 P: You see, I'm sorry, it could be my wife saying

99 R: Um, no {recorder turned off for about two minutes at 6:52}. Alright, we'll just pick  
100 up where we left off.

101 P: Alright, and if I think of something, other experiences, um//going to law school, in  
102 72 to 75, at the height of not only the Vietnam War but the Watergate investigation  
103 and, uh, the way protestors were dealt with and, uh, women at the law school, it was  
104 another//whole dimension, you know, when I started there were I think//ten women in  
105 our first year class at law school, by the time I graduated three years later it was fifty  
106 percent women. So, a great growth in, in women in, in the legal practice, and I, I  
107 always considered myself a feminist, and I got more and more turned on //hat, that  
108 whole, uh, sensitivity I think, um, so I guess a lot of things through the years and the  
109 Obama campaign kind of revitalized some interest in, uh, in uh groundswell, ground-  
110 group movement, grassroots movement, sorry. So, uh, worked with, um, New  
111 Democratic Coalition when I came back from law school, and Coalition for the  
112 Environment, and all those groups. I actually worked for ACORN for a while. Uh,  
113 did literally work for them, and uh, so uh, I, I tried to stay in touch with those type of  
114 grassroots movements, and uh, people who were probably not understood and didn't  
115 have power, you know, who didn't have power because of power and privilege, you  
116 know and, um, and I've been//a long time member of the ACLU and, which does not  
117 always//sit well with my comrades, my peers, shall we say, at school and that. But, it  
118 is great teaching constitutional law, the Constitution rather, in class because I, I have  
119 a lot of resources that I can go to and say, what about this, though? Teaching the  
120 Socratic method is, is//always they don't guess what my position [is, I try to] avoid=

121 R: [ (laughs) ]

122 P: =that///.

123 R: So, you know you, um, I mean you talked about that, the phrase that I wrote down  
124 was, you come into contact with persecuted groups all through your life, and you're  
125 actually part of a persecuted group as well in there, um, you know, but you started off  
126 with your dad and you said your dad was involved in the civil rights movement, and  
127 you talked about the conversations you had, was he an activist or was he?

128 P: Let me tell you, one of the//one of the things I'm most proud of, um, my dad went to  
129 a law school in (college 2), in (city) Georgia, which is where I was born. My mother  
130 would never let me tell people I was born in the South cause she was a northern  
131 liberal, you know, she didn't want people to know that. But, so we moved back to St.  
132 Louis, it was my dad's hometown, in the early fifties, and my dad came a member of  
133 the bar association. Well, at that time//in the early fifties, there was a white bar  
134 association which was the regular bar and then you had the (city name) bar, which  
135 was the black bar. And, uh, um and an African American lawyer tried to join  
136 the//regular bar, if I may call it that, and um, was not allowed. And my dad, who was  
137 friends with some of the people in the movement was so upset he, he joined the (city  
138 name) bar. He was the only white member [of the Mound City Bar], and=

139 R: [ (laughs) ]

140 P: =there were articles in the (newspaper 1) and the (newspaper 2) about him, and, and  
141 uh, you know it was before I was really conscious as a human being, very much, but  
142 uh, but I look back on that and it was just a one man's stand, you know he did that,  
143 and if you're familiar with (municipality 2)

144 R: Uh hum

145 P: Which is the largest, was the largest, the largest completely, 100% black city in the  
146 U.S., and he was their city attorney for many, many years. And worked with the city  
147 government there to obtain federal grants for housing and public works projects, and,  
148 and uh was a city attorney and court on Friday nights. And I can remember a couple  
149 times I went with him, and um//going into (municipality 2), on a Friday night, for  
150 court//, no matter how liberal you are you, it gives you pause.

151 R: Uh hum

152 P: And, I can remember, on more than one time when he said he had to have a  
153 policeman escort him out to his car so he could leave. Very, very interesting, um, in

154 the uh/I guess it was, I think it was the early seventies when we went to, when we  
155 were coming into the black power movement more, late sixties, early seventies. And,  
156 uh, more of uh the//black identity and we can do this ourselves, we don't necessarily  
157 need you white liberals. And I remember my dad came home one night, Friday night,  
158 from (municipality 2) and he said well, they decided they didn't want me anymore as  
159 a lawyer, they had a black lawyer to do it. And I talked with him about it, and he said  
160 well, you know at first I was upset, offended, a little insulted, hurt that after all these  
161 years they would just suddenly announce, but he said I realized that's, the pro-the  
162 natural progression of the movement, is for them to say, you know, our own people  
163 are educated now, we can claim more, and um, I, I had respected that he was able to  
164 step back and see that for what it was as a natural part of the movement, a natural part  
165 of progress within the black community, but, um, he worked really hard, you know,  
166 making sure//when he was mayor, he was mayor of (municipality 1) for thirteen  
167 years, making sure that restaurants integrated, you know, he'd get the clergy  
168 involved, making sure that, uh, we had black officers on the police force, things like  
169 that, so. He, he was, very active in a, in a sense of doing that day to day things, he  
170 was never arrested, you know at the, at the (name) Bank, and uh I mean he knew//  
171 (activist 1) and some of those people in the movement, and uh, and a good friend of  
172 (activist 2), and people like that, they were the ones who had Jackie Robinson in their  
173 home when he [came to town] because [yeah, so uh, he, he was a= ]

174 R: [when he came] [when he played with the Dodgers]

175 P: =an activist in that sense. I'm very, very proud, um, and to his dying day he was  
176 always, I remember, he, he had cancer and, uh, the last few months I'd go down and  
177 visit a few times in Florida.//One of the last times, the second-next to last time I  
178 visited we had a long conversation about Huckleberry Finn, we were both big Mark  
179 Twain fans. And, the scene where Huck decides not to turn Jim in, and he'd rather go  
180 to hell, you know, than turn in his friend. And we just talked about how, what a  
181 magical piece of literature that was, but uh, what an important scene in American  
182 history, literature, history. So, you know, to the very end we were, he was teaching  
183 me about things, I get a little wordy, sorry.

184 R: Yeah, oh no, no, no, I-it's good to have that, um, it makes it really rich. You know  
185 you talked about growing up in (municipality 1) when your father being the mayor  
186 there and your sister, the conflict that occurred when your sister dated a, a black man.  
187 But, what about the, the community and going to schools. Were issues of social  
188 justice discussed in, in both either the community or the school when you were  
189 growing up?

190 P: (Municipality 1) was a conservative, Republican community. How my dad got  
191 reelected so many times we're never sure. But, I think it was because he did his job  
192 well, but, (municipality 1) had a black community, which is now where (department  
193 store) is in (municipality 1), and um//we knew/a lot of the families, um. In the  
194 school, I remember when the first black kids came to elementary school. I uh, I  
195 remember I came home from school and I told my mom, I was in fourth grade//, and  
196 my, I said to my mom, mom we have a, we have a negro boy in our class, and he's  
197 really nice. And my mom just looked at me and said well, what do you expect? So  
198 my mom was really on top of things too. And uh, but we, we hardly ever talked  
199 about civil rights and I remember people just, you know, if you talked about Martin  
200 Luther King or the March on Washington, you know things like that, you know you  
201 were this flaming liberal, you were this radical. And, uh, in school I don't remember,  
202 there was one teacher//my history teacher, who would um talk once in a while about  
203 things like Vietnam, just as it was starting out. I remember in 63//when the Supreme  
204 Court decision on prayer in public school, I think it came out in 62, in 63 I remember  
205 we had a debate in class and I took the side of no prayers in schools, and you know I  
206 was really in the minority on that one, you know but, it was, and you know, Jewish  
207 kids, we had a couple maybe, and they, they sang the Christmas carols like everybody  
208 else, and, we just you know, eh, it was just excepted (municipality 1) was a nice,  
209 conservative community. You know I loved it, it was a wonderful place to grow up,  
210 but it wasn't a place where you challenged things, it wasn't a place where you really  
211 talked about the civil rights movement in school, and very, and probably less even in  
212 your social life. You wouldn't want to talk about it, you know, it was outside of  
213 (municipality 1).///

214 R: But, so when you went to college, that was a different experience, where did you go  
215 to school?

216 P: Well, I went to (college 1), which it was a//basically a conservative, Republican, but  
217 it was 1967 to 71, so during the//the campus unrest, so there were, there were-was a  
218 niche of, of uh, radicals, uh liberals, a few Democrats on campus, you know. And so  
219 we, we did, and the war of course bonded all the men because we were facing that,  
220 that lottery number, um, we had a few blacks on campus, most were from Africa. We  
221 had, in fact, I was//the first African American we had, that was on campus, that was  
222 really kind of African American, from East St. Louis, his father was a police uh  
223 officer in East St. Louis. And he was my roommate. They gave him to me, they said  
224 (name) will know to deal with this. So he and I, in fact he's still a professor now at  
225 the college, but I, I still remember, this, this was really strange though. You know we  
226 were in the dorms, instead of fraternities we had dorms, a small college, about 400  
227 students, 700 students. And we were (laughs), they would take freshmen out on  
228 hazing runs, in the middle of the night they'd wake you up and take you out. One  
229 night, and we were, there was one kid from California who had his hair growing long,  
230 and they, they pretty much drove him out of school and, just harassed him and tried to  
231 cut his hair and all this. And I remember we went out one night//and they put pillow  
232 cases on our head and walked us through the black area of (municipality 3) in the  
233 middle of the night, you can imagine how stupid that was.

234 R: Um huh, oh yeah//

235 P: (Municipality 3), and area that had a George Wallace headquarters and everything  
236 else, but. But what I remember is, they would, each freshman, they would take and, if  
237 your remember like in *Animal House* where they would harass, you know, they  
238 wouldn't physically abuse us, but they'd take each freshman and, and blindfolded,  
239 and they'd just start yelling things at 'em. And I, I was a big soul music fan, and they  
240 knew that I was liberal, you know, and then, in the middle of the night during this  
241 haze and they start yelling at me and they start saying what is this thing you have  
242 about blacks? Black people, you know, what is it? And they'd start yelling at me  
243 about this (laughs) and I'm thinking//you know I almost laughed it was stupid, but

244 that was the mindset, it was 1967, in the fall, you know, 68 hadn't happened, which  
245 was [the big year]. But, but I remember, I mean I stayed on and//there were a few=

246 R: [ oh yeah ]

247 P: =of us that were liberal, radical and uh, a few more as the war waged on, but, not  
248 much on civil rights, um. I don't think any gays came out when I was there, on  
249 campus, and women-there were some feminists, oh I fell in love with one feminist-  
250 don't talk about that but she, she really, I mean, turned me on to some=

251 R: (laughs)

252 P: =philosophy and stuff like that, it was great. But, I had a college was pretty  
253 conservative, pretty conservative. Then, um, as I was waiting to see if I was going to  
254 uh be drafted, my lottery number was 6, so

255 R: wow

256 P: so I was going to go

257 R: yeah

258 P: but it was a question of what, and so I filed for a CO, and//they um, they informed me  
259 that they didn't have any CO jobs, so I was going to go into the service as a non-  
260 combatant, which meant that they could shoot at me but I couldn't shoot back. So  
261 they were processing it and, uh, I lived in (city 3) at that time, for a year, waiting, and  
262 then they decided that, no um, oh Nixon decided to end the draft. I always tell my  
263 classes there were too many white kids getting killed, and it was an election year and  
264 he ended the draft just like that. And to me, I, I may be cynical, but that's exactly  
265 what happened, I think. So then I went to law school at (college 2). And um, it was  
266 uh, 72 to 75, a very interesting time because there were, there were all kinds of issues  
267 like, there was a rock, a memorial to Confederate soldiers on campus, that was a big  
268 site of protest. There were anti-war protests and then the Watergate thing was going  
269 on, so. I became, I-I guess, I think I became much more tuned in to like the gay  
270 movement and the um the women's movement through law school.

271 R: Did you go to law school with the, did you know what kind of law you wanted to  
272 practice, did you, um//

273 P: I had planned to practice with my dad, he had a general practice so I was going to  
274 come back to (state), to (municipality 1) and practice with him, which I did for about

275 three years. And, um, I really, I really wanted to do, you know, some good, you  
276 know, social good, and um, I worked with legal aid when I was in (city 3). And I did  
277 some, some work with other organizations when I was back in (municipality 1), but  
278 uh, after a while I just didn't like law, so I left it and did property management for  
279 twelve years, and then I got into teaching so, twenty years ago, it's hard to believe.

280 R: When you were in property management, did you, was it, um, did those issues still  
281 stay current with you, or was it more working for a firm and trying to work for social  
282 justice within that?

283 P: Well, this was very controversial. One thing is I, I ran for alderman in (municipality  
284 1), and I was elected to two terms. And half of my district, my ward, was the black  
285 area of (municipality 1), I had a lot of support there which was really nice. But I was  
286 also managing (apartment complex 1), which is now (name), huge,

287 R: Yeah

288 P: And um when I went in//the city, I mean it had become a pretty serious crime  
289 situation. They had had a problem, and the company that owned (apartment complex  
290 1) had had a, had been caught blatantly discriminating at an Ohio project, so they  
291 entered into a consent agreement with the justice department, which meant they were  
292 more//aggressive in marketing to minorities and they changed their admissions  
293 standards. And, uh, basically what happened was that they kind of just threw the  
294 doors open and (apartment complex 1) suddenly became a huge black population.  
295 And, and a lot of the black population was from the city of (name), totally different  
296 than the traditional (municipality 1) black population. There were a lot of conflicts  
297 between the two groups, it was really interesting because you had an established,  
298 middle, lower to middle class (municipality 1) community with families that had been  
299 in the school system and in leadership in the community, and um {waiter comes by,  
300 we tell him we are okay} and, um, then you had um, had//these other families coming  
301 in from (name) and there were fights at the high school between them, there were  
302 fights on the street, it was just interesting. Well, when I took over management, I  
303 mean I lived there and I, we all said, we all agreed that we needed to get rid of the  
304 crime problem,//and undesirables//. Now I did not, in my mind, equate that with  
305 being black, to me it was, you know, you want responsible neighbors, you want a

306 respectable neighborhood. So, you know, when people owed eight months rent and  
307 they were having fights and things in their apartment and all that, to me that was a  
308 good reason to ask them to leave. And I ran into some problems with, uh, a group  
309 called Freedom of Residency.//They thought I was evicting people just because they  
310 were black, and I was evicting people who were not being responsible tenants. And,  
311 and, and uh one of my arguments is, that, //it was and still is that everybody deserves  
312 to have a nice area to live in. You work hard and you deserve that. And that includes  
313 black people. And how many black people want to, you know, black people want to  
314 live in a nice area, and they want nice neighbors and all that too. They want to keep  
315 the neighborhood up, so, I would have black people come in and say, can you get rid  
316 of my neighbors? They had another big, screaming fight last night and all this, you  
317 know, and we'd go down and investigate. Well, the Freedom of Residency group  
318 said you're just evicting black people. And I said, no, I've evicted white and black  
319 people, but I'm doing it if they violate the lease, they don't pay rent or they do all  
320 these other things. And, you know, they said well you're, you're a racist. And I said,  
321 let me tell you, what's racism to me is when you say//these black people have, they  
322 have, they, they have to put up with this stuff, you know. We're not going to, we're  
323 going to lower the standards and they have to put up with it as neighbors. And it's a,  
324 it's a really, it's a tough argument, but I really believe that it's like students, you  
325 know. How many of our teachers see a black student from the city and say, well if  
326 they can just do this much that would be great.

327 R: Uh huh.

328 P: Instead of saying, I can expect you to, to achieve. And so what you do is you lower  
329 their standards, their expectations, and their, their achievements probably. And that's  
330 what I saw, and, in (apartment complex 1), um. That, you know, that there were so  
331 many great black families, and I was living there too, and we all wanted a nice  
332 neighborhood, so and when I evicted a problem tenant they'd say thank you, you  
333 know, this is why I moved out here, is to get away from that stuff. And, and it's//you  
334 know

335 R: Did your, you know, you had a lot of credentials by the time you were there, did that  
336 help? In that, that?

337 P: Well some, you know whether it's on the right or the left, you have some people and  
338 some groups that are just so dogmatic that, they're not going to listen. And, and you  
339 know they've got protestors and they'd come to the board meeting and they'd scream  
340 at me and, it was, it was very frustrating when you committed yourself to doing  
341 things, and um, I ended up resigning//from my position and getting another job so that  
342 I could stay as alderman. And then, of course, what happened was the (bank name)  
343 bought it and converted it all to condominiums and pretty soon it was:

344 R: Lily white

345 P: Yeah, and, and, and what I did, in the last months was convince them to give//uh,  
346 relocation loans and time and stuff like that and, so, so I feel good about what I was  
347 doing was right, making sure that it all came from my background. But, I'm sure you  
348 run into this, you know no matter what your credentials and what you've  
349 done//there's some people that just//you know, you're, you're white privilege and  
350 that's it.

351 R: Yeah

352 P: You know, you don't understand, you can't relate. You're right, I'm never going to  
353 be a black person. I'm never going to be a young black kid being followed at the  
354 (mall). But I can try to help.

355 R: Yeah//so why did you get into education, and what, you know, when was that, about  
356 how old or?

357 P: Well, you know in college I was, I was, when, when I was a little kid it was always I  
358 was going to be a lawyer with my dad, all through school. And when I was in college  
359 I had, I started having these doubts, do I really want to do that? My fiancé at the time  
360 was an education major, and I was curious of all the teaching classes, and education  
361 classes, so you said I know, I may think about education so I took a couple classes at  
362 the end of my undergrad. And then, when I um, when the draft ended, I was, it was  
363 like suddenly January and I had to, what am I going to do? And I'd already been  
364 accepted into (college 2) law school, so that I said, well I'll go there. Even if I don't  
365 practice law, it's not going to hurt me, and it didn't certainly. I did that, and I still  
366 was not sure, but I did law for a while and, then I, I just need to start making money, I  
367 had a wife and a kid or two, and my property management job really was much better

368 paying and stable, I had free housing an all that. So I kept doing that, but then, I just  
369 kept running against, there I was in the corporate world, and there I was, frankly  
370 around a lot of landlords who found ways to discriminate and that kind of thing, it  
371 was a, it was tough, And I got fired from my last job, managing (apartment complex  
372 2),

373 R: Oh yeah

374 P: Up north//and uh//I got fired one day and my boss, well I'm going to come up and  
375 get your keys and all that. I said, okay. I just told my secretary, I said I'm going to  
376 lunch (laughs). So I went downtown to where my girlfriend at the time was working,  
377 I was separated//, we went to lunch and I took my business card and I lit it and burned  
378 it in the ashtray at the restaurant, and I said, that's it. I'm going to be a teacher. And  
379 I had already started taking a few classes at (college 3), and I, and I loved it, I loved  
380 the kids, coaching and all that, and, and I'd been involved in theater a lot, so you  
381 know, I want to perform with kids, you know, I want to do this stuff. (.hh) And uh,  
382 while I still have the energy, you know, so I, that was twenty years ago, haven't  
383 looked back, you know it was the best decision-my mom will often say, it's too bad  
384 you didn't start teaching earlier. I said, well you know, it happened when it was  
385 supposed to happen. I mean I, my life experiences, you know, law school, apartments  
386 and all this other stuff, really have made me, I think, a better teacher.

387 R: And it does, it informs your practice.

388 P: It really does, it really does. You can tell stories and kids say, well what haven't you  
389 done Mr., you know (laughs)

390 R: (laughing) Exactly, I'm sitting here wondering. Amazed, I knew you practiced law, I  
391 never knew about all this other stuff.

392 P: I've never been a male stripper and now never will be.

393 R: (laughs) Um, when you were taking the, so, you go into uh, teacher preparation  
394 classes. Did you find, um, that issues of social justice at that time were being brought  
395 up in classes, or//did you?

396 P: Um, yeah, some, more along the lines of how do we get these kids to learn. You  
397 know, um, differentiation. And I think whenever you talk about differentiation  
398 there's always an implication that there's some racial lines that you're talking about

399 or socioeconomic lines, um. And the whole, uh, I was taking a class at (college 3), on  
400 a, what was it//psychology, I forgot the name of it exactly, but we all had to do  
401 presentations. So, um//what did I call, I did a presentation called//something like  
402 um ADHD, ADD, LD//or just, I didn't say idiots but something like, what do we call  
403 it, I forget what it was, but basically I said back when I was growing up, you know,  
404 we just said those were, it was just kids that, you know, just aren't learning well, I  
405 mean nobody had a label for it and everything, and I think that's when we were (.hh),  
406 you know, and it was fun in the classes trying to, uh//fit my real life experiences to all  
407 these clinical analysis and everything like that. And, there was, I remember, when I,  
408 we were talking about, and I was talking about the use of ritalin in, in class, and with  
409 students, and I remember one of the black students raised the point that they thought  
410 ritalin would, was being used as a way to repress/kids in the black community, and  
411 that. And it was kind of an eye-opener, I had not heard that directly stated, I mean I  
412 know why, I knew some parents didn't like the use of ritalin, not as a racial weapon,  
413 so it was kind of interesting. But uh, um//and when I got into teaching history, um,  
414 the classes about how to teach history and everything, and we talked a lot about how  
415 do you guarantee that you're teaching all the people? How do you make sure that  
416 you're, you're providing some role models for every person in your class, you know,  
417 so every kid can identify with somebody that you're teaching about. I, I think  
418 (college 3) did well, and I ended up in the uh, what I call the midlife crisis program at  
419 (college 4), mid-career turn, whatever, so I went through those classes and they were  
420 pretty good about, about that

421 R: Is that the MAT program, or?

422 P: Yeah, it could be.

423 R: Yeah.

424 P: Yeah, I forget who was, yeah it's been a while now. But, uh, that was when I, I  
425 actually started subbing in a bunch of districts, I subbed in uh, (district 3), (district 4),  
426 (district 2), (district 5). But, but I kept getting called back to (district 2). And uh,  
427 when you're back there, pretty soon people start to say, okay, if they like you, they  
428 keep calling you back. And there was one woman going to be on maternity leave, so  
429 they said well, when she goes you'll get that job. And I thought that would be good,

430 well then one night, Sunday night, the director of personnel called me and said we've  
431 got a teacher that needs to take leave and we want you in the classroom tomorrow.  
432 And, uh, I was there for///came to twelve years.

433 R: So you were at (district 2) for twelve.

434 P: Yeah

435 R: Wow

436 P: They um, yeah that teacher never came back. She just lost it in the classroom, so I  
437 was like the rescuer for the [district, ], it was kind of neat. But uh, you know, it is=

438 R: [(laughs)]

439 P: =interesting um//cause, cause I was, I had been out of school for a long time. So  
440 going back and trying to learn all these theories and everything like that, I said just  
441 put me in the room, I'm ready to teach.

442 R: What did you teach when you were at (district 2)?

443 P: Uh, it started with American history. Um, and then the last eight years was, uh, world  
444 history, ancient, ancient history, so.

445 R: And did you find in your practice there, I mean were issues presenting themselves  
446 that you got involved in questions of social justice, either inside the classroom or in  
447 the whole school community? I mean that was you first job, really.

448 P: In the classroom, um//I mean in American history I did a lot on the civil rights and,  
449 you know that, that, that leant itself well, because I was doing up to modern.//  
450 Ancient history was an interesting opportunity because you could//we had a unit  
451 called classic civilizations. And I always would talk about well what does classic  
452 mean, you know? Greek and Roman, is that, are they the only classic ones? So we  
453 put the Mayans in with the Greek and Romans, and then the Chinese and, we'd talk  
454 about the, you know, our definitions of classic have been skewed by our Eurocentric  
455 you know approach, you know.//We'd talk about African civilizations and//I have this  
456 great quote I, I, from the *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*//about all the  
457 civilizations being built on top of each other, you know, and uh it's really interesting  
458 about Africa being the source of so much, um.//And we did, also, a unit on world  
459 religions which was really cool because we could (coughs), you know (district 2) had  
460 a lot of Christians and Jews but very few, uh, others, and so we started to get more

461 from the Asian countries. And we'd take field trips to religious centers around town,  
462 the Islamic center and Buddhist temple, the New Cathedral and all that kind of stuff,  
463 it was kind of neat. And then there were always things that would come up, you  
464 know, the predictable black history month assemblies, you know, that kind of stuff.  
465 But we also, um, worked with kids on diversity issues as much as we could, um.  
466 Eighth, I taught eighth grade and, so they were always, it was kind of neat cause they  
467 were ready to move on in so many ways. And, um, it was a natural progression I  
468 think for them to move to high school. And when I left there, so. You know//yeah, it  
469 was, it was good and, and (district 2), uh, I know you find this in (district 5) //district  
470 2), the teachers are just, so [dynamic] for the most part, I mean they really are looking  
471 for ways to challenge and be challenged, looking for ways to make connections. And  
472 they have the resources to make those connections, you know, to get kids from the  
473 city to every activity and that kind of stuff, so. It's very int-interesting and, I know  
474 we, we took some bus tours and, you know where do our kids live, you know, the  
475 ones who came from the city. It was kind of neat, but//always a lot of (.hh), always  
476 something to do, always something to tackle.

477 R: Yeah, it gets in the way.

478 P: Yeah

479 R: Um, well you know, and, and this can be either in (district 2) or in (district 1), I don't  
480 know if you taught anywhere else.

481 P: No, no

482 R: Um, were there any professional development experiences that you think built upon  
483 what you previously learned or were directed towards issues of inclusion, equity,  
484 justice?

485 P: Yeah, there were//you know, everybody has the, um, the bullying seminar you know  
486 which certainly addressed some of the issue. And differentiation, etc. Um, I went to  
487 the, eh, you know social studies conferences, national conferences, some others.  
488 And, uh, had some great workshops, experiences there. Um//we do, uh, a social  
489 justice program at (district 1) where all the teachers, all the staff members have to go  
490 through a, it's a year-long program

491 R: (name of program)?

492 P: Yeah, yeah

493 R: (Program director's name) group?

494 P: Yeah, right, so I went to that a few years ago, you know with the uh weekend retreat

495 and everything like that. And, uh, then we went to the White Privilege Conference,

496 we took some kids there a few years ago when it was at uh

497 R: Oh, at (college 3)

498 P: At (college 3). Um//uh, we, yeah we, eh, I, I think we've, we've done a lot, we've

499 had//oh gosh, what's his name? I want to say Shakesy, or, I can't remember

500 R: Oh, Shakty Butler? Shak-or, I know who you're

501 P: Shocksey, from California

502 R: Yeah

503 P: Yeah, and uh, you know we've had some speakers like that. I, you know, it's, eh, you

504 know what you said earlier is so true, you know you get some people that just sit

505 there and go oh boy, here we go again, you know you're going to make me feel guilty

506 again, aren't you, you know? And then you've got others that say, okay, what can I

507 learn from this, what can I use? As usual though with teachers there are so many

508 things that get//put on us like, you know now I've got to get my papers graded.

509 R: Yeah

510 P: And I have to do this and that? It's alright, that's always the trouble with that, but uh.

511 Yeah, yeah//the social justice thing, that's been an interesting experience, you know.

512 There were some challenges to that when we did it a few years ago. There were, it

513 was presented, part of it was presented in a way that was//pretty abrasive to a lot of

514 people, you know, with pretty much you're white, you're a racist. And//people said

515 wait a minute now, I said okay, if you want to say I'm privileged, I agree. If you

516 want to say I don't, I can't necessarily identify I understand. But racist is such a

517 malevolent, malicious term, let's talk about it before you start calling me a racist. It

518 was, it was a good discussion and we//pretty sincere, but I think it's made us

519 appreciate more, um, our, our black colleagues on the staff, what they struggle with

520 and, and I, I, our kids, our students, you know//. But, a long way to go.

521 R: Yeah, always, a long ways, and we've sort of gone a long way and I promised you an

522 hour and I'm not going to take too much more of your time.

523 P: Sorry, I'm talking so much.

524 R: Oh, no, no, no, that's what it is supposed to be. I, I, I, it's a good interview if I don't  
525 say anything.

526 P: Oh, okay

527 R: I appreciate, I mean you've just shared so much, but you know, we started sort of in,  
528 you're growing up in (municipality 1), we talked about school we talked about  
529 various experiences that you had. Um, you, you'd mentioned your, you know one  
530 other thing, you know, you mentioned your mom, and that she'd been involved in the  
531 forties and then, was she sort of in, with your father, doing that, was she out doing  
532 different things? Um, did, would, did, she work outside of the home?

533 P: My mom came from Ohio, met my dad at (college 1) and he went away to war, came  
534 back. One of the things that, I should throw this in, when he was in India and Burma  
535 during the war, he actually, he, he was the kind, he would go out and have an  
536 adventure, I mean he went to one of Gandhi's prayer meetings and got to see Gandhi,  
537 and, and I remember, he was really into that at the time. Well, came back and they  
538 had decided they didn't want to date the people they had been dating, they wanted to  
539 date each other, so they, they got married on campus and, my mom, I reread it again  
540 about a year ago, um she gave her senior speech in the chapel, they all give senior  
541 speeches, and it was about the negro problem and being, trying to understand, you  
542 know why don't we treat them equal, you know, why don't we, you know here's this  
543 daughter of conservative Republicans, you know, making these statements, you  
544 know. When I read it now, it just makes me feel so proud, so when dad, and she  
545 would go to meetings with dad and she would, became friends and, you know, and  
546 did all the social interaction with uh civil right workers, uh leaders, and//African  
547 American leaders, and that she, she stayed at home, we had five, five kids so she  
548 pretty much raised all of the kids and, um, my dad was, was mayor and he ran, he was  
549 a judge, he //very active in the Democratic party and things like that, so. She would  
550 go along to the activities but, she was pretty much busy at home. Like I said, we'd  
551 come home and she could zing us, you know, and say well why not? What did you  
552 expect? And, um, you know and in later years when they moved to Florida, she  
553 would be with him like when they would take trips and go to like uh, go visit the

554 court house of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or they'd go to the Southern Poverty Law  
555 Center, they were very interested in, in helping support that and hearing Morris Dees  
556 speak and things like that. So, and she, she's still very much, you know, very liberal.  
557 She's, she's not always, uh, comfortable with some of the newer styles, shall we say,  
558 but uh, no I'm, I'm really, I'm really proud of her, I guess I learn more and more  
559 about her as the years go by.

560 R: You know it's interesting, cause in the context of Christian Scientists, uh, and  
561 Christian Science, and you, you've characterized it as sort of conservative which is  
562 sort of the way people look at it, yet, when I think about Mary Baker Eddy and, who's  
563 a remarkable woman and in many ways very socially advanced, do you think that  
564 Christian Science//um, Christian Scientists nurtured that or was in opposition to it, or  
565 is it sort of a weird mix?

566 P: It, it, it's really strange, we always joked that Christian Scientists think God is a  
567 Republican, you know, and they all get rich because they save money on doctors  
568 bills. I, um, my dad was one of nine kids and he's the only Democrat in the family.  
569 My mom was one of four kids and she's the only Democrat in the family, and

570 R: And they found each other.

571 P: Yeah, well, I, you know, I//I'm not sure exactly how it happened, I think my dad just  
572 read a lot, he always told his siblings, well I was the only one with a college  
573 education and I'm the Democrat [(laughs)], and I learned. But uh, Christian,=

574 R: [(laughs)]

575 P: =Christian Science, for some reason, I think because it came out of the upper class,  
576 Boston social circles, that um//for some reason it just became characterized as a more  
577 conservative. And then when it went out to California they were conservatives out  
578 there. I mean, you know in the Nixon White House, Halderman and Ehrlichman were  
579 Christian Scientists. Bud Crowe, who went to jail, you know, they, there were, they  
580 used to brag about (college 1) connection581s to the White House and then Watergate  
581 broke and (laughs)

582 R: (laughing) They kept it quiet after that.

583 P: I, it's really hard to figure out, I know my dad, he wrote some things later in life  
584 about Jesus being a radical, you know, he didn't understand how fundamentalist  
585 Christians could be so conservative, you know it's. He was a thinker.

586 R: Yeah, it seems like it's just this huge aquifer that you grew up in and tapped into. Is  
587 there anything else, you know, sort of at the end of the interview, anything else that  
588 you can think of in your life that sort of helped shape this disposition towards  
589 advocating for, for people that were, you know, persecuted against and all the?

590 P: //Um, I really, I read a lot. I go to a lot of movies. And the movies I go to are usually  
591 the artsy-fartsy, (mall, movie theater), typically, they will have usually some social  
592 cause related to it. And, and I love reading books, you know, books like, I mean *To*  
593 *Kill a Mockingbird*, I reread it every five years and *Catcher in the Rye* and things like  
594 that. Um, um *Animal Farm*, which I think is very important for radicals to read

595 R: Oh yeah

596 P: You know, how we can get pulled into the wrong thing. But, um, I think I see my  
597 college education and my, my parents just always telling me to think, you know, and.  
598 And, and, very honest, I'm a big music fan, I love music, and music is such a great  
599 way to express. You know there was the soul music that I loved growing up, or the  
600 Beatles or the Kinks, my favorite group, or Neil Young and some of his stuff, Bob  
601 Dylan and, wow, what a, what a wonderful period I got to live through so far. You  
602 know the sixties, and what a dynamic time. And um, I bought into a lot of it and I,  
603 you know people say//you're stuck in the sixties and I say, no, I brought them with  
604 [me. I'm] you know, and I'm okay, I mean here are all these sixties radicals and=

605 R: [(laughs)]

606 P: =people saying, oh we regret, we were mistaken, we did all. Nah, you know, it's  
607 what you go through, you know you go through, you go through life experiences and  
608 you grow from it. I, I don't think I'm as radical as I used to be, I don't think I'm as  
609 wild eyed crazy, but I certainly understand people who stand for a principal or fight  
610 for social justice. There are too many people out there still suffering, you know.

611 But//

612 R: Well cool, well thanks for taking an hour of your life, you busy life, to do it. Um, I'll  
613 type this up and, and send them to you

614 P: Okay, I hope this is what you wanted

615 R: Oh, it's incredible, and it's uh, yeah, um, it's, I'll turn this off {recording ends after

616 49 minutes and 38 seconds}

Appendix F; Sample Narrative Plot/Thematic Analysis (Jeff)

Question	Narrative Segments (THEME)	Line #'s
Opening		26-30
	Father and mother as influence, abstracts the whole opening section (FAMILY)	31-39
	Father takes to baseball games, talks about race (FAMILY)	40-46
	Sister dates black man (FAMILY/OPPRESSION)	47-54
	Curt Flood's stand inspires (MEDIA)	56-62
	Discrimination as Christian Scientist (OPPRESSION & SPIRITALIY)	62-71
	Going to college in 60's (SCHOOL)	71-75
	Working with gays/tension with father	75-92
Break w/note and phone call		92-100
	Going to law school (SCHOOL)	101-108
	Work with father and community organizations after law school (FAMILY)	110-120
Father's activism?		123-127
	Father's stand against discrimination in bar association (FAMILY)	128-143
	Father's actions as attorney for black municipality and as mayor of white community (FAMILY)	143-175
	Last meeting with father still addressing equity (FAMILY)	176-183
Experiences in community, schools?		
	Mother corrects him on race (FAMILY)	190-198
	Public school as conservative, avoiding race and controversial subjects (SCHOOL & COMMUNITY)	198-213
Experience in college?		214-215
	College not diverse, roomed with one of few blacks (SCHOOL)	216-225
	Hazing story, harassed for his interest in black culture (SCHOOL)	226-244
	After 1968, issues of the draft and feminism, war add to radicalism (MEDIA)	244-265
What type of law?	Law school adds to awareness, 72-75 (SCHOOL)	265-270
		271-272

	Practices law with father, not fulfilling, becomes property manager (NON-TEACH WORK)	275-279
Issues as property manager?		280-282
Credentials help?	Racial tension in apartment complex, likens to issues with students, ultimately resigns (NON-TEACH WORK, OPPRESSION, COMMUNITY)	283-354
Why get into education?		355-356
	Interest in education but avoided for a variety of reasons (NON-TEACH WORK)	357-368
	Dislikes job and fired, turns to education (NON-TEACH WORK)	368-386
Influence of all jobs on views?		387, 390-391
Influence of teacher preparation?		393-395
Type of program?	Psychology class and issues of labeling disabilities, race and disability discussed (SCHOOL)	396-413
	History methods classes, multiple perspectives (SCHOOL)	413-420
	Subbing leads to job in first school (TEACH)	421
First job's influence		424-432
	Challenges Eurocentric traditions in world history course (TEACH)	442, 445-447
Professional development?	School wide diversity initiatives (TEACH)	448-463
		463-476
	Lists and discusses initiatives in current school (TEACH)	482-484
	Critique of one program (TEACH)	485-508
Mother's influence		510-520
	Mother's background and speech in college (FAMILY)	527-532
	She's supportive of father but at home (FAMILY)	533-544
	Father and mother interest in inclusion continues after retirement (FAMILY)	544-552
		552-559

Influence of Christian Science?		560-565
	Parents are different from their families, depart from faith traditions (FAMILY, SPIRITUALITY)	566-585
Any thing else?		586-589
	Media, going to movies, reading and music (MEDIA)	590-611

## Appendix G: Sample Structural Analysis (Jeff)

### Coding Scheme

A-Abstract

O-Orientation

C\_Complication

E-Evaluative Statement

R-Resolution

Co-Coda

### **Segment 1, Father and mother as influence (31-39)**

When you first contacted me, A  
one of the first things I was thinking about A  
was my dad/, um, my hero. A  
And a great influence on my life, A  
my dad was very active in the local civil rights movement. O  
Um, very much of a thinker O  
and we would talk about a lot of social issues C  
as I was growing up, O  
and he led by example in so many ways. C  
My mom did too, C  
when she was in college, O  
I know back in forties O  
she was making speeches about the, uh, the “negro problem” C  
as they often referred to it back then. C  
And, uh, shocking the Republicans up at (college 1), so. C  
My mom and dad really had a big influence on me E  
and, uh, and I think, I think that uh, experiences that went through childhood E  
and through college, um, really did influence me in that sense. R

### **Segment 2, Father and baseball game (40-46)**

Specific uh experiences//, you know it may sound funny A  
but my dad and I shared a love of baseball. A  
He's, uh, passed on now but, O  
and we would always go to the old (name) Stadium at street and street, O  
and I remember//as we would drive by, into (neighborhood), C  
and we would talk about what the houses were like C  
and why, and the negroes who lived there C  
and uh some of the social situations C  
and, so uh, we would, we would take an outing E  
that was pretty much pleasure, baseball, E

and we'd talk about other issues, and, E  
and I still remember that very clearly in my mind. Co

### **Segment 3, Working with gays and father's growth (75-92)**

Um, I got into um//appreciation of, I guess you could say, the gay movement, the gay rights movement A  
when I worked, was in (city 3), Colorado, for a year. O  
And I worked in a store that was owned and run by gays, C  
and I was one of the only straight employees. C  
And it just, I became familiar with the gay community in (city 3) C  
and, and it really opened my mind up to, uh, E  
to a whole another part of society that was being persecuted E  
and, so I, I began, very much um, I guess in tune with that movement, E  
which was an interesting conflict with my father. E  
My father//one of the old line liberals, kind of a Hubert Humphrey liberal, O  
and so the civil rights movement and, um, uh, for blacks was, and women, was  
understandable for him O  
but, I think a lot of them had trouble understanding the gay rights movement E  
because so many of them had a personal, um, problem with, with the lifestyle. E  
And, uh, he and I would talk eh, C  
and by the time, you know, in his later years O  
he understood, because uh, one of my nephews came out of the closet, C  
and uh, and I think he realized that, E  
well this is a great kid, E  
and I need to fight for him too, so. E

### **Segment 4, Father's stand to the bar (128-143)**

Let me tell you, one of the//one of the things I'm most proud of, um, A  
my dad went to a law school in (college 2), in (city) Georgia, O  
which is where I was born. O  
My mother would never let me tell people O  
I was born in the South O  
cause she was a northern liberal, you know, O  
she didn't want people to know that. O  
But, so we moved back to (city 1), C  
it was my dad's hometown, in the early fifties, O  
and my dad became a member of the bar association. C  
Well, at that time//in the early fifties, O  
there was a white bar association which was the regular bar O  
and then you had the (city name) bar, O  
which was the black bar. O  
And, uh, um and an African American lawyer tried to join the//regular bar, C  
if I may call it that, E  
and um, was not allowed. C

And my dad, who was friends with some of the people in the movement C  
was so upset he, he joined the (city name) bar. C  
He was the only white member of the (city name) Bar, C  
and there were articles in the (newspaper 1) C  
and the (newspaper 2) about him, and, C  
and uh, you know it was before I was really conscious as a human being, very much, but  
uh, O  
but I look back on that E  
and it was just a one man's stand, E  
you know he did that, R

#### **Segment 5, Father as attorney for black municipality (143-175)**

and if you're familiar with (municipality 2) A  
Which is the largest, was the largest, the largest completely, 100% black city in the U.S.,  
O  
and he was their city attorney for many, many years. O  
And worked with the city government there C  
to obtain federal grants for housing and public works projects, and, C  
and uh was a city attorney and court on Friday nights. O  
And I can remember a couple times C  
I went with him, and um//going into (municipality 2), on a Friday night, for court//, C  
no matter how liberal you are you, it gives you pause. E  
And, I can remember, on more than one time C  
when he said he had to have a policeman escort him out to his car so he could leave. C  
Very, very interesting, um, E  
in the uh//I guess it was, I think it was the early seventies O  
when we went to, when we were coming into the black power movement more, late  
sixties, early seventies. O  
And, uh, more of uh the//black identity O  
and we can do this ourselves, O  
we don't necessarily need you white liberals. O  
And I remember my dad came home one night, Friday night, from (municipality 2) C  
and he said well, they decided they didn't want me anymore as a lawyer, C  
they had a black lawyer to do it. C  
And I talked with him about it, C  
and he said well, you know at first C  
I was upset, offended, a little insulted, C  
hurt that after all these years they would just suddenly announce, C  
but he said I realized that's, the pro-the natural progression of the movement, C  
is for them to say, you know, our own people are educated now, C  
we can claim more, C  
and um, I, I had respected that he was able to step back E  
and see that for what it was as a natural part of the movement, a natural part of progress  
within the black community, E  
but, um, he worked really hard, you know, C

making sure//when he was mayor, C  
he was mayor of (municipality 1) for thirteen years, O  
making sure that restaurants integrated, you know, C  
he'd get the clergy involved, C  
making sure that, uh, we had black officers on the police force, things like that, so. C  
He, he was, very active in a, in a sense of doing that day to day things, C  
he was never arrested, you know at the, at the (name) Bank, O  
and uh I mean he knew// (activist 1) O  
and some of those people in the movement, O  
and uh, and a good friend of (activist 2), and people like that, O  
they were the ones who had Jackie Robinson in their home C  
when he came to town because yeah, C  
so uh, he, he was a an activist in that sense. R  
I'm very, very proud, um E

#### **Segment 6, Last meeting with father still addressing equity (176-183)**

and to his dying day he was always, I remember, he, O  
he had cancer O  
and, uh, the last few months O  
I'd go down and visit a few times in Florida.// C  
One of the last times, the second-next to last time I visited O  
we had a long conversation about Huckleberry Finn, C  
we were both big Mark Twain fans. O  
And, the scene where Huck decides not to turn Jim in, O  
and he'd rather go to hell, you know, than turn in his friend. O  
And we just talked about how, C  
what a magical piece of literature that was, C  
but uh, what an important scene in American history, literature, history. C  
So, you know, to the very end E  
we were, he was teaching me about things, E  
I get a little wordy, sorry. R

#### **Segment 7, Mother corrects him on race (190-198)**

(Municipality 1) was a conservative, Republican community. O  
How my dad got reelected so many times we're never sure. O  
But, I think it was because he did his job well, E  
but, (municipality 1) had a black community, O  
which is now where (department store) is in (municipality 1), O  
and um//we knew/a lot of the families, um. O  
In the school, I remember when the first black kids came to elementary school. C  
I uh, I remember I came home from school C  
and I told my mom, C  
I was in fourth grade//, O  
and my, I said to my mom, mom C

we have a, we have a negro boy in our class, and he's really nice. C  
And my mom just looked at me C  
and said well, what do you expect? C  
So my mom was really on top of things too. E

#### **Segment 8, Mother's speech in college, Father at war (533-544)**

My mom came from Ohio, O  
met my dad at (college 1) O  
and he went away to war, came back. C  
One of the things that, I should throw this in, A  
when he was in India and Burma during the war, O  
he actually, he, he was the kind, he would go out and have an adventure, C  
I mean he went to one of Gandhi's prayer meetings C  
and got to see Gandhi, and, C  
and I remember, he was really into that at the time. E  
Well, came back O  
and they had decided they didn't want to date the people they had been dating, C  
they wanted to date each other, C  
so they, they got married on campus C  
and, my mom, I reread it again about a year ago, O  
um she gave her senior speech in the chapel, C  
they all give senior speeches, O  
and it was about the negro problem C  
and being, trying to understand, you know why don't we treat them equal, C  
you know, why don't we, C  
you know here's this daughter of conservative Republicans, O  
you know, making these statements, you know. C  
When I read it now, E  
it just makes me feel so proud, E  
so when dad, and she would go to meetings with dad C  
and she would, became friends and, you know, C  
and did all the social interaction with uh civil right workers, uh leaders, and//African  
American leaders, C  
and that she, she stayed at home, C  
we had five, five kids O  
so she pretty much raised all of the kids C  
and, um, my dad was, was mayor O  
and he ran, he was a judge, O  
he //very active in the Democratic party and things like that, so. O  
She would go along to the activities C  
but, she was pretty much busy at home. C  
Like I said, we'd come home E  
and she could zing us, you know, R  
and say well why not? R  
What did you expect? R

### **Segment 9, Father and Mother in retirement (552-559)**

And, um, you know and in later years O  
when they moved to Florida, O  
she would be with him C  
like when they would take trips C  
and go to like uh, go visit the court house of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, C  
or they'd go to the Southern Poverty Law Center, C  
they were very interested in, in helping support that C  
and hearing Morris Dees speak and things like that. C  
So, and she, she's still very much, you know, very liberal. O  
She's, she's not always, uh, comfortable with some of the newer styles,  
shall we say, but uh, no O  
I'm, I'm really, I'm really proud of her, E  
I guess I learn more and more about her as the years go by. Co

### **Segment 10, Parents differ from faith traditions (566-585)**

It, it, it's really strange, A  
we always joked that Christian Scientists think God is a Republican, you know, C  
and they all get rich because they save money on doctors bills. C  
I, um, my dad was one of nine kids O  
and he's the only Democrat in the family. O  
My mom was one of four kids O  
and she's the only Democrat in the family, O  
and Yeah, well, I, you know, I/I'm not sure exactly how it happened, E  
I think my dad just read a lot, E  
he always told his siblings, C  
well I was the only one with a college education C  
and I'm the Democrat [(laughs)], C  
and I learned. C  
But uh, Christian, Christian Science, for some reason, O  
I think because it came out of the upper class, Boston social circles, E  
that um//for some reason it just became characterized as a more conservative. O  
And then when it went out to California O  
they were conservatives out there. O  
I mean, you know in the Nixon White House, C  
Halderman and Ehrlichman were Christian Scientists. O  
Bud Crowe, who went to jail, you know, they, there were, O  
they used to brag about (college 1) connection's to the White House C  
and then Watergate broke C  
and (laughs) I, it's really hard to figure out, E  
I know my dad, he wrote some things later in life about Jesus being a radical, C  
you know, he didn't understand how fundamentalist Christians C

could be so conservative, you know it's. C

## Appendix H: Content Analysis Code Book

Category	Subcategory/Code	Property	Examples
Social Justice Defined	Equality	Defines social justice education as addressing equality.	Uh, and the whole goal is to create equity on either side, make sure that everyone is heard, make sure that everybody has, has a fair chance in terms of, you know, the great words of, uh, what's his name, John Locke, life, liberty and property. (Dominic, interview 2, 37-40)
Empathy		Defines social justice in education as increasing student care about and for others	so I try to get them to look at the world and how people live, in a non-judgmental way, in a way that's more open-minded and in a way that helps them kind of put their feet in other people's shoes so that they can sort of empathize, (Karen, interview 2, 41-44)
Citizenship		Defines social justice as promoting a pluralistic approach to democracy	Well, I think/that it has to do/with the idea/that, as citizens, that we want to be part of a society where people treat each other decently. And, I think that's really the, the key issue to it all. (Craig, interview 2, 36-38)
Critical Pedagogy		Defines social justice in education as being critical of the operation of power and privilege in education	And, so, the way most curriculums are structured, the way most books are structured, they have, and this is not just for one race, so most social studies classrooms are going to show white men, especially that comes from, uh, higher social economics, um, backgrounds with the power and with having basically//done everything that exists today, (Patricia, interview 2, 67-71)

	Broadening Visions	Defines social justice in education as opening students minds to new ideas and experiences	I, I guess a major part of it is communicating and educating the students about all the aspects of society, different viewpoints of society, (Jeff, interview 2, 30-31)
	Human Dignity	Defines social justice as respecting the dignity of every person	I think in my classroom, again for me, it's that each child can walk in and feel valued. Um, can feel respected, um can feel he or she has the right to learn, um that he or she can, um, agree to disagree (Linda, interview 2, 33-36)
Social Justice in Classroom Practice	Multiple Perspectives	Examines topics from the vantage point of different groups, often groups who have been marginalized.	it's an eye-opening experience to start to look at these things and with the classroom, just trying to provide an opportunity like I had to look at things from multiple perspectives. (Allen, interview 2, 81-83)
	Critical Inquiry	Critically inquires about existing power relationships, attempts to challenge the assumptions that students have	What, what happens when there's a concentration of wealth and taxation put on the peasants, and then their land's taken, you compare that to Latifundia in Rome, so that whole constant struggle which is very Marxist, I know (laughs) (Christine, interview 2, 81-84)
	Student Discovery	Learning about social justice was achieved through student driven inquiry.	I let them go along and read information on their own and do the research and come to the point where they go, hey, that book wasn't right that we just read, the textbook isn't, isn't correct. And let them discover that knowledge for themselves... (Sandra, interview 2, 108-110)
	Community Building	Builds or cultivates community in the	Well one of the things I think as teachers, regardless if we're teaching the content or not, is to

	classroom	ensure that the environment in where students learn/is one where students feel safe. (Goldie, interview 2, 62-64)
Discussion	Encourages discussion in class, often through the Socratic method	So we, um, have Socratic seminars, we have um, uh daily questions when they come in the class in which they have to discuss that... (Patricia, interview 2, 95-96)
Neutrality	Explains whether they share their opinions about controversial subjects in the classroom.	...as professionals in the social studies area, it's our obligation to, I think, throw things out there, not necessarily to push a certain viewpoint, and I think that's what some people get doing and, and it can be dangerous and I hope that the kids really never know a lot of my opinions. (Jeff, interview 2, 69-72)
Alternative Resources	Brings in a variety of resources into the classroom to address social justice topics.	I myself am, as you know, a great fan of using songs and using movies, commercial movies, foreign films, whatever, that are out there and just showing those snippets out sometimes to, to kind of prod thinking by the students and by the class, so. (Jeff, interview 2, 66-69)
Textbooks	Discusses the extent to which textbooks address social justice themes.	I was teaching Oklahoma history and the textbooks were very much about the Trail of Tears, oh wasn't it great for the Native Americans to come to Oklahoma? And they like it. I mean it really was this/I don't even want to say sanitized because that's not it, but it was such a skewed perspective of what history was (Sandra, interview 2, 63-67)
Current Connections	Links the past with current realities in an exploration of social justice.	In China, uh, a thousand years ago, but the same behavior as the upper one percent are able to keep the bulk of taxes off of them and instead put them on the bulk of, or the majority of the people,

		what's the impact of that? And then we look at the United States, we look at the world today, whose, whose got the burden? (Christine, interview 2, 123-127)
Relationships	Discusses efforts to cultivate positive relationships with individual students.	I don't care why the kids are like that because sometimes, just telling them, letting them know that, you know, I'm not going to, I care about you too much to let you do that to yourself. (Christine, interview 2, 363-365)
Historical Thinking	Discusses the need for students to consider the historical context in which past events occurred	I'm very, um, strong in, in emphasizing that you have to remember the times, you know. We look at things now, you know, Booker T. Washington, was he an Uncle Tom? You know, remember the times, you know, Thomas Jefferson was a slave owner, how could he have done that? (Jeff, interview 2, 139-146)
Social Justice in the School	Student Clubs	Sponsors a student club such as a diversity club
		I sponsor the diversity club, and we um, we do things, we do you know black history month activities, we do uh women's history month activities, uh, Hispanic, uh Latin history month activities. (Jeff, interview 2, 183-185)
Leadership/Advocacy		Discusses their leadership roles, both formal and informal, within the school, working for systematic change
Collaboration		Discusses working for change within the school through formal and
		So, uh, those are some of the things, challenging the status quo, and challenging the status quo along the lines of curriculum, hiring practices, admissions policies, uh//it's, it's a tough job. (Allen, interview 2, 173-175).
		a lot of times, though, it's more in the background with, um, I'm, I have the type of personality where I can get along with a lot of different groups of

	informal organization or committees	people. And so, people will come and talk to me about things, and usually if I can form a, a relationship with them we can have an open discussion, we can talk about stuff (Patricia, interview 2, 163-167)
Events	Discusses organizing or supporting events that raise awareness of social justice	we didn't do anything for, um, black history month when I got to (school) my first year... so you know I did that and it was, it was, eh, again I'm not saying it was like some huge big deal, but it was nice, I mean the kids came together, we did a really lovely month of celebration, a couple of nice programs, (Linda, interview 2, 231-237)
Professional development	Participates in professional development activities associated with social justice	Um, my district is fledgling, uh, I was actually surprised to see uh, for our professional development in January was actually a seminar on social justice. (Dominic, interview 2, 184-185)
Social Justice in the Community	Volunteers	when people call me an say, hey we need a speaker or hey, uh we'd love for you to help us with this brainstorming, I'm engaged in that way or I make recommendations in that way so if I'm not at every event for folks, to support and, and have those conversations, it's fine
Leadership	Leads or organizes a social justice program or initiative in the community.	(Allen, interview 2, 334-337)
Participates in programs	Participates in a social justice oriented program in the community on a	I was the one that, you know, researched (church 2) and started feeding the homeless once a month, you know, we went down to (homeless shelter), um, I was you know uh the Brownie leader for both of the girls in school and so I adopted (nursing home) (Linda, interview 2, 347-350)
		Right, well, I'm working with (organization name), a program my son is in, and that's, their whole mission is to create troublemakers of the best kind.

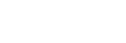
	consistent, ongoing basis.	So, um, I'm very active in the parent part of their organization, where I go to the meetings and we have discussions, and they're facilitated and your interacting with, um, uh, in this case Jewish and white parents, African American parents. (Patricia, interview 2, 245-249).
Political Action	Discusses involvement in political action or their desire to be more involved in politics.	I would be interested, so I don't know how your study's going to go, I would be interested in having more connection with legislators. They're very disconnected, I mean the school board's disconnected and they're in the same community. (Patricia, interview 2, 286-288)
Collaboration	Collaborates with other social justice oriented people in the community.	I feel like I know what's going on and I'm communicating with a number of people to, you know, maybe send students or recommend professional development to the teachers here. Even if I'm not at every event, I still feel like I'm engaged. (Allen, interview 2, 325-328)
Challenges	Fellow Teacher's	Uhh, but the uh, the teachers resisted, uh, fear of a job, uh fear of the unknown. And also one other thing that I've talked about a lot with the kids, and it's a very important concept, I think, in teaching social justice. (Craig, interview 2, 179-182)
Administration	Experiences resistance to social justice from other principals and other administrator.	I'm starting to think that they're right/is/that the leadership in this place wants chaos, they, they want chaos, they want dysfunction, they want there to be fights, they want-because, and some people believe that they want all this because then they get money. (Karen, interview 2, 332-335)
Community	Experiences resistance to social justice from members of the community.	Um//(hh) very honestly the, the community is conservative, and I//I've had to, not only watch myself but I've also had to win back some people that remember me from my much younger days

		(Jeff, interview 2, 251-253)
Students	Experiences resistance to social justice from students.	I think what I know in my school that I would say is my, my biggest challenge, is that um, eh, I overwhelming teach um very affluent and yet um relatively//provincial kids, so that uh, you know their, eh, bubble of existence (Linda, Interview 2, 362-364)
Stereotyped/Pigeonholed	Participant experiences stereotyping that limits social justice practice	A, a specific challenge for me has been being pigeonholed and stereotyped by not only the, uh, my colleagues and the administration but also by the students, the expectation that, because I was an African American male that I'm supposed to be a certain way, and if I didn't do those things than I wasn't a real black person... (Allen, interview 2, 224-228)
Apathy	Apathy of others is seen as a challenge to social justice practice	I think indifference.//Um, and I certainly understand life, uh, just living life can be quite a challenge itself, and some people-sometimes people, they become indifferent because life is so challenging for lack of a better word. And they don't want to be involved because they have/their life (Goldie, interview 2, 426-429)
Time	Limited time is a challenge to social justice practice.	But the time crunch really kind of//I'm feeling the pressure now that it's the end of the year (laughs), where I'm like okay, we have to move on. Here maybe give them a quick recognition, it, it's difficult, I wish I had more time for all of that (laughs). (Sandra, interview 2, 118-121)
Personal	Discusses personal limitations that undermine their social justice work such as family or capacity	I grew up, we weren't wealthy, we were a typical middle class home. And so that's all I know, I don't know what it means//to not have. You know, if I really needed something my parents found a way to get it. Um, so it, it is difficult//to

		remember, especially for me, the cla-more of the class and economic struggle. (Sandra, interview 2, 440-444)
Successes	Student Growth	Discusses student academic or personal growth as evidence of success
	Student Appreciation	Discusses student expressions of thanks or appreciation as evidence of success
	Peer Appreciation	Discusses expressions of thanks or appreciation from fellow teachers or administrators as evidence of success
	Intellectual Achievement	Discusses personal intellectual growth as evidence of success
	Systematic Change	Discusses systemic change within their school as evidence of success

## Appendix I: Content Analysis Frequency Reports

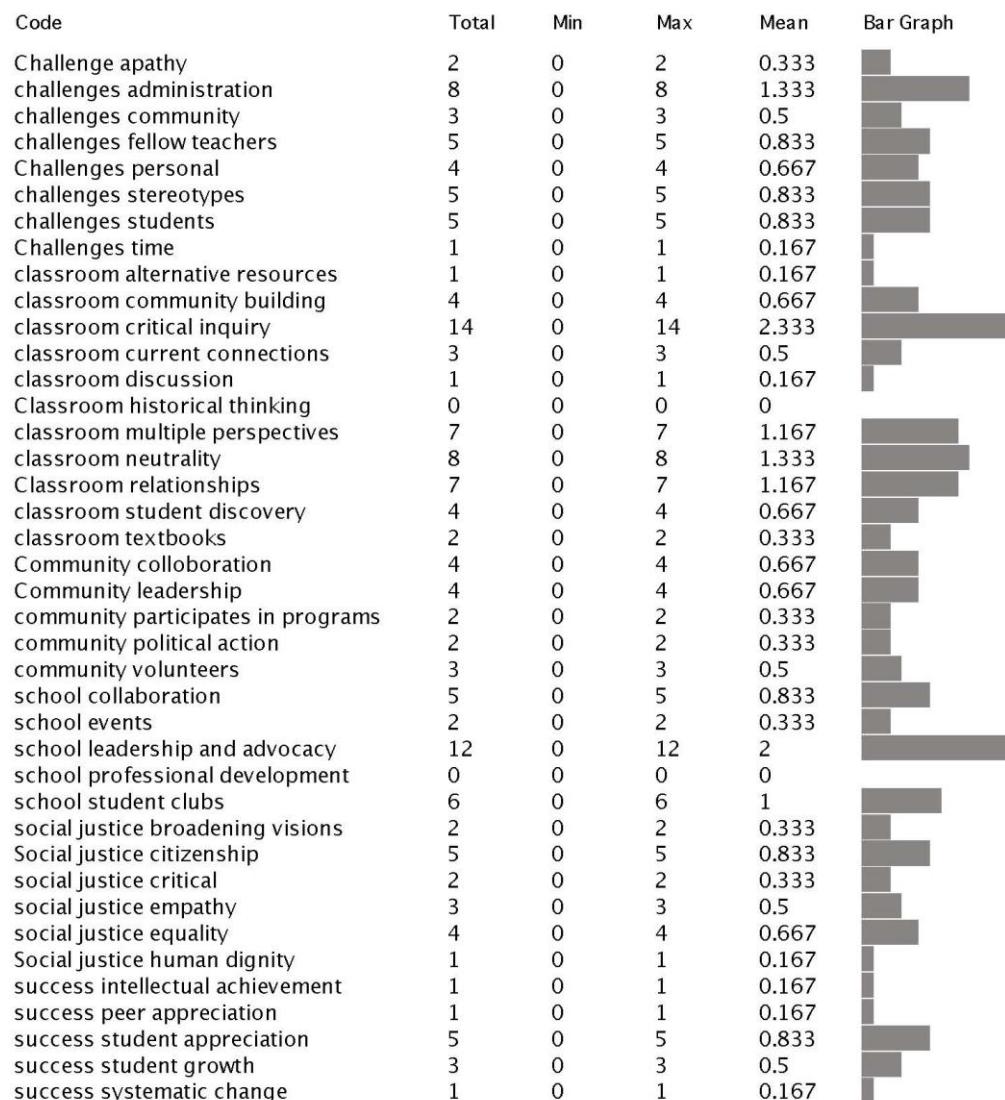
### Frequency Report: All Cases

<u>Code</u>	Total	Min	Max	Mean	Bar Graph
Challenge apathy	4	0	1	0.308	
challenges administration	13	0	4	1	
challenges community	9	0	3	0.692	
challenges fellow teachers	15	0	3	1.154	
Challenges personal	7	0	2	0.538	
challenges stereotypes	9	0	3	0.692	
challenges students	15	0	4	1.154	
Challenges time	1	0	1	0.077	
classroom alternative resources	12	0	3	0.923	
classroom community building	6	0	3	0.462	
classroom critical inquiry	29	0	6	2.231	
classroom current connections	8	0	2	0.615	
classroom discussion	9	0	4	0.692	
Classroom historical thinking	3	0	1	0.231	
classroom multiple perspectives	22	0	6	1.692	
classroom neutrality	15	0	3	1.154	
Classroom relationships	7	0	4	0.538	
classroom student discovery	10	0	3	0.769	
classroom textbooks	8	0	2	0.615	
Community colloboration	5	0	2	0.385	
Community leadership	7	0	2	0.538	
community participates in programs	3	0	1	0.231	
community political action	2	0	2	0.154	
community volunteers	5	0	2	0.385	
school collaboration	9	0	2	0.692	
school events	4	0	2	0.308	
school leadership and advocacy	24	1	4	1.846	
school professional development	2	0	1	0.154	
school student clubs	8	0	2	0.615	
social justice broadening visions	4	0	2	0.308	
Social justice citizenship	8	0	3	0.615	
social justice critical	5	0	2	0.385	
social justice empathy	6	0	2	0.462	
social justice equality	8	0	2	0.615	
Social justice human dignity	1	0	1	0.077	
success intellectual achievement	4	0	2	0.308	
success peer appreciation	5	0	2	0.385	
success student appreciation	9	0	2	0.692	
success student growth	10	0	3	0.769	
success systematic change	3	0	2	0.231	

**Total: 40**

**334**

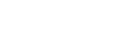
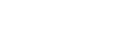
## Frequency Report: Females



**Total: 40**

**152**

## Frequency Report: Males

Code	Total	Min	Max	Mean	Bar Graph
Challenge apathy	2	0	2	0.286	
challenges administration	5	0	5	0.714	
challenges community	6	0	6	0.857	
challenges fellow teachers	10	0	10	1.429	
Challenges personal	3	0	3	0.429	
challenges stereotypes	4	0	4	0.571	
challenges students	10	0	10	1.429	
Challenges time	0	0	0	0	
classroom alternative resources	11	0	11	1.571	
classroom community building	2	0	2	0.286	
classroom critical inquiry	15	0	15	2.143	
classroom current connections	5	0	5	0.714	
classroom discussion	8	0	8	1.143	
Classroom historical thinking	3	0	3	0.429	
classroom multiple perspectives	15	0	15	2.143	
classroom neutrality	7	0	7	1	
Classroom relationships	0	0	0	0	
classroom student discovery	6	0	6	0.857	
classroom textbooks	6	0	6	0.857	
Community collaboration	1	0	1	0.143	
Community leadership	3	0	3	0.429	
community participates in programs	1	0	1	0.143	
community political action	0	0	0	0	
community volunteers	2	0	2	0.286	
school collaboration	4	0	4	0.571	
school events	2	0	2	0.286	
school leadership and advocacy	12	0	12	1.714	
school professional development	2	0	2	0.286	
school student clubs	2	0	2	0.286	
social justice broadening visions	2	0	2	0.286	
Social justice citizenship	3	0	3	0.429	
social justice critical	3	0	3	0.429	
social justice empathy	3	0	3	0.429	
social justice equality	4	0	4	0.571	
Social justice human dignity	0	0	0	0	
success intellectual achievement	3	0	3	0.429	
success peer appreciation	4	0	4	0.571	
success student appreciation	4	0	4	0.571	
success student growth	7	0	7	1	
success systematic change	2	0	2	0.286	

**Total: 40**

**182**

## Frequency Report: Blacks

Code	Total	Min	Max	Mean	Bar Graph
Challenge apathy	4	0	4	0.667	
challenges administration	3	0	3	0.5	
challenges community	3	0	3	0.5	
challenges fellow teachers	8	0	8	1.333	
Challenges personal	2	0	2	0.333	
challenges stereotypes	6	0	6	1	
challenges students	6	0	6	1	
Challenges time	0	0	0	0	
classroom alternative resources	4	0	4	0.667	
classroom community building	5	0	5	0.833	
classroom critical inquiry	16	0	16	2.667	
classroom current connections	5	0	5	0.833	
classroom discussion	3	0	3	0.5	
Classroom historical thinking	1	0	1	0.167	
classroom multiple perspectives	6	0	6	1	
classroom neutrality	4	0	4	0.667	
Classroom relationships	6	0	6	1	
classroom student discovery	4	0	4	0.667	
classroom textbooks	2	0	2	0.333	
Community colloboration	3	0	3	0.5	
Community leadership	5	0	5	0.833	
community participates in programs	2	0	2	0.333	
community political action	2	0	2	0.333	
community volunteers	3	0	3	0.5	
school collaboration	4	0	4	0.667	
school events	1	0	1	0.167	
school leadership and advocacy	11	0	11	1.833	
school professional development	2	0	2	0.333	
school student clubs	3	0	3	0.5	
social justice broadening visions	1	0	1	0.167	
Social justice citizenship	5	0	5	0.833	
social justice critical	3	0	3	0.5	
social justice empathy	3	0	3	0.5	
social justice equality	6	0	6	1	
Social justice human dignity	0	0	0	0	
success intellectual achievement	1	0	1	0.167	
success peer appreciation	2	0	2	0.333	
success student appreciation	4	0	4	0.667	
success student growth	3	0	3	0.5	
success systematic change	3	0	3	0.5	

**Total: 40**

**155**

## Frequency Report: Whites

Code	Total	Min	Max	Mean	Bar Graph
Challenge apathy	0	0	0	0	
challenges administration	10	0	10	1.429	
challenges community	6	0	6	0.857	
challenges fellow teachers	7	0	7	1	
Challenges personal	5	0	5	0.714	
challenges stereotypes	3	0	3	0.429	
challenges students	9	0	9	1.286	
Challenges time	1	0	1	0.143	
classroom alternative resources	8	0	8	1.143	
classroom community building	1	0	1	0.143	
classroom critical inquiry	13	0	13	1.857	
classroom current connections	3	0	3	0.429	
classroom discussion	6	0	6	0.857	
Classroom historical thinking	2	0	2	0.286	
classroom multiple perspectives	16	0	16	2.286	
classroom neutrality	11	0	11	1.571	
Classroom relationships	1	0	1	0.143	
classroom student discovery	6	0	6	0.857	
classroom textbooks	6	0	6	0.857	
Community colloboration	2	0	2	0.286	
Community leadership	2	0	2	0.286	
community participates in programs	1	0	1	0.143	
community political action	0	0	0	0	
community volunteers	2	0	2	0.286	
school collaboration	5	0	5	0.714	
school events	3	0	3	0.429	
school leadership and advocacy	13	0	13	1.857	
school professional development	0	0	0	0	
school student clubs	5	0	5	0.714	
social justice broadening visions	3	0	3	0.429	
Social justice citizenship	3	0	3	0.429	
social justice critical	2	0	2	0.286	
social justice empathy	3	0	3	0.429	
social justice equality	2	0	2	0.286	
Social justice human dignity	1	0	1	0.143	
success intellectual achievement	3	0	3	0.429	
success peer appreciation	3	0	3	0.429	
success student appreciation	5	0	5	0.714	
success student growth	7	0	7	1	
success systematic change	0	0	0	0	

**Total: 40**

**179**

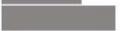
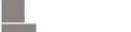
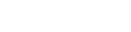
## Frequency Report: Over the Age of 50

Code	Total	Min	Max	Mean	Bar Graph
Challenge apathy	2	0	2	0.333	
challenges administration	3	0	3	0.5	
challenges community	4	0	4	0.667	
challenges fellow teachers	5	0	5	0.833	
Challenges personal	2	0	2	0.333	
challenges stereotypes	2	0	2	0.333	
challenges students	5	0	5	0.833	
Challenges time	0	0	0	0	
classroom alternative resources	8	0	8	1.333	
classroom community building	4	0	4	0.667	
classroom critical inquiry	12	0	12	2	
classroom current connections	3	0	3	0.5	
classroom discussion	2	0	2	0.333	
Classroom historical thinking	1	0	1	0.167	
classroom multiple perspectives	6	0	6	1	
classroom neutrality	8	0	8	1.333	
Classroom relationships	6	0	6	1	
classroom student discovery	6	0	6	1	
classroom textbooks	3	0	3	0.5	
Community colloboration	4	0	4	0.667	
Community leadership	3	0	3	0.5	
community participates in programs	2	0	2	0.333	
community political action	0	0	0	0	
community volunteers	2	0	2	0.333	
school collaboration	3	0	3	0.5	
school events	4	0	4	0.667	
school leadership and advocacy	10	0	10	1.667	
school professional development	0	0	0	0	
school student clubs	5	0	5	0.833	
social justice broadening visions	1	0	1	0.167	
Social justice citizenship	6	0	6	1	
social justice critical	1	0	1	0.167	
social justice empathy	1	0	1	0.167	
social justice equality	2	0	2	0.333	
Social justice human dignity	1	0	1	0.167	
success intellectual achievement	3	0	3	0.5	
success peer appreciation	2	0	2	0.333	
success student appreciation	6	0	6	1	
success student growth	4	0	4	0.667	
success systematic change	0	0	0	0	

**Total: 40**

**142**

## Frequency Report: Under the Age of 50

Code	Total	Min	Max	Mean	Bar Graph
Challenge apathy	2	0	2	0.286	
challenges administration	10	0	10	1.429	
challenges community	5	0	5	0.714	
challenges fellow teachers	10	0	10	1.429	
Challenges personal	5	0	5	0.714	
challenges stereotypes	7	0	7	1	
challenges students	10	0	10	1.429	
Challenges time	1	0	1	0.143	
classroom alternative resources	4	0	4	0.571	
classroom community building	2	0	2	0.286	
classroom critical inquiry	17	0	17	2.429	
classroom current connections	5	0	5	0.714	
classroom discussion	7	0	7	1	
Classroom historical thinking	2	0	2	0.286	
classroom multiple perspectives	16	0	16	2.286	
classroom neutrality	7	0	7	1	
Classroom relationships	1	0	1	0.143	
classroom student discovery	4	0	4	0.571	
classroom textbooks	5	0	5	0.714	
Community colloboration	1	0	1	0.143	
Community leadership	4	0	4	0.571	
community participates in programs	1	0	1	0.143	
community political action	2	0	2	0.286	
community volunteers	3	0	3	0.429	
school collaboration	6	0	6	0.857	
school events	0	0	0	0	
school leadership and advocacy	14	0	14	2	
school professional development	2	0	2	0.286	
school student clubs	3	0	3	0.429	
social justice broadening visions	3	0	3	0.429	
Social justice citizenship	2	0	2	0.286	
social justice critical	4	0	4	0.571	
social justice empathy	5	0	5	0.714	
social justice equality	6	0	6	0.857	
Social justice human dignity	0	0	0	0	
success intellectual achievement	1	0	1	0.143	
success peer appreciation	3	0	3	0.429	
success student appreciation	3	0	3	0.429	
success student growth	6	0	6	0.857	
success systematic change	3	0	3	0.429	

**Total: 40**

**192**

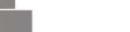
## Frequency Report: “Aligners”

Code	Total	Min	Max	Mean	Bar Graph
Challenge apathy	4	0	4	0.5	
challenges administration	6	0	6	0.75	
challenges community	5	0	5	0.625	
challenges fellow teachers	6	0	6	0.75	
Challenges personal	4	0	4	0.5	
challenges stereotypes	3	0	3	0.375	
challenges students	11	0	11	1.375	
Challenges time	0	0	0	0	
classroom alternative resources	8	0	8	1	
classroom community building	5	0	5	0.625	
classroom critical inquiry	19	0	19	2.375	
classroom current connections	7	0	7	0.875	
classroom discussion	8	0	8	1	
Classroom historical thinking	3	0	3	0.375	
classroom multiple perspectives	14	0	14	1.75	
classroom neutrality	10	0	10	1.25	
Classroom relationships	6	0	6	0.75	
classroom student discovery	4	0	4	0.5	
classroom textbooks	5	0	5	0.625	
Community colloboration	4	0	4	0.5	
Community leadership	5	0	5	0.625	
community participates in programs	2	0	2	0.25	
community political action	0	0	0	0	
community volunteers	4	0	4	0.5	
school collaboration	4	0	4	0.5	
school events	4	0	4	0.5	
school leadership and advocacy	12	0	12	1.5	
school professional development	1	0	1	0.125	
school student clubs	5	0	5	0.625	
social justice broadening visions	1	0	1	0.125	
Social justice citizenship	5	0	5	0.625	
social justice critical	3	0	3	0.375	
social justice empathy	4	0	4	0.5	
social justice equality	4	0	4	0.5	
Social justice human dignity	1	0	1	0.125	
success intellectual achievement	4	0	4	0.5	
success peer appreciation	4	0	4	0.5	
success student appreciation	8	0	8	1	
success student growth	6	0	6	0.75	
success systematic change	0	0	0	0	

**Total: 40**

**209**

## Frequency Report: “Resisters”

Code	Total	Min	Max	Mean	Bar Graph
Challenge apathy	0	0	0	0	
challenges administration	7	0	7	1.4	
challenges community	4	0	4	0.8	
challenges fellow teachers	9	0	9	1.8	
Challenges personal	3	0	3	0.6	
challenges stereotypes	6	0	6	1.2	
challenges students	4	0	4	0.8	
Challenges time	1	0	1	0.2	
classroom alternative resources	4	0	4	0.8	
classroom community building	1	0	1	0.2	
classroom critical inquiry	10	0	10	2	
classroom current connections	1	0	1	0.2	
classroom discussion	1	0	1	0.2	
Classroom historical thinking	0	0	0	0	
classroom multiple perspectives	8	0	8	1.6	
classroom neutrality	5	0	5	1	
Classroom relationships	1	0	1	0.2	
classroom student discovery	6	0	6	1.2	
classroom textbooks	3	0	3	0.6	
Community colloboration	1	0	1	0.2	
Community leadership	2	0	2	0.4	
community participates in programs	1	0	1	0.2	
community political action	2	0	2	0.4	
community volunteers	1	0	1	0.2	
school collaboration	5	0	5	1	
school events	0	0	0	0	
school leadership and advocacy	12	0	12	2.4	
school professional development	1	0	1	0.2	
school student clubs	3	0	3	0.6	
social justice broadening visions	3	0	3	0.6	
Social justice citizenship	3	0	3	0.6	
social justice critical	2	0	2	0.4	
social justice empathy	2	0	2	0.4	
social justice equality	4	0	4	0.8	
Social justice human dignity	0	0	0	0	
success intellectual achievement	0	0	0	0	
success peer appreciation	1	0	1	0.2	
success student appreciation	1	0	1	0.2	
success student growth	4	0	4	0.8	
success systematic change	3	0	3	0.6	

**Total: 40**

**125**