An Interpretive Analysis of Educational Administrators' Perspectives of Democracy and Citizenship Education in Albertan Public Schools

by

Jordan Long

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education
in
Educational Administration and Leadership

Educational Policy Studies
University of Alberta

Abstract

Little is known about the effects of public school educational administrators' perspectives on democracy and citizenship education on the pedagogy and learning of the same topics within the school buildings that they lead. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews to better understand how Albertan public school educational administrators experience and make sense of democracy and citizenship education. Four participants' detailed responses were analyzed using an interpretive analysis methodology. It can be concluded that the perspectives held by educational leaders of democracy and citizenship education effect how individuals in the buildings learn about and participate in these tremendously important matters. While all participants found democracy and citizenship education important, only one participant was found to lead in a way that encouraged democratically desirable education. The other participants led democratically challenged schools because they preferred to remain obedient to a "top-down" approach to school management, were debilitated due to the demand of their administrative obligations, encouraged procedure and policy that was democratically void or challenged, and were confused about democratic leadership practice. Therefore, the findings suggest that educational leaders do not necessarily understand their role or responsibility in creation of a democratic learning environment.

Acknowledgements

Although I am receiving the majority of the credit for this study, this work would not have been accomplished without the considerable efforts of so many.

Firstly, I would like to thank Dr. Lynette Shultz for her courageous work in the area of democratic and citizenship education. Without Dr. Shultz's support, this study would not have been possible. Through her guidance as a supervisor, her expertise as a teacher, and her genius as a scholar, I am able to complete this thesis. Simply saying thank you is obviously not enough to reciprocate your efforts. Instead, I will offer a promise to you that I will forever endeavor to educate and research in a way that will make you proud.

I want to thank my fellow graduate students that have added priceless ideas that have enriched my work in one way or another. The thoughts and perspectives shared with me around classroom and barroom tables will be with me always.

I hasten to add that this study would not have been possible without participants so I want to thank them for giving me some of their very valuable time. Please know I struggle to find ways to make the educational administrative field a responsible and noble one.

And finally to my family, dear friends, and Lauren, thank you for being willing (and sometimes unwilling) listeners to my ideas, frustrations, and discussions throughout this challenging process. Your love and support is deeply appreciated and greatly valued.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

Origins of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore democracy and citizenship education in the Albertan pubic school context from a school leadership perspective. It is hoped that this small study may offer some suggestions of school leadership that fosters an educational environment that encourages the authentic practice of and education for democracy and citizenship. The broad goal of this study is to enter into a dialogue about the immediacy of necessary changes in public school policy that begin to deconstruct the irony of the undemocratic nature of current educational institutions that operate within so-called democratic societies.

My experiences as a public middle and high school teacher in Alberta were fraught with frustrations in both policy and pedagogy. These frustrations stemmed from my desire to teach in a way that encouraged youth to participate in positive social change in their learning community. Inevitably, I would be reminded that school organization, pedagogy, and assessment policies were created to ensure quality student learning in congruence with the learning outcomes of the provincially mandated curriculum. These policies included a typical top-down approach to the management of education where individual pedagogical practice was tolerated as long as it suited the school district's overarching educational model, the school's educational mission, and the teaching and learning philosophy of the school administrator(s). The bureaucratic system of school management left me feeling powerless and pessimistic.

In an effort to continue the struggle, I entered the Master of Education program in the department of Educational Policy Studies specializing in Educational Administration and Leadership at the University of Alberta to learn more about the complexities involved in this field. As I learned first-hand as a teacher and then discovered more clearly in my graduate

studies, a public school educator has very little voice into the creation and evaluation of educational goals as a subordinate within the long and deep chain of command. The irony of this simple fact motivated me to learn more about the intricacies of democratic theory, democratic education, and school leadership.

I became interested in understanding how to best educate students in a way that encouraged youth to leave schools with a deep and critical understanding of democracy and be prepared to engage in a lifelong participatory-rich citizenship. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was revealed to me that individuals in leadership positions played a key role in fostering an environment conducive to such goals.

My considerations of the incredible power that educational policy had on the influence of democratic school practice were confirmed early on in my graduate studies. In review of the literature, it became apparent that a) in general, people live a life deprived of an authentic democratic engagement in governance; b) the public school functions as the defining institution of political ideology for youth; c) school policy has a tremendous influence on the limits of political participation and; d) public school administrators, as leaders of the institution, play a crucial role in defining and reforming school policy to which all staff and students are bound. Theoretically, there is a link between these four themes. This study was aimed specifically at analyzing the link between the effects of educational leaders' perspectives of democracy and the democratic functions of their schools. By understanding that phenomenon, perhaps more can be done to reform schooling to encourage a future polity for an authentic democracy in a time of greater importance being placed upon individualizing students, competitive assessment practices, market-based ideological adoption, and bureaucratic control (Apple, 2007; Portelli & Solomon, 2001).

Some may argue that a school ought to be a reflection of the society from which it operates within. I feel the opposite should be the case. If it were possible to inculcate an education rich in participative democracy and citizenship, the public school institution would represent an ideal model of democratic life that all other public and private institutions could aspire to. This type of institution may be reflective of the daring, loving, and liberal educational philosophies so elegantly described by John Dewey (1916) and Paolo Friere (1970).

Significance of the Study

Democracy is a humanitarian effort; one that cannot be understated. Now, more than ever, our globalized world is bringing cultures and peoples with different worldviews together, face-to-face, side-by-side, like never before. We are in a time of unprecedented economic and political potential or crisis and collapse. Evidence of the crises and collapse dominate mainstream media, government election platforms, and everyday conversations of the pessimistic among us. The enormous potential of the collection of knowledge and creative ideas brought about by globalization is perhaps less discussed and even feared. I favor the possibility of our potential. Who would favor the possibility of our demise?

Background and Context of Study

This study took place within two rural Albertan public school districts in the fall of 2015. Perspectives from four participants at three different levels (one director, two principals, and one vice-principal) of school administration were studied.

In specific locations, this study was welcomed by some and not tolerated by others. The idea of democracy seems to make people in powerful positions uneasy and my requests for

interviews were met with great caution and hesitancy. This hesitancy is what makes this study so necessary and so timely. Two superintendents agreed to speak to me but only under certain circumstances (off-the-record discussions) while many others denied me the access to interview administrators within their respective districts for various reasons. This is telling of the curiously undemocratic environment that public schools are currently operating within and reproducing.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was designed to better understand how administrators make sense of democracy and citizenship education. In order to meet the needs and purpose of this study, few individuals were invited to participate in this study. This way, discussions from few participants would provide a more in-depth understanding of the participant's views and perspectives.

This study was not designed to generalize all Albertan public school administrators. To my mind, having a broader, more surface leveled method of research would have offered less to understanding the current educational administrative environment within Alberta. However, having a few more participants from a variety of administrative levels in school leadership would have been useful in this study to help reveal potential differences in role specific themes of administration. This is a consideration for future research.

Upon arriving at a site to do an interview session, two of my participants chose to be interviewed together. One of these participants was the other's superior in the school bureaucratic chain of command. Therefore both of these participants' responses may have been affected by the fact that the other participant was in the room for two reasons. The first reason is that the participants may have chosen to hold back certain responses based on their desire to protect themselves or each other due to their professional relationship with each other. This

would be a limitation. The second reason is that input revealed from one participant may have changed the perspective held by the other participant in some way thus affecting what was revealed through responses to the questions. Although this would not be a complete limitation, it may have affected the data in some way.

A personal limiting factor was a lack of resources (time and money) that could have provided an opportunity to speak to individuals in different locations at different administrative levels throughout Alberta. Had I been afforded the resources to travel farther around the province, and wait longer to hear from preferred levels of school leadership, this study would include more diverse perspectives from diverse leadership positions.

As spoken to earlier, this study does not assess the perspectives of any individuals within a school board or the superintendent role. Interviewing more leaders at the highest levels of school administration was a limiting factor in general. Only one of the four participants in this study worked out of a central office and was responsible for providing direction to the principal and vice-principal of a school within the district. More participants from that level of school leadership may have provided more substantial evidence of the relationship between the levels of command and the democratic environment of the school district and/or specific school.

Conclusion

Insofar as a society truly values democracy as a way of life, the importance of educating for it is a primary function of the public school system in order to prepare future citizens to participate in their political lives and effectively protect themselves from anything or anyone that attempts to corrode that opportunity. My past experiences as a public school teacher and current

experiences as a graduate student lead me to believe that very little is being done to encourage an authentic education of and practice for democracy.

Of particular importance is the role a leader plays in fostering competencies for citizens to become democratically empowered. In regards to the educational institution, an educational administrator, as the creator of policy and procedure in schools, plays a crucial role in encouraging an educational environment that can cultivate those competencies.

Studying democracy in an educational context has proved to be challenging. As mentioned earlier, challenges were presented before the official study (interviews) even took place. Although many inferences can be made about democracy and citizenship in the school context based on the limiting factors of this study, I cautiously approached the participants in my study, those that even allowed me the opportunity to discover more about this phenomenon, hoping that more would be revealed than kept secret. I was not disappointed.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Theory introduced in this section of the thesis will describe the conceptual framework of the study in order to help explain, predict, and understand phenomena related to democracy and citizenship, education of those two topics, and the relation to the field of educational administration. Throughout this chapter I will introduce and define relevant terminology in order to help situate my study within existing knowledge found in theory and attempt to identify a gap.

This section will analyze the theoretical link between democracy, the public sphere, education, and educational administration in a linear fashion (see figure below); that is, that authentic democracy is only possible once environments to cultivate its potential are created. In essence, authentic political democracy demands a strong and legitimate public sphere. A public sphere is the result of the education *of and for* citizenship and democracy. An educative environment conducive to such important matters hinges on the perspectives, behaviours, and actions of those in powerful leadership positions within a school: educational administrators.

Educational Administration and Leadership
↓
Citizenship and Democratic Education
↓
Legitimate Public Sphere
↓
Promise of Democracy

There are a number of topics that need to be explored while explaining this link. Firstly, democratic theory provides a lens into the incredibly powerful potential that the promise of democracy has to offer. Secondly, theory on the importance and relevancy of a strong public sphere attempts to explain the necessary public elements of life needed in order to bring about the promise of democracy. Progressive educational theory offers a strong argument that the public school is the ideal location to teach the skills and knowledge necessary to live a

democratically and publicly powerful life. Finally, I will explain that school administrators play the most influential role in encouraging an educational environment that cultivates the skills and knowledge pertinent to future citizens participating in a more full and authentic practice of democracy.

The Promise of Democracy via a Legitimate Public Sphere in a Deliberative Democracy

When analyzed from every angle, democracy allows an opportunity for all people to participate in the political issues that affect their lives. Perhaps more importantly, it allows people a modality of a powerful existence: a way to confirm one's agency in the world. The most pervasive, and arguably limited, form of a democratic life is when an individual is able to voice an opinion as a vote. In tandem with the vote is the neoliberal ideology that free choice in the market is a necessity to democratic life. This, I argue, is the general understanding of democracy by the vast majority – being able to vote and having a choice in what to buy. However, there is far more to democracy and its potential than is typically understood.

The promise of democracy has the potential to reveal another kind of Enlightenment – a public consciousness that allows the negotiation and accommodation of difference and identity politics in a pluralistic global society that harnesses the ability of individuals to act as a powerful collective citizenry. The effects of an authentic democratic system of governance that values these differences and is capable of substantial egalitarian change cannot be underappreciated.

There are many terms and concepts in the previous paragraph that need to be unpacked and further discussed in order to give a clear picture of what is currently at stake. The promise of democracy assumes that the collective, as a group of individuals – a public sphere – is far more powerful than any individual can hope to achieve on his/her own and this is supported in the

literature (Benhabib, 1996, 2002; Dryzek, 2006, 2009, 2010; Habermas, 1981, 1992). However, the reader need not confuse the public sphere to include the sort of comprehensive political sphere argued for in the cosmopolitan sense where subordination of national, regional, tribal, religious, and cultural identities is possible. In fact, as some political philosophers argue, a plurality of groups is far more desirable and applicably appropriate (Fraser, 1996; Honig, 1996; Mouffe, 1996, 1999). This is where the concept of discursive pluralism provides the means to satisfy deliberative democratic theory that values the differences, including those evident in cultural, gender, sexual, racial, tribal, and religious identity of everybody. All of these topics will be discussed in this chapter. First, however, I begin with the idea of the public sphere.

Along with an array of economic, technological, and educational advances, the Enlightenment brought with it a range of ideas that included the individual moving from a domestic life to engaging in public action. Kant (1784, as cited in Gripsrud et. al., 2010) describes the emergence of a public sphere as "man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the ability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another" (p. 3). Here, Kant illustrates that a sign of maturity is one's ability and/or desire to engage with others. Likely due to the public sphere's exclusive beginnings, Hegel (1821) provides a distinction between the family, civil society, and the state where the public sphere is located somewhere between civil society and the state. This same distinction is made in contemporary times (see for example, Habermas, 1992; Rawls, 1997).

The public sphere remains in a metaphysical state – a 'phantom' as Lippman (1925, as cited in Gripsrud et. al., 2010) described it so many years ago – as if it lacks a definitive physical body or existence because it lies in a curious location outside the legitimate area of political will-formation. Without this definitive form, the public sphere will forever fail to change public

policy and the promise of democracy can never be realized. It is essential that if the public sphere's concerns are taken seriously and can affect change in the political forum, a legitimate institutional space where citizens deliberate their common affairs through a discursive practice must be available.

Although Habermas' discursive model of governance by the public sphere is often contested, many political philosophers share his optimism in a participatory discursive system of governance and agree that the deliberative democratic model of participative governance stands out as the most inclusive and egalitarian (see for example, Benhabib, 1996; Gutmann, 1987; Dryzek, 2006, 2010; Cohen, 1996). Deliberative democracy offers an important theoretical approach to bringing about a legitimate public sphere while accommodating the means to which political pluralism can be achieved.

As its name suggests, deliberation is the central focus in a deliberative democracy. Here, individuals reflect upon their own views in light of what others have to say. This requires giving good reasons for any held belief or opinion and accepts that it can change upon points advanced by others. The key to the deliberative process is a virtue of reciprocity – making arguments in terms that others can accept. It is a "process of judgment and preference formation and transformation within informed, respectful, and competent dialogue" (Dryzek, 2010, p. 3). By taking part in this kind of political process, and individual engages in the public sphere.

Presently, decisions made in the political sphere are presented to, not developed by, people acting in the public sphere. There is a clear division of power evident in this form of governance between those who make the rules and those who simply follow them. Benhabib (1996) and Dryzek (2010) explain that the 'problem with democracy' is its ironic paradox that it demands two seemingly opposing but necessary pieces of its whole: an empowered and

legitimate public sphere and a decentralized form. In order for the public to have any substantial effect on matters of the political, the rule of law, individual rights, and constitutional guarantees have to be established. This requires a centralized form of power and is often formalized through a constitutional government and a separate judicial system. In many cases, however, centralized governments have exercised 'power over' its people instead of exercising 'power with' its people.

Deliberative democracy provides the conceptual and practical means to achieve the common good while remaining compatible with individual sovereignty as each individual is empowered to participate into defining and conditioning a consensus among other members of the public. As Benhabib (1996) contends, deliberative democracy is based on the principles of universal moral respect and egalitarian reciprocity while refraining from assuming any value-laden beliefs that lie beyond the foundations of democracy itself. In an allegorical sense, deliberative democracy is the scientific method of political theories and practices because it assumes that all decisions and processes, including democracy itself, must be able to be deliberatively justified. Dryzek (2006) explains how a deliberative democracy can avoid becoming a centralized power of control as "communicatively competent decentralized control" that stresses communicative action of all matters (including the processes itself) within the public sphere (p. 154).

Much of the skepticism of deliberative democracy is based in its inability to affect political authority in today's heavily dependent representative system. So far, I have attempted to explain that this is due to the lack of legitimacy of the public sphere and that deliberative democracy offers the public sphere the legitimate form it so desperately needs. In the next

section of the chapter, I will describe how this can theoretically come about before identifying a gap in the theory and provide a possible solution.

The Dialogical Process and Participative Governance

The primary concern of the public sphere continues to be how it will create and engage with public opinion and therefore gain a more legitimate form. There are a number of theories that can help explain how this may come about.

Social pragmatist and democratic educational philosopher John Dewey (1916) can help us understand how the promise of democracy can be fulfilled. Social pragmatic theory assumes that one cannot truly understand reality and the world without the involvement of other actors within the world (Hickman & Alexander, 1999). Relevant to democracy and the public sphere, social pragmatism encourages deliberation and human interaction (dialogue) is essential to our political agency for we can achieve far more political power acting within a group instead of acting alone. In fact, incredibly important compartments of the public sphere today (public opinion, law enforcement, freedom of information, mass media etc.) were all developed in a dialogical process when private interests were shared with others (Negt & Krug, 1972).

The promise of democracy holds that one's power increases exponentially, to the fullest possible human extent, when one is capable of applying reason and action as a "being of communication who needs to enter into dialogue" (Morrow and Torres, 2002, p.117). In this sense, democracy is a dialogical process where individuals can achieve greater political power by participating in dialogue with each other in an attempt to find truth or a collective identity.

John Stuart Mill (1859) argued that the rights of the individual, the minority, could not be silenced if society claimed to be finding the common truth. Mill argued that truth could only be

found through public discursive action of all members of society, including the opinions of the minority. This is an important notion to understand in reference to the promise of democracy because the accommodation of differences, including those of the minority, must be negotiated among the members of the public sphere. Mill states the importance of deliberation with the quote:

> However unwillingly a person who has a strong opinion may admit the possibility that his opinion may be false, he ought to be moved by the consideration that however true it may be, if it is not fully, frequently, and fearlessly discussed, it will be held as a dead dogma, not a living truth. (Mill, 1859, as cited in Gripsrud et. al., 2010, p. 18)

In this regard, it is unjustifiable for the majority to silence anyone of contrary opinion just as it is unjustifiable for the minority to silence the contrary opinion of the majority. In Mill's view, public political life necessitates that all individuals have the right to an opinion and for that opinion to be heard and deliberated. Mill's view of the egalitarian mode of political participation contributes to the framework for a society that can realize the promise of democracy through public deliberation.

The opportunity to deliberate upon our differences is perhaps the greatest barrier to achieving a democracy that values each and every individual's agency in the world. This kind of political life can be supported through participatory democracy (Benhabib, 1996; Dryzek, 2010). As these two authors explain, participative democracy encourages citizens to contest each other's views on content of the general good. Public needs in political affairs that affect the entire population can be validated and reasoned in this discursive model. Of course, for participative democracy to have any definitive meaning, the opportunity for civic society to engage in an

authentic democratic medium of participative governance is necessary. The key, of course, is political participation.

As defined in the Oxford Dictionary, participation is simply: the action of taking part in something (Oxford Dictrionaries). I find one word demands my immediate attention, “action”. Participation is of course a noun. But within this word, etymological roots break down the meaning to include verbs; words of action. These being: *participatio*, Latin for the English equivalent of ‘partaking’, a noun of action which is derived from *participare*: to participate in, share in, or partake of (Online Etymology Dictionary). Cleary, for participative governance to have any definitive meaning, it would require action on behalf of the public that is being governed. Research in the field of participative governance provides additional clarity and function for the purpose of this study.

White’s (1996) scholarly work in participative development throughout the world has revealed a number of concerning issues with what participation actually entails. In her accounts, participation has become a “hurrah” word that provides its users and hearers with a “warm glow” (as cited in Cornwall, 2011, p. 57). In that regard, participation has been used as a façade of good intentions while providing the public with very little legitimate power in reform as "sharing through participation does not necessarily mean sharing in power" (as cited in Cornwall, 2011, p. 57). Incorporating participation only after decisions have been made offers very little power to the participator. Thus, without striving for a redistribution of power throughout the entirety of the participative process, not much in terms of momentous social change is likely to occur.

Elite groups in power existentially require and benefit from a bureaucratic model of shallow participation in policy formation and reform to remain elite (Friere, 1970; Harvey, 2010). In this way, powerful groups can manipulate the public to agree and go along with a

project that has been designed for them and not by them while disguising this process as a participative practice (Leal, 2011). Through this process, people are defined as 'target' or 'beneficiary' groups as projects are handed down from above. This reproductive model dictates that the public has no legitimate authority in the decision-making process. Instead, it merely allows the public an opportunity to take part in the implementation of decisions that have already been made for them. It is a simple ‘I manage, you participate’ approach. Any real substantial change in public participation would only call the bureaucratic model of governance into question. It must be understood that if we are to expect radical social change to occur, radical changes in what we expect of political participation is necessary. Radical social change must begin with the "fundamental point that participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless" (Arnstein, 2011, p. 4).

Leal (2011) argues that participatory action is a radical idea of change because there is great potential for a dramatic shift in power from those that currently and historically possess it to those that hold very little and desire more. Simply convincing local people that they are exercising power by getting involved in projects that have been decided for them by an outside party is not radical at all. In fact, as can be currently witnessed throughout much of the developing world, it is a violent, albeit much more subtle, display of imperialistic power. Leal (2011) explains this with the quote: "[b]y having been detached from its radical nature, participatory action was consequently re-politicized in the service of the conservative neoliberal agenda" (p. 76). This kind of hegemonic discourse is ubiquitous in developmental 'aid' and foreign investment.

Participation must be therefore understood "as a process by which the people are able to organize themselves, and through their own organization are able to identify their own needs,

and share in the design implementation and evaluation of the participatory action" (Saxena, 2011, p. 31). Participation must occur as a part of a wider radical political project aimed at securing citizen's rights in political participation. Political participation must be re-articulated to serve a broader struggle of citizenry to which "the merits of participation as a political and methodological approach" can be realized (Hickey & Mohan, 2004, as cited in Cornwall, 2011, p. 77). This realization may lead us towards the possibility of real social transformation.

It is clear that citizens require opportunities to practice participatory governance in order to sustain improvements by "exercising voice and choice and developing the human organizational and management capacity to solve problems as they arise" (Saxena, 2011, p. 31). Simply put, citizens require a public political forum that encourages the engagement of a competent citizenry in continuous deliberative political debate.

As was discussed above, participation by definition must include action. But the limited location of that action in participative governance is what needs to change. The participation of an engaged citizenry ought to be evident in all areas of public policy. As White (1996) states, "the idea of participation as empowerment is that the practical experience of being involved in considering options, making decisions, and taking collective action to fight injustice is itself transformative" (as cited in Cornwall, 2011, p.60). So, if a political decision is to be made that affects all citizens, it should rightly be the case that all citizens should have input in every step of the process from beginning to end - from enlightened thoughts on a public issue, debating what is to be done, making a decision, the implementation of the decision, and finally the maintenance and evaluation of the newly created policy.

A key question comes to the fore here: what comes first, policy reform (from the top) or participation (from the bottom)? Many political theorists (Habermas, 199; Honig, 1996; Rawls,

1997; and Young, 1996 to name a few) have debated this chicken-and-the-egg issue. To my mind, policy reform and participation need not require such a causal before-and-after relationship. It is not necessarily the case that meaningful public participation in the political sphere can only mature *as a result* of policy reform, although I will not deny that it would certainly help the public sphere's efforts. As people in the public sphere learn to participate politically, mature, and gain strength, a natural progression of a public conscious of their power has the potential to bring about policy reform. Admittedly this may occur over many years. This doesn't necessarily require a revolutionary change in the way our current democracy functions but it does require a change in how we think – it requires a purposefully designed process of teaching and learning how to participate in the political aspects of our lives.

As will be clarified in the next section of the chapter, many authors argue that education is the means to which this consciousness takes form. Of course, education *about* democracy is absolutely essential. But educating the public to participate *in* democracy (practicing what we preach) is the learning component that is missing. If citizens are to understand all that participative governance has to offer, let it be that the public school serves as the one public institution for *learning about* and *practice of* citizenship and public participation.

Creating Publicness in Public Schools

The contradiction evident in today's schools is that they operate authoritatively within a democratic society (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Apple & Beane, 2007; Portelli, 2001; Woods, 2005) which has contributed to a mass culture that exhibits many antidemocratic tendencies and political apathy (Gutmann, 1987). Thus it is of no great confusion that the public sphere remains in its politically powerless and illegitimate form spoken to above. For a public sphere to possess

a more legitimate form its citizens must be capable of creating it, and for Dewey (1927), it was the primary function of the school to cultivate those personal potentialities.

As Dewey (1927) argued, the problem of the public is how to best improve "the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion" in the public forum that suffers from a "sterility of discussion in social matters" (Dewey, 1927, as cited in, Gripsrud et. al., 2010, p. 43). In essence, the public sphere lacks what inherently makes it public; publicness.

I see publicness as the ideal form of a public consciousness; it is the structural and procedural knowledge that Dewey argued for and described as common knowledge (Dewey, 1927). This knowledge is necessary in the struggle towards a common understanding of the well-being of the public. The lack of a public consciousness can cripple the public sphere and should be the primary concern for the purpose of public schooling. An education system can bring about publicness only when it prepares youth for full democratic participation in social life (Dewey, 1916). But not just any old education will do. An education steeped in democracy that provides students with the means to learn about and live a participatory-rich lifestyle is the way to bring about a society that operates to achieve the public good (Apple & Beane, 2007; Gutmann, 1987).

There are two central questions that form the foundation of democratic education: 1) how does the school organization need to be designed in order to create the conditions necessary so that the entire school becomes a democratically designed organ? and; 2) how do people learn to enter and participate in public political space? Theories on the best way to inculcate a democratic public consciousness in children fall into two general categories: structural/organizational (democracy-creating) and procedural (democracy-doing). Both of these categories, which I will develop in my study, rely on grounded theory in democratic education and critical pedagogy which is where I will turn to next.

Gramsci grants us the capability to imagine what a democratic education may look like: "[b]ut democracy, by definition, cannot mean merely that an unskilled worker can become skilled. It must mean that every citizen can govern and that society places him [or her] in a general condition to achieve this" (Gramsci, as cited in, Darder, 1991, p.99). The general condition that Gramsci describes is achievable through education and it is Dewey (1916, 1927) that explains this possibility.

Dewey is the foremost pragmatic educational philosopher of the 20th century and his name is intimately connected with democratic education (Pring, 2007). His perspective on education's hopeful outlook offers educators a look into a life of learning with democracy at the center as much of his work dealt with the relationship between democracy and education. Dewey presents two central arguments: a) the 'problem of the public' is how to improve the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion and b) the public school is the ideal location where this occurs (1927). His first argument attempts to explain why exactly the public sphere lacks a legitimate political form while his second argument offers a theoretical solution.

For Dewey (1927), the ability to discuss and judge should be common knowledge among members of a democratic society. These skills would help the individual involve themselves in the political world. In Dewey's view, participating among others in a democratic life meant that people would become interdependent which "from a social standpoint…denotes a power rather than a weakness" (Dewey, 1916, p. 44). For Dewey, the power created by this possibility is the way towards the promise of democracy. The means to achieve this power, Dewey argued, was the goal of the educational institution. He saw that far beyond the technical training of children, the school offered future actively capable citizens the means to live a democratic way of life. He

argued that this possibility would require a drastic change to the current policies and procedures of the educational institution. Dewey theorized:

> [a] change in educational methods would release new potentialities, capable of all kinds of permutations and combinations, which would then modify social phenomena, while this medication would in its turn affect human nature and its educative transformation in a continuous and endless procession. (Dewey, as cited in Gripsrud et. al., 2010, p. 46)

This way, the education system would avoid a stagnant reproduction of one dominant ideology over another – the antithesis of democracy that Gramsci described in cultural hegemony (Darder, 1991). The way forward was, and continues to be, encouraging those in powerful positions within an educational institution (teachers and administrators) to look critically into the processes involved in teaching and learning. This is the essence of critical pedagogy and it has become the theoretical underpinning of the procedural theme of democratic education.

Critical pedagogy. Ira Shor defines critical pedagogy as:

> [h]abits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse. (1992, p.129)

Paulo Friere (1970) also provides crucial insights about what critical pedagogy can offer democratic education. For Friere, in order for an individual to realize his/her agency in the world, a new consciousness – what he calls *conscientizacao* – is created in a two stage process: 1) the oppressed must first unveil the world of oppression to which they are subject to and; 2) commit

themselves to a constant process of transformation. The task of critical pedagogy, as Friere sees it, is to constantly re-create knowledge as a collective group of equal citizens.

Critical pedagogy views the teacher as a facilitator creating the necessary conditions for students and staff to find the solutions to problems of human beings in their relation with each other and to the world. In this way, the school, as a public institution of learning, has the potential to operate in a way that promotes critical thought, democratic procedure, and creative and imaginative ways to serve the public good. This aligns well with the democratically focused education that Dewey describes and others have since expanded.

Structure/Organization of democratic education. The public school finds itself in a similar position as the public sphere in reference to the issue of which is first necessary, policy reform or participation. Policy reform has to do with the structure and organization of the school because the school's day-to-day functions are defined by what is accepted in regards to the externally and internally designated rules. If the public school were to establish policy that revolutionized the way a student learns to live a powerful life in the world, those future citizens would become conscious of the potential for their political agency later in their public life.

Carlson and Gause (2007) argue that the education system is the single most important institute to make democracy a more deliberative process outside of the formalized political spaces of the government in our society. In general, the literature shows a great lack of programs to support the democratic process in schools (Greene, 1988; Darder, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Apple & Beane, 2007; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012).. Young et. al. (2008) explain this best, "it is hard to see how an institution can inculcate in young people respect for the law and for the rights of others, as well as the understanding of the democratic process, when these same principles are not embodied in the actual operation of the school" (p. 136).

Sergiovanni's (1994) conception of the structure of school is especially helpful in determining a theoretical foundation of democratic school leadership. Sergiovanni suggested that if you changed the metaphor of the school from organization to community, the fundamental nature of the meaning of school would change to encourage more ethically rational purposes like democratic education. If our current educational system is to adopt democracy as a foundation for all other outcomes to be built upon, schools need to take steps towards the representation of a metaphor of community (Sergiovanni, 1994).

The purpose of school being largely academic would have to be scrutinized for a dramatic change argued for in democratic education and critical pedagogy to take place. It is argued that in order for any teaching and learning of the democratic type to occur, the school and its organization as a whole ought to reflect an attachment to public sector values (Gutmann, 1987; Starrat, 1994; Woods & Gronn, 2009). Policy on what is expected of members within the school community would then represent a democratic education more suited to Dewey's ideas of the purpose of schooling. Slater (1994) made this point as well as anybody:

> A democracy only exists to the degree that people are committed to the democratic ideals as the chief organizing principle of their society. A democratic society's schools are among those of its institutions most responsible for developing people's desire and capacity to be so committed. (p. 100).

Of course policy creation and reform is not the only means to which democratic education can come about in the public school system. An equally important piece resides in the day-to-day actions and decisions of a democratically capable school leader.

Procedure of democratic education. Dewey (1916) argued that democracy is ambiguous unless an authentic practice of it is stressed in everyday life. Simply put, without the

explicit teaching of the skills and knowledge needed to live a democratic life, the public sphere will continue to be politically ineffective because the general public will lack the competencies for what democratic life demands. Democracy cannot prevail if democratic ideals remain simply as ideals. "Without participating in some form of public as an integral part of schooling, students will leave schools both without the skill [or] desire to form such spaces" (Ranson, 2008, p. 501). That is where the school can fulfill a democratic praxis. In Giroux's (2005) words: "educators need to define schools as public spheres where the dynamics of popular engagement and democratic politics can be cultivated as part of the struggle for a radical democratic society" (p.32). The educational goal should be to encourage people to participate in shaping a public life.

The public school ought to be a site for a radical form of experiential democracy and a laboratory of democratic movements. Advocates for democratic schools believe that long lasting and meaningful democratic processes are created from the bottom-up through collaboration (Apple & Beane, 2007). There will be times of hardship and struggle, but as Mouffe (1996) and Honig (1996) argue through an agnostic theory, those struggles can present themselves as opportunities to identify structurally embedded social issues, bring them to the fore, and be deconstructed through a human vocation of agency and contestation. Therefore, public education would offer society a chance to deliberate on the public good by "developing an ethical discourse with an emancipatory political intent…a discourse that can provide the basis for organizing and sustaining a community of public spheres inextricably connected to forms of self and social empowerment that extend the project of human possibility and collective future happiness" (Giroux, 2005, p. 60).

First, to instill a democratic consciousness in the youth of today, teachers must disregard a position of neutrality, act as primary stewards of democracy, and recognize themselves as

political agents. Disrupting the hegemonic individualistic values laden in the provincially mandated curriculum is essential to this critical pedagogical practice and foundationally important to democratic ideals. Educators have the duty to create opportunities to criticize and deliberate every curricular outcome and school policy that dictates how and what students learn. As Fischman and McLaren (2005) state, "educators take on intellectual roles by adapting to, resisting, and challenging curriculum, school policy, educational philosophies, and pedagogical traditions" (p. 425).

There are also a number of suggestions made by a few authors that fall into the procedural category of democratic education that concern the actual teaching and learning in a classroom – where the 'rubber hits the road'. Carr (2009) suggests that students should be given explicit instruction in "how to listen, articulate, debate, and diagnose difference" (p. 43). For me, this is perhaps the most important of all democratic pedagogical practices because this kind of knowledge and skill possession will form the competencies to participate in the public sphere later in their adult life. Theoretically, this also fits well with the dialogical process and social pragmatism. The kind of exchange that sees children deliberate their deepest beliefs and values about the good life will help everyone understand the plurality of views in our society and, although not necessarily the required result, a group of different students from very different cultural, political, and religious backgrounds may be able to find a common consensus.

The burden of resisting mandated curriculum, critical pedagogy, and teaching deliberative democratic skills should not fall onto the shoulders of the teachers alone. Carr (2009) even goes so far as to suggest that "contracts for superintendents of education and principals should contain a clause that they will be evaluated on how well they inculcate democratic education, political literacy, and social justice" (p. 44). A change of this magnitude

seems to be a far reaching proposal, but surely part of the burden must be shared by the school leaders and head office personnel for it is the direction that they provide that will dictate the boundaries a teacher can act within.

School Leadership the Key to Creating Publicness in Schools

In this section of the chapter, I argue that individuals in school leadership positions are the key to providing the necessary opportunities for students to learn in an environment that is conducive to the educational environment that Dewey (1916, 1927) and Friere (1970) theorize and that the public sphere so desperately needs. In an analogous sense, public school administrators are the keystone in the arch of the promise of democracy. Johanasson (2004) explains it well:

> [T]he democratic reflective school leader understands that is not itself sufficient that education imparts knowledge of fundamental democratic values. It must also be carried out using democratic working methods and prepare pupils [and staff] for active participation in civic life. (p. 701)

As individuals in key powerful positions within the school, the public school administrator's primary job ought to be to both reform school policy and encourage procedures that enhance the authentic learning and practice of democracy by staff and students. Educational leaders can be directive or participative. They can also be authoritarian or democratic. If school leaders are "powerful mediators of whatever initiatives [they] propose" (Hoy & DiPaola, 2013, p. 2), let current policy reform show that educational administrators are mere puppets of top-down organizational structure (Apple & Beane, 2007; Apple & Beane, 2007; Portelli, 2001). Democratic education demands that educational administrators adopt procedures that move them

from a position of a directive, authoritarian manager to a position of a participative, democratic leader that drives a system of community. By changing their roles, educational leaders have the opportunity to encourage followers to live more powerful lives.

Carlson and Gause (2007) provide an essential question that will be the focus of this section of the chapter: "in an age when the democratic promise of public education is 'at risk' of being abandoned, forgotten, and emptied of meaning…what is the responsibility of educational leaders in such a context?" (p. ix).

Many authors tend to use a number of terms to describe a leadership style conducive to democratic education that include democratic leadership, transformational leadership, transformative leadership, leadership for social justice, and distributed leadership that all have their own distinguishing differences (Shields, 2010, 2014; Carr, 2009, 2014; Pryor, 2008; Schugurensky, 2008). For the purpose of this study, I will use democratic leadership as an umbrella term that includes small nuances of the others listed. However, there are some fundamentals of democratic leadership that need to be explained.

Democratic leadership must include two parts that are equally important. The first concerns issues discussed in the last section of this chapter – policy reform (democracy-creating) – all things policy related where the formalities and rules to encourage democracy are created and maintained. The second part is procedural (democracy-doing). This involves the specific democratic actions of those in power. Together these two parts of democratic leadership can help establish the democratic life that Dewey thought possible in an educational institution.

An ironic paradox presents itself in the democracy-creating theme of democratic leadership. In order to create the necessary opportunities for others to take power, power must first be given to those that don't typically possess any. This places the educational leader in a

precarious position being the one that inherits power simply by assuming the role as the leader of the school. This paradox leads some to believe that there is an inherent discrepancy between democracy and leadership.

Starratt (2010) questions the possibility that the themes of democracy and leadership are integrally contradictory and describes the relationship between them as an oxymoron. However, his work largely focuses on the irony that these two themes are not only possible but desirable in an educational setting. This is possible when a leader within a democracy simply facilitates and encourages her group to identify democratic values that people can rally around. After such values have been identified, the leader need only promote an environment that cultivates the growth of such values. Staratt (1994) explains that a democratic leadership framework has the combined fundamentals of care, justice, and critique. Through this framework, a human ethical response to inequities is possible. Staratt argues that where development in this area lacks is being able to go beyond theory to recommend transformative practice in order to contribute to change. He feels that school leaders are public intellectuals steeped in the politics of education and thus ought to be viewed as more than management and work. Instead, educational administrators can assume a more active leadership role by adopting the ideology of leadership as a cultivation of efforts and skills and not leadership as simply managing staff and students.

Woods (2005, 2009) raises an interesting point that democracy within a school can have a bivalent character that requires an organizational dynamic that allows for movement between tight and loose structural frameworks. He explains that people like and prefer to operate in an organization with a structure but that it is loose enough to allow free thought and creativity.

Bredeson (2004) offers an architectural analogy to help explain this confusing aspect of democratic leadership. Bredeson argues that a democratic school leader can create and define a

democratic school cultural space without having to dictate what happens within that space as an architect develops purposeful designs bound to a blueprint but has no input into the day-to-day activities that happen within a building. In this case, the educational leader can design a blueprint that creates and nurtures learning opportunities that are conducive to democracy and citizenship without having to be authoritative.

Woods also speaks to the procedural aspects of democratic leadership in educational settings and argues that the aim of democratic leadership is to share power by dispersing or distributing leadership responsibilities. This process involves redistributing power that is commonly in the hands of administrators to teachers and students. The leader's job need not be to define, dictate, and enforce values upon the people that follow them. Motivated by democratic ideals, a democratic leader must act within an ideology of *primus inter pares* (first among equals) and leave their selfish motivations behind them. The same can be said about an educational leader's role within a community, a school district, and a school.

Woods (2005) offers the following six practical and open approaches to leadership as a means of bringing about democracy-doing in a school leadership role:

1 – ensuring there are opportunities for staff to comment on and criticize leadership;

2 – listen and engage positively with those criticisms;

3 – shared critical reflection on teachers' own practice;

4 – recognize and value teachers' professional expertise and judgment;

5 – encourage teachers to take responsibility, initiate change and take risks and;

6 – creating a culture of collective responsibility.

These six suggestions are very valuable because they provide educational leaders much needed practical ideas of democracy in work.

Perhaps the most valuable theoretical basis of procedural democracy on the part of the educational leader belongs to Greenfield (1979), Bates (1982), and English (2008). Collectively, these three authors, in different ways, argue that the study and practice of educational administration has shown to be over-reliant on the pseudo-science of scientific management; an "under-conceptualized knowledge base" that has resulted in an era of educational organization and procedure that lacks a human element that continues today (Brooks and Miles, 2006, p. 1).

Greenfield's (1979) work on organization theory is especially helpful here. One might first assume that organization theory speaks to the structural side of the argument but in Greenfield's case it's not. Greenfield argued that organizations are socially constructed; created by individuals and their personal experiences. Therefore, he argued against the premise that any inquiry within schools, as organizations made up of individuals and their experiences, could not be legitimized as 'objective' and therefore cannot be viewed as a machine. Removing the human element from any organization made up of humans is conceptually void. Bates (1982) makes this clear by arguing that the educational administrative field lacked a fundamental focus in behavior or social science. Bates was certain during his time that the field of educational administration remained "blissfully unaware" and ignorant to important philosophical and social theories which "divorces fact from value, theory from practice, rationality from commonsense and education from administration" (p. 2). A separation of theory from practice of this kind may be crippling the courageous efforts of many school leaders to resist systemic control and encourage more humanitarian procedures in their buildings.

Conclusion

To summarize, the promise of democracy is an honorable and attainable goal as it has the potential to fulfill an optimistic future of a more egalitarian life and a more powerful human existence. Democracy depends upon the individual to form not only an individual consciousness but a public consciousness as well. This will in-turn provide the ability of the polity to form a collective group of reasonable and engaged citizens that act *with* and *for* each other. Within the collective there will be opportunities for agnostic forms of dialogue in which the politics of difference can be addressed. Forming a public consciousness and debating our deepest differences can than become a source of collective power instead of an unfortunate handicap.

Deliberative democracy seems to stand apart from other democratic theories as the optimal system of governance that encourages an authentic democratic environment. Deliberative democracy requires a strong and legitimate public sphere that demands two inherently linked foundational aspects in order to bring about the promise of democracy: participative governance and citizenship.

It happens to be that the public school lies in a crucial and ideal location as a public institution of education that can provide the skills and knowledge necessary to encourage and cultivate participative governance and citizenship. I argue that the educational leader, as an agent with power, has the greatest ability to change the school environment to create and encourage an educational facility structurally and functionally conducive to such democratic goals.

Now that I have provided the theoretical conception of this study, I turn to discussing and reflecting upon what the scholarly literature in this area is revealing in order to explicate the need for a study of this kind.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this section presents scholarly work in the relevant areas of democratic education and democratic school leadership. First, I will explore the methods used in current research in this field. Second, I will explain the findings of relevant studies. Finally, I will attempt to argue that a gap exists in the research and therefore justifies a need for a study of this kind.

How are Democratic Education, Citizenship, and Democratic Leadership Being Studied?

First, it must be recognized that research in the scholarly areas described above is dishearteningly sparse. I was able to find special issues dedicated to this specific area in peer-reviewed scholarly journals in which the entire focus of the volume contained chapters on the relationship between educational leadership and democratic education. Most of the relevant studies spoken to below have been pulled from those volumes.

Much of the literature is theoretical rather than empirical. Most often theory discussed in democratic school leadership is organizational theory heavy (policy driven) and diagnostically purposeful. Studies of this kind place the researcher outside the school looking in on factual data like graduation rates, socio-economics, comparative female educational administrator ratios, student, teacher, and educational leader racial data, and academic test scores. This data is useful in many ways and I will raise some discussion on those points. However, they do not reveal the importance of the attitudes, perspectives, and behaviours of educational leaders in relation to democracy and citizenship education. In fact, very little research in this area exists. For what little there is, however, I will expand upon here.

I hasten to add that the greatest area of concern for me was discovering that only a handful of studies of this kind had ever been done in Canada, let alone the province of Alberta. Canadians pride themselves in our democratic government and its commitment to a strong and healthy education for its citizens. One would think that, for Canadians, democracy and education would go hand-in-hand and would therefore need to be explored scholarly and assessed rigorously.

What are the Findings of These Studies?

There exists a great deal of research and literature on democracy and a lack thereof in schools (Dewey, 1916; Darder, 1991; Portelli & Solomon, 2001; Giroux, 2005; Simons & Masschelein, 2010; Pryor, 2008). Much of this literature presents an interesting contradiction that today's schools operate authoritatively within a democratic society due to its exploitive ability to produce labour-oriented future citizens within an organization's perceived needs to shape the person rather than the person shaping the organization. This is effectively alienating every student that enters public school education and preventing a more democratically and publicly conscious individual. Moreover, the current operation of the public school is not conducive to democracy as there is a clear power difference between each level of the bureaucratic ranks of school administration: superintendent and principal, principal and teacher, and teacher and student.

Apple's (1982) work surrounding educational reform has been enlightening. His work focuses on topics of power, curriculum, critical education, democratic schools, and neoliberal and neoconservative influences on schools. In much of his work, Apple raises some very important points of troubling results that the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) educational reform

policy under the Bush administration has created. He argues that an educational apartheid as occurred further separating the educationally privileged, and thus economically privileged, even further from the educationally poor, and thus economically poor. NCLB as only further propagated this educational apartheid (Apple & Buras, 2006).

The term 'democracy', as Apple (1982) points out, is a term that has been corrupted and haphazardly used in contemporary times in certain contexts, notably education and social-work programs; two institutions within the public sphere that have not been spared from the neoliberal onslaught of the late 20th century. What was once understood as a mode of participative action in various social contexts (Edelsky, 2004), democracy is now synonymous with individualistic neoliberal discourses of market-based ideologies and consumerism (Hyslop-Morginson, 2000; Apple & Beane, 2007; Apple, Au, & Gandin, 2009). If one were to look at the broad-scope of the U.S. education system in particular, it is evident that the discourse of democracy in schools has evolved and has influenced educational policy reform that is apparently innocent, but profoundly suspicious (Ball, 2009).

What Apple has witnessed in his time as a teacher and scholar in the U.S. is a calculated global phenomenon of an "odd combination of marketization on the one hand and centralization of control on the other" (2007, p. 27). He is speaking to the contradictions that lie in a supposed weak state of governmental control and neoliberal market-based ideologies of choice. By centralizing power through the No Child Left Behind policy (using standardized testing and accountability standards attached to funding), the U.S. government has reduced the democratic power of individuals involved in education, such as teachers and students, by requiring public support for all things efficient. These reforms move education further away from democracy as "a very strong tendency for needs and values that were originally generated out of collective

deliberations, struggles, an compromises that led to the creation of state services [are] marginalized and ultimately abandoned" (Apple, 2007, p. 27).

The movement away from public support for democratic organizations is what Apple (2007) calls creative ideological work; the manipulation by a more powerful central state to convince the people that anything public is synonymous with inefficiency and foreign socialism and anything private with American ingenuity, efficiency, and choice. Neoliberal ideologies affecting educational organizations have brought about reform policies such as NCLB and *Inspiring Education*. Like Apple, I argue that educational reform must follow true democratic ideologies. True democracy values the voices and actions of all individuals within an organization. Policy-makers "need to define schools as public spheres where the dynamics of popular engagement and democratic politics can be cultivated as part of the struggle for a radical democratic society" (Giroux, 2005, p. 32).

Evidence suggests that provincially governed education in Canada is mirroring global neoliberal market practice (Wallace, 2004; Young, Levin, & Wallin, 2008). A close critical reading of Inspiring Education, the previous Alberta government's (2013) recently released report on provincial education, is heavily laden with neoliberal language. The report suggests that Albertan education ought to strive towards teaching students to manage their “knowledge as a resource” and “earn success” through a “competitive” ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ in order to compete in the global economic world (2013, pp. 5, 6). This document also outlines goals that Albertan students be “engaged thinkers” and “ethical citizens” (p. 2) whereby the education system promotes a position that “children must be the center of all decisions related to learning and the overall education system” (2013, p. 6). If this is true, it is essential to provide socially inclusive circumstances for these goals to be met. By promoting resiliency and competition

through market-based neoliberal models, I argue that Alberta Education is only perpetuating the devolution of democracy by individualizing student learning.

The public school's seemingly obvious purpose is to prepare future citizens to participate in a multiplicity of positions within the public and private sphere of their increasingly connected world. It has been argued that historically the idea of compulsory education in the U.S. was designed for the sole purpose of raising a docile and conservative ideological workforce from the very beginning (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). It is of little wonder then why the school continues to represent a bureaucratic form of management that encourages competitive learning and discourages participative involvement from many groups including teachers, parents, and students.

The curriculum may be the best place to start for it is the curriculum that defines the boundaries from which teachers teach and students learn. Incidentally, the curriculum is a provincially governed document that does not include any substantial input from public stakeholders. It is rather another example of a minority of experts designing a governing document for the majority. This concept alone is inherently undemocratic.

In the Albertan context, the introduction of the provincially mandated Social Studies Program of Studies notes:

> Social studies provides opportunities for students to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge that will enable them to become engaged, active, informed and responsible citizens. Recognition and respect for individual and collective identity is essential in a pluralistic and democratic society. Social studies helps students develop their sense of self and community, encouraging them to affirm their place as citizens in an inclusive, democratic society (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 1).

A critical reading of this passage describes that the course ought to develop certain behaviours in youth en route to becoming involved and participative citizens in the public sphere. As a former Social Studies teacher, I have personally witnessed how certain learning outcomes are prioritized over others. In my experience, it was often the case that learning outcomes that focused on the knowledge of Canadian politics vastly outnumbered those that fell under skills and processes. Simply put, it is much easier to test children on their knowledge and understanding of Canadian politics on paper than it is to assess their ability to "engage in active inquiry and critical and creative thinking" (2005, p. 2). My anecdotal evidence aside, while the Program of Studies does explicitly mention that skills and processes are an integral part of becoming engaged and active citizens, there is not one practical reference or direction to resources to show how this should come about other than reading, writing, and thinking within the bricks of a physical classroom. This leads me to believe that like myself, there are many Social Studies teachers trying to find effective ways for students to "affirm their place as citizens in an inclusive, democratic society" that go beyond in-class essays and simple recall cognitive level abilities on paper and pen tests (2005, p. 2).

Arnstein (2011) argues that informing citizens of rights and responsibilities for participation in the public sphere is an important first step. However, authentic public participation requires much, much more. The absence of the diversified means to which rights and responsibilities can be practiced publicly is a debilitating feature of Western democracies. As reflected in public policy in federal, provincial, and municipal levels, the school is an institution that continues to practice a predictable pattern of a one-way flow of information – from officials to citizens (or in this case, from administrator to teacher and teacher to student) – with no channel for feedback and no power for negotiation. This contradictory feature of a public

institution in a democratic society is what obstructs individuals from living a publicly powerful life.

Literature on the study and practice of educational administration suggests a strong pervasiveness of business-model organizational theory. Educational administration has borrowed fundamental managerial structures from organization theory and management theory that have defined the boundaries of design for the current practice of leadership in schools (Taylor 1912, as cited in Pugh, 2007; Weber, 1924, as cited in Pugh, 2007; Bates, 1982; English, 2008; Brooks & Miles, 2008) primarily to produce a labour force that the capitalist economic system demands (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). This practice operates in a very linear fashion oriented from the dominant power at the top constructing social structures for the subordinates below. What direction and mission the leader at the top decides to create will guide all other individuals within an organization. In the educational organization's case, this direction will define individual roles by compartmentalizing the school into departments and grade levels, defining job descriptions, developing curriculum, and establishing guidelines of the delivery of that curriculum to students.

English (2002) argues that scholars early on in the field were "infatuated with the rhetoric and publicity surrounding the work of Fredrick Winslow Taylor" (English, 2002, as cited in Brooks & Miles, 2008, p. 2). Taylor is responsible for a reliance on a positivist approach to leadership that would dominate the practice of educational administration for nearly half a century and is arguably still used as the current model of organizational theory in schools today. These ideologies surround managerial techniques in the field of business that relied heavily on seemingly empirical studies and resulted in the view of early 20th century principals as scientific managers "responsible for devising standardized methods of pupil accounting and introducing

sound business administration practices in budgeting, planning, maintenance, and finance" (Brooks & Miles, 2008, p. 3).

Another strong source of influence into the practice of educational administration was Weber's (1924) organizational theory. This theory promotes regulative structures through a rationality of emphasizing precision and efficiency in organizations and human positions within that organization as ideal and natural (Weber, 1924, as cited in Pugh, 2007). Although Weber's contention that this kind of scientifically managerialized organization is inevitable and natural, it is heavily deterministic. Social theorists (Greenfield, 1979; Bates, 1982; Blackmore, 2006) have tried for decades to promote theories opposed to Weber's determinist views and their important work has been slow to be adopted within the field. These scholars are producing work that emphasizes a critical look into Taylorism and Weber's organizational theory in hopes of implicating a more democratic public school system.

The opportunity for an educational administrator to change his/her managerial role to a transformative leadership position capable to lead the organization of the school to a higher level of social justice and morality is possible. Instead of a top-down structure of organization as something done traditionally both for the poor and to the poor (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), let the culture of the school reflect the democratic society that it operates within, for if they do not, schools are "either socially useless or socially dangerous" (Apple & Beane, 2007, p. 26). And let it be the educational leader who embodies in both attitude and action an authentic democratic form of governing a school district and/or school site.

Although there are very few studies using qualitative data in personal interviews with educational administrators, the results of the studies are powerful and foreshadow an optimistic

future of educational leaders dedicated to achieving a public education suitable for democratic learning.

Carolyn Shields is a formidable scholar in the study of democratic education and democratic leadership. She makes important contributions to theory as well as empirical research. Two studies of particular interest that seek an understanding of the effects of graduate education on educator's leadership practices (2014) and transformative leadership theory's utility to guide the practice of educational leaders (2010).

In her earlier study (2010), Shields found that when two of her participants accepted transformative leadership theory as a means to guide their practice, both educational leaders indicated that strong and positive relationships with each child and staff member became a major part of their work. Leading others to participate in their learning helped the two participants to teach "what children [had] not had the opportunity to learn" and at minimum deconstruct their past practices and adjust them towards more democratic goals (p. 582). Shields concluded that transformative leadership "is not simply a blue-sky theory too idealistic and too difficult in practice" and ought to be at least attempted by other educational leaders (p. 583). Studies of this kind are perhaps the most important because they are attempting to link theory to practice (praxis) which is what many scholars in this area are arguing for.

In her latter study (2014), Shields found that graduate classes centered on themes of teaching democracy and social justice had influenced scholar-practitioners to claim that "their doctoral programs had, indeed, both shaped and changed their understanding of leadership and helped them to understand ways in which traditional practices continue to marginalize and exclude some students" (p. 134). Her participants also described that "an amplified sense of isolation and increased frustration and disappointment" occurred indicative of the school staff's

resistance to including more democratic practices in their classrooms and in the school (p. 135). This is an important matter to consider if we are to continue to promote educational leadership graduate courses of this kind in order to properly prepare educational leaders for the struggle ahead.

Price's (2008) study of North American Elders' conceptions of democracy is closely related study to my own in that he attempted to analyze the understanding of democracy by educators and the effects on educational practice. This study examined the democratic viewpoints of 10 educators working in diverse urban schools in Canada, four of which were school administrators. Price concluded that his participants showed a strong understanding of democratic principles. He listed those principles as voice, critical thinking and reflection, community and cooperation, and non-discrimination and non-repression. This study did not discuss the pedagogical practices of the 10 educators and how they enforced those conceptions of democracy within their schools and classrooms.

Where is the Gap?

I agree completely with Woods (2005) that "more needs to be understood about the practice of democratic leadership and the implications of the richness and demands of the democratic ideal, if it is to have a chance of being nurtured in the everyday life of schools" (p. 118).

Not enough is known about educational leader's perspectives of democratic education and even less is about how these perspectives guide their practices. This is especially the case within Canada. Current research in the area of democratic education, citizenship, and democratic leadership is proving that very little is being done to enhance the critical and participative

political competencies of those at the receiving end of policy creation at the school level – the staff and students. In that regard, it is necessary that more research be done on democracy and citizenship education and practice in schools. In particular, more needs to be studied about how the educational leader can affect that dynamic as the individual with the greatest influence in policy creation and reform within a school or school district. And so I move forward with this gap in mind and offer research questions in order to better understand this phenomenon.

Research Questions

I used these three questions as a guide to the study:

1. What perspectives of democratic and citizenship education do school administrators hold?

2. How do school administrators promote an authentic practice of an education for democracy and citizenship?

3. How might students and teachers participate in schools to promote an authentic education on democracy and citizenship?

I am interested in knowing what citizenship and democracy means to public school administrators and if they feel that democracy and citizenship are important topics to be educated for in contemporary times? If so, I would like to understand how they are promoting citizenship and democratic education within their specific public school setting?

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology and findings of scholarly work in the areas of democratic and citizenship education and democratic school leadership. In general, literature in

these areas is inadequate, theoretically heavy, and empirically sparse. Much of the empirical research is done from a position external to the education system. Very little qualitative research exists in the analysis of phenomena relative to the perspectives held by educators and educational leaders in the areas of democracy and citizenship education and democratic leadership. Very few studies have taken place in Canada and no studies have taken place in the Alberta context.

Findings presented in the area of democracy and citizenship education reveal a strong pervasiveness of individualistic and democratically void practices in schools reflective of a the encroachment of neoliberal ideologies in other public areas of life. In regards to educational leadership, the study and practice of educational administration has been and continues to be dominated by organizational ideologies and philosophies of the business sector.

Democratic leadership theory exists and has been found to be practiced by educators and educational administrators attempting to encourage a more authentic education of and for democracy and citizenship in schools (Price, 2008; Shields, 2010, 2014; Starratt, 2004; Woods, 2005; Woods & Gronn, 2009).

A gap in the literature currently exists specifically in the Alberta public school context, relative to the empirical analysis of qualitative data in regards to the perspectives held by educational administrators of democracy and citizenship education and democratic leadership.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate a selected sample of Albertan school administrators' perspectives on democracy and citizenship education.

It is hoped that findings gathered from this study will help extend the literature on democracy and citizenship education specifically in the field of educational administration and leadership. It is not the goal of this study to prescribe policy reform or leadership practice to educational leaders, however, the findings may at the very least bring about a critical reflection of educational leadership practice and policy that both hinders and catalyzes the advancement of democracy and citizenship in the school institution.

Methodology

The goal of my study was to discover the multiple constructions of democracy and citizenship education used by my participants. With that in mind, it was necessary that this study be designed under a constructivist paradigm where "research can be conducted only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, as cited in Mertens, 2010, p. 19). In order to understand the multitude of individual perceptions within my participants, a qualitative study designed to deconstruct those viewpoints through an interactive process of participant interviews was necessary.

Qualitative methods were used to provide an in-depth description of the participant's perspectives within a specific context in order to gain an understanding of the constructions held by the participants. I wanted the participants to be able to describe how they recognize, understand, and account for democracy and citizenship education in their everyday professional

lives. This motivated me to design this study with personal interviews as the ideal mode of data collection because interviews are perhaps the ideal way to understand the "linguistic constructions that reveal interpretive repertoires used by people to make sense of their lives" (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 310).

One of the administrators in this study was purposely chosen while three others were chosen based on responses to participant-seeking emails. Participants were not individually chosen to represent the wider population of all Albertan administrators. Inferences cannot be made about the entire population of Albertan administrators in regards to provincially mandated education policy and it is not the goal of this study to make broad-reaching generalizations about all Albertan administrators. Actually, such generalizations were not desired. Instead, analysis from specific contexts provided insights into the relationship between the time and place of the research and each individual administrator's interpretation within their specific working environments.

Methods

Four school administrators (a curriculum and instruction director, principal and vice-principal at one school, and a principal of another school) at the secondary level of public schooling in two different school jurisdictions within the province of Alberta were selected to participate in this study. Invitations to participate in the study were sent via email to superintendents before being forwarded on to lower levels of school administration.

I used semi-structured interviews for data collection in the fall of 2015. Personal interviews provided an in-depth look into the complexities of the administrators' professional context and gave me the best opportunity to understand how my participants view democracy

and citizenship education generally and practically in their respective roles because it helped focus the dialogue yet allowed for space and time for the participants to delve into topics they felt were relevant.

Each administrator was offered a one hour, face-to-face oral interview session. The vice principal and principal at the same school chose to be interviewed together because of time restraints they presented to me as I arrived at the school. This proved to be an important factor in the data that was revealed from these two participants because the semi-structured interviews gave them a chance to have dialogue with each other. The other two administrators were interviewed individually. The interviews took place at three separate locations (a middle school, a central office, and a high school). The interview sessions took place early in November near the beginning of the school year.

Semi-structured interviews provided a flexible structure that was open enough to allow a free flow of personal dialogue while allowing me to ask questions that probed into specific details of the study (Mertens, 2010). As an assurance to the administrators participating in this study, a great amount of control into the research process was given during the data collection stage. The participants were given instructions that allowed them to not comment on all questions posed and were given multiple opportunities to withdraw from the study at various locations.

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were then sent back to the participants to be reviewed before any analysis took place. Member checks were done in order to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. The participants were given two weeks to read the transcriptions and respond if they wanted any information changed or removed completely.

Data Analysis

Following the transcription of the interviews, the data was coded into four themes. By coding the data, I was able to interpret the participants' responses as pockets of specific information before analyzing the data as a whole.

In order to understand how the participants experience and make sense of democracy and citizenship education, I used an interpretive analysis. Interpretive analysis methodology was especially helpful in deconstructing beliefs and perspectives held by participants in my study because the interpretive analyst "seeks to understand the intentions underlying actors' practical reasoning in particular situations" (Yanow, 2000, cited online, pp. 1-27). Interpretive methodologies "are based on the presupposition that we live in a social world characterized by the possibilities of multiple interpretations" of any notion (Yanow, 2000, cited online, pp. 1-27). Interpretive analysis methodology allows the researcher to be a subject *within* the phenomenon as an actor that subjectively interprets the understandings of others in order to best comprehend the phenomenon being studied. This provided me the best opportunity to place myself in a position to interpret the data that the participants were able to give. Conclusions and recommendations were then made based on those interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

This study was governed by the University of Alberta's regulations for conducting ethical research with human participants. Ethics approval for the research was gained through the Faculty of Education and the Research Ethics Office at the University of Alberta prior to any contact with the respondents. As mentioned previously, I contacted potential participants via

email and included an introductory letter (see Appendix A), which outlined their rights as a participant.

I obtained individual permission to interview each participant, and had all participants sign a consent form (see Appendix B) at the start of the interview after reminding them of the ethical implications of the study verbally. I also gave them the opportunity to withdraw from the study on three occasions: prior to commencement of the interview, after completing the interview, and after they reviewed the transcribed interviews.

Maintaining confidentiality was ensured. Pseudonyms were used to refer to participants throughout the thesis. Furthermore, participants were able to review the interviews and redact any information that they felt compromised their identity.

I informed participants that all data, both written and recorded, would be stored in a locked filing cabinet for five years, that all computer files would be encrypted and protected by a password, that, after five years, all data would be shredded and encrypted files would be deleted, and that only my thesis supervisor and myself would have access to the data. I also let participants know that the data collected would be used in the writing of a thesis and in subsequent journal articles.

Conclusion

Four participants were recruited to take part in this qualitative study. The goal of this study was to understand how those educational leaders experience and deal with democracy and citizenship education. One hour, face-to-face, semi-structured oral interviews were used to gain qualitative data from the participants.

The data was transcribed and member checks were completed. After transcribing the data, the participants' responses were coded into four main themes. The data was then analyzed using an interpretive analysis methodology.

This study's ethical considerations were governed by the ethical standards of the University of Alberta.

Chapter Five: Threads and Findings

In this chapter, I will first introduce and summarize the professional pathway each participant has taken to become the educational leader they are today. This will help clarify each participant's role in their respective positions. This information includes facts about each individual's past experience, professional growth, and past and current working conditions. Throughout the chapter, I present the participants from the facts they provided in the interviews. I have used aliases in order to protect the participants' identities.

After introducing the participants, I break down the data into coded themes of obedience, administrative obligations, democracy and participation, and democratic leadership.

Participants

George. George is currently employed as a vice principal in a middle school within a rural Albertan school district. At the time of the interview, George had begun his second year as a vice principal at the school. Prior to this position George was employed as an administrator of a alternate delivery program within the same school district for two years. George taught at a high school within the same district for 12 years.

George described his primary role within the school as a teacher despite being a vice principal. He taught science and math while acting as the vice principal. In this role, he was responsible for discipline, a communication link between the community and the students, and the administrative individual of first contact. George is "*serving under*" Leah, the principal of his middle school. The middle school served 275 grade 5 – 9 students in a rural town and surrounding area.

Leah. Leah had just begun her first year as principal at the same school as George. Prior to the principal position, she was a vice principal at two other schools for a total of five years. Leah was a teacher and then school counsellor for a period of 10 years before moving into an administrative position.

Leah described her primary role as an instructional leader. She then added areas of discipline, budgeting, and school-community liaison as responsibilities of her role.

Morgan. Morgan is the director of curriculum and instruction of the school district to which George and Leah's school belongs. Morgan worked at the central office of the school district. Prior to this position, Morgan taught for 10 years and was a vice principal for three years before becoming a middle school principal for one year. He then moved into the central office beginning a new career as a self-ascribed "*lead teacher*" for five years.

Morgan described his role as responsible for "*anything around curriculum and instruction in education services*". He dealt primarily with school administrators and teachers of schools in his district by assisting them with what they are "*required to teach and how it happens*".

Mervin. Mervin was the principal of a rural high school serving 600 students. He had been principal of the school for 16 years and was vice principal of the same school for 7 years. Before becoming an administrator, Mervin taught for 9 years in the same school. This totalled 32 years at the same school for the entirety of his career.

After consultation with my thesis supervisor, I selected Mervin for participation in this study because of his reputation in Alberta as a steward of democratic and citizenship education as a school leader. I purposefully selected Mervin because I felt it was necessary to obtain data from a different perspective. I felt that whatever data was revealed by Mervin would be helpful

in understanding how perspectives held by an educational administrator in the same role (in this study's case, the principal role) would differ from each other.

Themes Evident in Data

Obedience within the school administrative chain. During the interview with George and Leah, it became clear that George and Leah serve the school in specific ways characterized by their professional title which defined their role. Early in the interview, George defined his role as "*serving under the role of principal*". George was quite capable in describing his leadership role within the school clearly. He did not hesitate in response to the question. George also mentioned that his primary role is teaching and disciplining students. He said that he spent 50% of his time in the office and 50% of his time teaching.

After posing the same question to Leah to describe her role as the leader of the school, Leah was far less capable to answer. She said,

> *[i]nstructional leader would be number one I guess…what is the role of the principal hey, jeez? Certainly a little bit of discipline but primarily that is George. I'm* (long pause), *yeah. That's not funny hey, what is your role? You can add a million little things but um….*

It was quite clear that Leah was unable to define her role at her school. I wanted to probe deeper into this issue so I asked if more of her role consisted of things that are managerial based as opposed to leadership based. She stated: *"Certainly. Absolutely. All of the school management pieces – is policy being* (short pause) *definitely assuring that our staff is abiding by our district policy".* What is crucial to note here is that Leah, as the school principal, was unable to describe her role as a leader and stumbled through the answer. The complexity of the role made it difficult

for Leah to articulate a specific response to the question. What is also important to note is that George was confident in describing his role by immediately referencing it to Leah's role as his superior.

In a separate interview with Morgan, he also chose to define his role by describing where he is located in his occupation in reference to his superior's roles. I asked the simple question of "what is your title?", and he quickly revealed where he fit into the complex hierarchy of the central office administration and provided a detailed description of people he called "*superiors"*. He called himself *"middle to upper-management",* careful to mention that he was not in a senior leadership role. He referred to himself as a *"puppet regime".*

Soon after the exchange with George and Leah above, I asked, "there is much debate on the effectiveness of the bureaucracy of school leadership. What is your position on the effectiveness of a multi-leveled approach to policy creation and reform? George replied:

> *Well I think because we actually reflect it, I actually do believe in it. It's nice to have those protocols in place. When you make a decision, it's not a do-all-end-all. When I make a decision sometimes it's a quick decision. I try not to make a quick decision but at the same time, when I have that opportunity to go in to the principal's office and say, 'this is what I did, I hope I didn't overstep my bounds'. And then a lot of times I can make another decision based on what I got from the higher level. So it just gives you that line – that chain of command that you can go through and look for answers because they all have their personal strengths. I'm glad that it is not just one board that you face if you have a question. When that board stops you, that's the end. Whereas now we can go 'well, we can agree to disagree, do you mind if I step over your head on this one? I need to go talk to someone higher'.*

Leah's response to this comment was argumentative. She nodded her head and responded: *"I think it has to be multi-leveled because I think you have different roles within the school. I hate the word bureaucracy because it has a negative connotation."*

George added:

> *It's not so much that I am going to the boss above my head but – there is such a great opinion that comes to us from central office. They've had years of experience and they have that higher thought. And they are more tied to the community than we are because they're tied to the broader picture.*

It is unclear from this exchange what exactly their superiors do, but it is clear that some form of comfort is felt by both Leah and George in having a chain of command to direct them or assist their leadership practice in some way.

When asked how influential their superiors are on their day-to-day activities, they both responded. Leah said,

> *I think they are hugely influential. We get together once a month as administrators just to talk about…things that our board is wondering about or changing policy about. After those meetings we take that back to our schools. How do we implement it? If we're talking right now about GSAs within the schools, it's really an important thing that we know how our board policy is mandating – that there is a bigger picture than we actually know in our school. The role of the board is to deeply understand that policy.*

Interviewer: "So if I can clarify, you feel it is more important the board understand how school policy works rather than this specific site?"

Leah: *"Right, yes."*

George: *"They keep us in tune with those because that is the chain of command. Alberta Ed*[ucation] *is going to go to a district office before they come to us. So that's distributed to us. So I do think they help keep us focused. We are kept to task that way so no one can stray."*

Again, both George and Leah describe an appreciation of the chain of command by linking policy creation, reform, and enforcement to those in superior positions. I wanted to keep this theme in the forefront of our conversation so I posed another question where they could expand on that link while introducing the topic of democracy. The following is what transpired: Interviewer: "Focusing on policy creation and reform, how much of an influence do your superiors have on your abilities to initiate democratic trends in your school?" Leah:

> *So some things would be policy driven. For example, do you play the national anthem in the morning? And we had a controversial school in our district because they did the Lord's Prayer at one of our schools. That was a big thing talked about at admin [istration] council. What does the School Act say? And what is the norm of the community? And Christmas concerts. Are we going to have it with a religious connotation or not? It really depends on the community. We need to know what our communities want. So, absolutely they influence us because policies influence us. We have to follow policy. But do I think that each school makes some individual decisions? Yes. Would we do that without talking to someone at central office? Probably not. It would never be within our school a top-down approach unless it was a policy.*

Interviewer: "You said it depends on the community and those values. Could you tell me more about that?" Leah:

> *"Well, it was past practice that there was a Lord's Prayer at that school and within the School Act it said that it can be said at school and most of that community was in support*

of the Lord's Prayer. There is always going to be conflict between community and policy. I think that is indicative of our school board's values. Is it indicative of everybody in the community? I wouldn't say necessarily but that is our board's policy and that is what we follow through with. In the end, we support the board's policy."

Interviewer: "Regardless of what you say?"

Leah: *"It's a tough one."*

George: *"Could we ignore it? Can we deal with it locally? Typically we stick to policy."*

When interviewing Morgan, I asked if he had faced any resistance when trying to change school policy. He replied: *"Oh, one hundred percent. I ran [an] assessment project in changing assessment practices. I still have the cut marks on my back to prove it. It is extremely difficult."* He did not mention from which direction (superiors above or staff below) this defense came from.

I asked Morgan the same question I posed to George and Leah about the influence of his superiors on his day-to-day activities. His response differed slightly from George and Leah's:

I have quite a bit of autonomy. There is certainly flexibility. My superiors – there is a high level of trust between us. They trust me to move forward in directions that are in the best interests of all of our stakeholders. I'm also given very clear boundaries and guidelines around my portfolio. We all work well with structure but I feel we perform best when we're trusted and those responsibilities are clear.

He goes on to say that his superiors have *"a huge influence"* on his ability to reform policy and that before any action is taken, he *"ha*[s] *to go through an approval process with my supervisors."*

I wanted to know how George and Leah felt about Heck and Hellinger's (1999) argument that the principal has the greatest effect upon the school community, culture, and academic results in an attempt to draw out some of their personal leadership perspectives. I asked if they agreed with Heck and Hellinger and to offer some further discussion on their answer. Leah:

> *It is a tough question. I worked with an administrator that would say 'yes' – the number one reason. I don't know that I agree with that. I think the principal is obviously involved, but I am working with ten teachers and it depends on the personalities of those teachers – and their goals. Yes, I am influencing them but not the only thing. There are too many people involved to say that one person can have the greatest effect.*

Leah admits that the principal has an effect on the school in some way but does mention that the group of staff should be held responsible as well. George, however, disagrees. George:

> *When we look at 30 staff people on board, I would say that she does have the most amount of influence because they all go to her. They are all going to her and those discussions have a bit of her in each one of those. The greatest? Yah, I think so. She's involved in everything.*

This was one of the only times in the entire interview that George seemed to disagree with Leah. George clarifies that even if those staff members do have some individuality, they still approach the principal for guidance. George mentioning that *"she's involved in everything"* suggests that school procedures, school policy, the staff, and the students are in some way reflected of her leadership. This was echoed by Morgan in his interview as well when I asked him if he agreed with Heck and Hellinger's (1999) statement:

> *Yes, I do. It's been my experience as a school principal that what I say or what actions that I have really impact what happens with the community – with the parents, with the*

> *students, with the staff. When I walk into the building as a principal, I set the tone on what that culture is going to look like…because I have contact and relationships with every single staff member within that building. It's pretty simple, if I don't see academia as a priority, staff, parents, and students are going to read that right away and so it might not be necessarily a priority for them.*

George and Morgan share the opinion that due to the personal connection with all members of the school community, the principal has the greatest effect on the school culture. I asked Mervin this question as well, and the response I received was surprising; so much so that it fit better with the theme of democratic leadership so I will speak to it when I expand on that theme in a later section.

I also asked Mervin how influential his superiors were in his day-to-day activities as principal. He replied that the superintendent was *"incredibly influential"* and the associate superintendent had *"a lot"* of influence. He mentioned that those *"main figures around me I would say affect what I might be thinking."*

The theme of obedience became most clear when I asked Morgan if policy creation and reform within his school district was a democratic process. He responded with:

> *We need to have rules and laws that everyone abides by – it's a founding principle of a democracy. But those laws need to reflect societal context and so if we look at the school division context, those policies and practices guide our work. The Board of Trustees are responsible for policy. And I should mention that the Board of Trustees are elected members of the community. It is a democratic process that lands them in those chairs.*

Administrative obligations. Another theme indicative of the situation that each of these educational leaders became apparent in the way they described their day-to-day activities. George and Leah speak to the complexity of a multitude of roles they play within the school. Not surprisingly, George and Leah find themselves incredibly busy having to manage multiple different things on a daily basis. Having been removed from the school environment completely, Morgan had less to say about his professional obligations as *"ninety percent"* of his time was spent either behind his desk in the district's central office or attending meetings.

As explained above, when asked to describe her role as a leader in the school, Leah struggled. George, perhaps empathetically, picked-up on this during her response and assisted her by interjecting, *"you do a lot with our community too right? They come to you. You are the liaison between our pack and the community. It's hard. Multiple roles all over the place."* To which Leah responded, *"Budgeting – that's definitely my role as well."*

Leah also mentioned that a lot of her time was spent in the office away from student contact: *"I do have a little bit of paper work to do. Even just emailing teachers and letting teachers know – that communication piece is quite time consuming."* George intervened in the conversation and said, *"I looked on my email and there are 85 in there".* Leah responded with, *"the minute I get an email in the evenings and the weekends, I just deal with it then. I know it annoys my husband but I feel a lot less overwhelmed at work. I get more anxious."*

When asked to tell more about why she wasn't more involved with the students, Leah responded with, *"I think once you get that management piece under control…just the little things – field trip forms, budget – that was crazy at first. It was overwhelming. But once you get that under control – 'this is the way it has to be done, people', then you can move on."* Leah to George: *"do you feel bombarded with management stuff?"*

George: *No. You take care of that stuff ahead of time. Get that stuff into place, now we have an effectively running school. Now I can deal with the leadership side of stuff. I can deal with students. I can deal with teachers going through a rough period. Those kinds of leadership things.*

It is clear through Leah's inability to effectively describe her role as the leader of the school, revealing her mental state at times to be both overwhelming and anxious, and George mentioning that leadership can only take place *after* dealing with "stuff", that these two administrators possess an incredible amount of work to do that limits their ability to play more of a leadership role.

Democratic participation in schools. Keeping my second research question in my mind (how do schools promote an authentic practice of an education for democracy and citizenship?), I asked a number of questions to probe how the participants encouraged citizenship and democracy in the students and staff in their school environment. In general, George and Leah described a school environment that lacked any authentic practice of democracy and/or citizenship. Mervin, however, provided responses that were reflective of Dewey's (1916) democratic educational philosophy.

I began the discussion on this topic by asking George and Leah how important democracy and citizenship education is at their school. First, George responded:

I think when we talk about democracy I always think about representation by population. And I do believe that's true because anything that is happening in our school, we are talking to our parent advisory committee once a month. We have a board chair – those kinds of things. They bring the voice of the student to the table. I think in any good school system, we have to hear those voices.

Leah added:

I know that some schools might have a very focused program. We don't do that at [this] *school. In the past we have. Our citizenship education part is talked more about with teachers and their relationship with the students and that being important – to always be emphasizing citizenship. So not something official, but certainly citizenship. Relationships would be one of our top priorities.*

After these responses I asked them both to describe some specific things happening in the school that relate to citizenship and democratic education. Leah responded first saying, *"we do have house leagues which is a group of students. Not only do they do sport activities – it's to promote that sense of group in everything we do – that sense of spirit in our school."* George added: *"Picking up garbage. We gave points to one student because he was picking up chairs in the gym at 7:40 in the morning. Nobody asked him to do that. So those kinds of things. We promote that."*

Leah continued: *"We also do have speakers that come in once a month on things like values, and motivational ideas, I guess. I think that George addressed the democratic control".*

I was unsure if any of their responses had anything to do with citizenship or democratic control so I helped by defining democratic control: "democratic control involves all stakeholders having a say in how things are governed. In what ways do you feel that this school environment is supportive of democratic systems of decision making? What follows is an interchange worth noting in entirety:

Leah: *"We have a band parent association. We do small things. For example, we wanted to know if Parent Teacher Interviews were going well so we did a survey when they came in. "*

George: *"Meet the teacher night. Just to bring the public in. In the spring we have a BBQ."*

Leah: *"We have a trustee that comes to our parent council members and also meets with us once a month to talk about what he is hearing and what needs to be addressed."*

George: *"We have a leadership class that goes and sings to the old folks homes. And they will be doing sidewalks and stuff like that. It ties into the community."*

I asked if they felt students were involved in policy creation and reform at the school. Leah responded:

> *Absolutely. So we ask students – for example, we were getting the Remembrance Day ceremony ready and I went into the classroom and asked, 'what do you want to see at the Remembrance Day ceremony?' It was funny. And they said, 'you are asking us? You are the adult.' They were surprised.*

Sensing some frustration in both the participants, I moved onto a similar topic hoping that they could expand on what they had mentioned so far. Interviewer:

> Many people feel that valuable lessons in citizenship are lost in the competitive environment of obtaining high grades in primary education. In a high-stakes accountability era, how can educational leaders promote an educational environment conducive to democratic and citizenship education?

George: *"I don't know."*

Leah: *"I don't know."*

George: *"Marks…seems to be the number one priority with parents. More than kids. But do they lose citizenship education?"*

Leah: *Maybe you're talking about the fact that we are focusing more on Math instead of Social Studies and citizenship. Maybe a bit of that has been lost. I think our school really understands the important part about citizenship education. I also think that historically our school was the center for a behavioural program – we had a fetal-alcohol program. So we almost focused more on the citizenship piece than the academic piece. Now we are trying to push the academic piece more.*

Interviewer: "Where is that pressure coming from?"

Leah: *"From us. I think our community deserves us to focus on the academic piece as much as the citizenship piece."*

I then asked how they believed students learn to enter and participate in the public political sphere. Again, Leah responded first:

With our leadership class that we've started this year, it certainly will. It promotes that volunteerism – which is a dying trait. We also, in Social Studies – the curriculum does lend itself – you know in grade 9 - we did our student vote the other day. We do try and have our students participate a) through volunteering in the community and b) in Social Studies classes. In Language Arts I know they are writing to companies. It would be a political voice. I think students are encouraged to talk politics in class.

Finally I asked how they thought a student would describe the democratic environment of the school. Leah responded with, *"I don't know right now that they would feel necessarily that it is democratic. I was surprised that kids were surprised when I was asking them about Remembrance Day."* George added: *"I think things have been put into place all the time. Our leadership class is one of the very few places that the students are put to task."* Leah then added:

"but I will also say, do we meet the needs of students? Yes. I had a student come and ask for a chess club and we created a chess club. I think that they realize their needs are being met. But if you stopped a kid in the hall, I don't know that they would say 'very'."

George finished the conversation: *"...that it is always the teacher's way"*.

After it seemed I had exhausted their perspectives on students getting involved in policy reform, I moved on to how they involved the staff members: "what are some ways you encourage staff members to participate in policy creation and reform?" George responded immediately: *"if there was a change to be made, we would certainly hear that from a teacher. At the end of every meeting you can add yourself to the agenda. We have the 'five good questions'. It might spark a bit of a conversation."* Leah clarified that with, *"it would definitely be through your administrators. If the staff had a problem, they would talk to the administrator and we would bring it to admin. council."*

According to Leah and George, it seems teachers do have some input into school policy but in trivial ways and only through an administrator. At least in George and Leah's case, the teachers' ability to affect school reform is limited.

In Mervin's school, however, the staff and students are central to school policy and procedures. I asked Mervin how the school environment is supportive of democratic systems of decision making. He responded that his particular school was *"very decentralized"* with *"five schools within a school"* and *"five semi-autonomous groups of teachers"*. He explained that once entering the school, students have the opportunity to choose one of five different *"learning communities*". By offering students a choice in their future educational paths, Mervin explained that this procedure taught students a democratic lifestyle but also that *"with that comes responsibility on their part"* by *"taking ownership"* over their learning.

In general, Mervin's school seemed to *feel* different to me. Immediately upon walking through the doors of the school, I noticed several students studying in a group in a central area called 'the commons' without a teacher or supervisor in sight. I continued to walk around a corner and noticed students playing volleyball with two senior citizens in the gymnasium. At the end of our interview, Mervin took me on a tour of the rest of the school. He introduced me to the group of student-centered learners (one of the five learning communities) in a corner of the school. The physical space alone was intriguing. The space resembled more of an open-concept common area than it did a typical classroom. There were no doors and no designated spots for desks or chairs save for the perimeter of the room where individual computer stations were fashioned to the wall. In the corner of the room were two teachers' desks. The rest of the space seemed to have no order whatsoever. Mervin pointed at two students he knew well. He explained that the female student was 17 and was receiving math help from a male student that had just entered the school two months prior (likely 15 years old). At a different table sat five students listening to a teacher explain cellular biology. Mervin encouraged me to speak to students. The information I gathered from two students (off-the-record) was telling. Both of them had their own individual reasons for choosing the student-centered learning approach and both of them felt they made the right decision for the kind of learner they were.

During the interview, I asked Mervin how a student might describe the democratic environment in the school. The following interchange transpired:

> Mervin: *Some democratic aspects they would say that there is more responsibility that comes with being a member with the student body here. They share a space with the public. I think that they would say that they have been given more freedom to learn how to use that, which is a key aspect of a democracy. You can't be democratic and not be*

given a freedom of choice. I think that almost unanimously [they] *would say they have that.*

Interviewer: "Do you feel that students in this school have more opportunity to participate in a democratic lifestyle than other public schools?"

Mervin: *Yes, for sure. It's a different culture. Everyone that comes says that. To go to that democratic idea, they know that they have been given freedoms. They know that with that comes responsibility on their part. Why students achieve better* [is] *because I think there is more ownership.*

I asked Mervin how important he felt citizen education is at his school. He responded: *Well I'd say we've really tried to make it a core of what we do here. And being a part of a community. The vision of this building is that it is a working building where they see that people in the community work. They see grandparents that are at work and lifelong learning. They see other groups that may be running a conference in our facilities. And part of the whole purpose of our building was actually to be a community center. And that they are citizens in the greater community. I really want them to feel that they're part of that greater community. We do the 'Cyber for Seniors' where our students are helping seniors in the town learn computer skills, and we've organized leadership conferences. We're part of a math study with Ontario Schools and Norwegian Schools. We try to reach out there.*

I asked Mervin if he felt parents and students have influence in how things are run in the school. He said, *"I'd say the students for sure do. Parents – we have a pretty active parent council. I think people are content with that."* I probed further by asking him how he involved parents of the students in his school in policy change. He explained that,

> *we do have several parent groups in the school. We have the band and sports council. With grad we have a parent council. Every major initiative has parents involved. There* [are] *a lot of lines that they can influence any procedure we might do in the school.*

In contrast to Mervin's responses, Morgan revealed much of the same issues of limited areas of citizenship as George and Leah's interview. Because Morgan has direct contact to the school board, I asked him how the school board encouraged community involvement in the schools. He responded:

> *Well it's not a free-for-all, you can imagine what it looks like. There are already established communication lines. If we talk more about the positive piece around democracy, we have policies and practices that encourages volunteerism for parents to get involved in the school. Parents attending field trips, working with kids in the school, supporting the front office, helping out with attendance and phoning home and such. At the school division level, we are always stressing the importance of our parent councils. That's a real opportunity for parent voice. It's not a free-for-all. I'll listen to a parent that is ranting, but that is probably as far as it's going to go. I might take something out of it. I think there are a ton of opportunities for students to be involved in clubs, options, and intramural programs. They are the center of the community.*

Morgan had some insightful things to say about what citizenship education ought to look like in a school district. As the director of curriculum with the school district I asked him the following question: "much of my study is based on curriculum. Would you agree that most of the outcomes in the curriculum in social studies are based on the knowledge based matters of democracy, say the House of Commons and how votes take place, and less on living a democracy?"

Morgan: *I agree with you. I would like to see more of the latter. I'm hopeful that the curriculum redesign will move us forward in that direction. There are way too many outcomes. The teachers are feeling overwhelmed. It's not a surprise that we go to a quick measuring tool like a multiple choice exam as opposed to a project that has a lot of breadth and depth to it and that kids come out with some real learning. What that does is upset the apple cart* (long pause) *it changes the status quo.*

Here, Morgan mentions that students are not learning about participating in democracy and explains that it's likely because the teachers are unable to facilitate such education due to the constraints of the curriculum. I then asked Morgan how a student would currently describe the democratic environment in any of the schools in the district to which he belongs. He said,

that's a tough question. There are so many factors. I think they would see it as being democratic. With kids sometimes you have to have a broader picture of what it is you're asking but I would hope they would say it is democratic.

Although he mentions in the previous question that the curriculum is undemocratic, he feels, at least hopeful, that the students would describe their schools as democratic.

I decided to turn the interview more towards assessment practices in hopes that Morgan would reveal a little more about the curriculum. Interviewer: "Many people feel that valuable lessons in citizenship are lost in the competitive environment of obtaining high grades in primary education. In a high-stakes accountability era, do you think citizenship and democratic education pieces are lost in this environment?"

Morgan: *Well sure because we develop these class structures. We develop the haves and the have-nots because if the currency is about marks than the 80% and above have it. Our middle class is the 55% to 75%. And then our impoverished kids are the ones that*

are failing. Those are the ones that the education system just isn't meeting. Kids are learning at a young age that there's social classes and society sees or has a particular value for each of those social classes. If you're upper class you're getting those awards, those accolades. If you're in the middle class, it's touch-and-go. And if you are in the impoverished than you are not of high enough value, I guess. And it's disappointing.

Democratic Leadership. All four participants revealed to me a range of perspectives on what they felt democratic leadership entailed. Each of them spoke to some specific procedures within their professional environment to encourage citizenship and democracy. Also, each of them revealed personal opinions on how leaders and educational systems ought to or can encourage democracy and citizenship.

Morgan spoke to the democratic or undemocratic aspects of the system early in the interview. I asked him what his position was on the effectiveness of a multi-leveled approach to how a school works. He responded:

It can be, on one side, very challenging because of the structures. And on the other side, especially if you can reach a point where there is a lot of collaboration, it can be very rich because if it is not too structured – different perspectives are a great thing. If you have a system where the structures get in the way of perspectives being shared, that's a problem. But when you have it in such a way where the structures are respected, what's put on higher value is perspectives and collaboration and an ability to work together in the best interests of the education of our kids.

Interviewer: "If I am understanding correctly, you agree with a multi-leveled approach as long as it is democratic in nature?" Morgan: *"Absolutely. That voice has to be there. When I think about democracy, I think about voice. But I certainly see the need for a hierarchy*

especially in this diverse culture and country that we live in with a lot of needs and responsibilities."

It is evident that Morgan seems to think that a hierarchy of leaders is necessary but that those leaders design a system democratic in nature that encourages voice among its members. Picking up on this I encouraged Morgan to describe some ways that he personally likes to encourage staff members to participate in policy creation and reform. He reflected on the fact that his current role demands that he spends a large portion of his time in meetings. He said, *"the way that you encourage them is to have a voice in meetings. We encourage staff to include voice and there have been many opportunities to have that voice."* Moving away from his current role, I asked him to reflect upon his previous experience as a principal and how that leader can facilitate democracy and citizenship within a school. He responded:

> *I think the biggest thing that school principals can do in our schools – whatever the important piece of culture would be – you've got to build the capacity in that building. If you're truly building capacity, you're building leadership. I think so much of it depends on your top leadership because things do run downhill. So if you have some at the top that believe in transparency and authenticity than it is going to be reflected as you move down.*

Building leadership among subordinates as a leader was central to many of Morgan's answers. The same was reflected in Mervin's interview. I asked Mervin the same question I posed to Morgan about the multi-leveled approach to school leadership. He responded in an entirely different way from Morgan:

> *If school policy doesn't come from a ground-swell it is not going to last. So the trick as a leader is – let's say you have a direction that you are hoping the school to come to – you*

have to be patient enough to wait for that to come from your teaching staff. And same at the district level. Any policy/procedure, I think that is meaningful, comes from a ground-swell of staff that express concerns and then it goes. It never works very well when it comes the other way – someone sitting in an office saying, 'I think we need this policy and this is what I want to do'.

Interviewer: "So in your experience, the most effective policy reform or creation comes from the bottom-up as opposed to the top-down."

Mervin: *"Yah, I haven't seen the other work yet."*

George and Leah responded in a different way. The following is the conversation in its entirety:

Interviewer: "How do you position yourself as the leader of the school in order to initiate democratic and citizenship education? What actions have you taken in order to represent this position?"

Leah: *So what I have done just coming into the school in the first two months, I have gone to inter-agency meetings. I have met stakeholders in the community. I have gone to open houses in the community. I'm out there meeting community members and they can talk to me about their ideas and the things that are going on. It's just trying to be out in the community. I am trying to push community.*

Interviewer: "If schools are to be democratic sites, what can school principals do to encourage and facilitate democracy in schools?"

Leah: *Number one would have to be* [being] *open to conversation and ideas. You have to be. From everybody. You cannot have people think that you are not approachable and*

are worried about coming to you with anything. I would hope people would think they can come talk to me – community and students and teachers

George: *I would like to think that I am one of the most approachable people in the building. If you have that demeanour that no matter what you will be listened to, you'll never walk away feeling humbled or silly, you will always have that voice. Someone once told me that if you want to avoid* [problems] *in your school, be present, walk around, talk to students, be everywhere.*

It is evident in this conversation that George and Leah share the opinion that the school leader ought to be approachable to staff and student concerns and needs. Similar to Morgan's statement, George and Leah's response also hints that the leader plays a central role in school change.

Mervin had more to say about the structure of his school district and the position its leaders were taking after I asked him how influential his superior were on his abilities to initiate democratic trends in the school. He responded: *"they have really taken a hands-off approach with us. 'What can we do to support you and what you want to do in your building?' I have never felt like I was having to be compliant. That's why I think the place looks so different."* I asked if he felt the school board was supportive of the things he does in the school. He responded:

For sure. Our superintendent is smart enough to know – let the school come up with stuff within certain parameters, and good things will happen. I have never worried about initiatives that we might be thinking about. I don't think he could tell you what our timetable is or anything like that. I think he would feel very comfortable with what's going on here.

I moved the conversation with Mervin in a direction where he would be able to express specific things that he does as a leader to involve student input in school policy. He responded:

> [Students] *know that when they are making a decision that I am going to abide by that decision. We are not – with our students – we're not, 'I'm voted as president, I'm voted as this'. It is more of a committee shared responsibility. That's just not how we do it. It's more democratic than that I think. It's more of a direct democracy.*

The conversation took a surprising turn when he explained his views on policy in general in absence of a leading question:

> *I never think of things we do in the school as policy. I think that is an old term. I think that is an old term in school language. Procedure maybe. Policy to me sounds a permanent thing and I don't think anything in schools today – in our society – I think procedures have to change all the time so I'm very careful with that word.*

Interviewer: "Would you say that policy is a less democratic word than procedure?"

Mervin: *"Yes, I do. I guess in the education world I think policy at the board level and it's overriding things tied to the School Act whereas what I do is procedure in my school. It is more like classroom pedagogy and learning."*

Interviewer: "How about something like discipline?"

Mervin: *"You would be hard pressed to find rules in this school. If the students feel like we have* [a] *hat rule, they are going to feel that the school has a lot of rules. In reality we don't have a lot of rules. It's a pretty self-governing group. I can spend two hours with you and not worry about what my students are doing."*

Interviewer: "How do you feel that is in comparison to other public schools?"

Mervin: *I used to be in this school before that happened. And it was more traditional. When I first became principal, I'd say that a good day was the hallways were empty, the doors were shut. It works a lot better in a democracy in a school if there isn't a sense of us against them. And I think when I go to schools – and I visit with a lot of them – we have many that come to visit – and they use the term policy, and it makes me get my back up because I know that that is just not an environment that I would facilitate.*

I then asked questions specific to how Mervin encourages staff in changing a procedure at the school. He first explained that at the district level, there were two groups he felt had a significant influence on how things were run: the 'Teachers Matter Committee' and the 'Superintendent Advisory Committee'. He explained that the former is a group of teachers that meet directly with the school board and central office members to talk about issues involved in the school district. The latter is a group of administrators that meet with the superintendent for the same reason. Mervin then explained more about his specific school site:

We spend time in each of our staff meetings going through what was brought up in those meetings and then we do a thing we call Project Tunes. When we are doing a new initiative – it's a process where a presentation is given to a group of colleagues. They just help tune whatever the initiative is. So if a teacher wanted to do something different, than we would suggest a Project Tune and then some colleagues would look at it objectively.

I asked Mervin if he agreed with Heck and Hellinger's statement mentioned earlier in this section. He began his response in the same was Leah did but held a completely different view as to why:

The greatest…it's against my nature to say the greatest. They have a major influence by the controls that they are willing to keep and share. To say the greatest…very important because the power and leverage of decision making can stop with them or they can open it up to everybody. That makes their role important from that angle. You have to let people fly with their passions. As a principal, that is my main job – finding out what the passion of each of the staff members are – finding out what matters to them. Micro-managing each of their initiatives – forget it. I just think in a mind of a principal – this was a real realization for me when I was doing some tours around – I was hearing, 'in my school I do this, I do that'. It dawned on me that this school is a community, teachers, students, me (physically motioning concentric circles moving inward). *As I was saying 'my', that is really wrong. I focused on that whole phraseology of 'our'. When I talk I am very mindful of when I talk with parents and community members, I talk about 'our' school because we share this facility with the community.*

Finally, I asked what school principals can do to encourage and facilitate democracy in schools. Mervin responded:

By being an active participant in it. I am the principal but I am also part of a group of democratic teachers that are working with a group of students. It all comes back to the thing of teaching. I am a colleague first. I think that one of the things that has allowed that is a trust between colleagues and me and colleagues and each other and that doesn't happen if you become too top-down.

Conclusion

Four public school administrators at three different professional levels were personally interviewed in this study. George, Leah, Morgan, and Mervin provided detailed descriptions of their past and present teaching and administrative positions. They also provided to me their perspectives on democratic and citizenship education.

Four general themes were revealed in their responses: obedience, administrative obligations as a barrier to leadership, democratic leadership, and democratic participation in schools. George, Leah, and Morgan (all three from the same school district) tended to respond to my questions of democratic and citizenship education in similar ways. Mervin's responses proved him to be an outlier in the study. Further discussion about the analysis of their responses will take place in the next section.

Chapter Six: Analysis

From listening to the participants it became clear that these school administrators all hold different perspectives on what democratic and citizenship education is, how it can be promoted by the education leader, and practiced by the staff and students of a school district and/or a school.

Data was coded into four themes to be analyzed and was cross-referenced with findings in the literature. In this section, I analyzed the participants' responses by cross-referencing with the findings in the literature.

All four participants explained various ways they encouraged staff and/or students to show citizenship in the school communities. One participant's responses proved to illicit an environment conducive to participative involvement while all three other participants within the same school district proved to explain instances of either pseudo-citizenship or citizenship in very limited locations.

The topic of democratic leadership was expressed thoroughly by all four participants and each participant had their own perspective on what democratic leadership ought to be about. Also, what seemed common among George, Leah, and Morgan in one school district on how they modeled democratic leadership was completely different from Mervin at a different school within a different school district.

Three of the four participants revealed that their obligations as administrators prevented them from leading in a way that empowered students to be democratic. Although it is unclear if that inability was caused systemically or induced personally, it remained the case that democracy and citizenship education was not of primary importance to their daily roles as school leaders.

Obedience proved to be a common theme revealed by all of the participants. Some of the participants explained why obedience is necessary in schools. In contrast, one participant presented school policy and procedure that attempts to break down the importance of obedience.

Obedience in Educational Contexts

"Some students like to have some decisions made for them. It becomes tough when you open it up to them. [Students] *are baffled and stumble because they are not used to having to make those decisions"* (Interview, George).

In review of the data, it became apparent that the theme of obedience was tied to all three of my research questions. Each participant made it clear that they had some kind of authoritative power but were responsible to a higher authority as well. An aspect of comfort in that middle position also became evident. There were also telling comments from George, Leah, and Morgan that revealed where students fit into the obedient positions within the school.

Early in the interview process with three of the four participants (George, Leah, and Morgan), it became apparent that each of them was very clear on their position within the bureaucratic chain of management of the school/school district and was able to describe their role in reference to leadership positions above and subordinates below. This is indicative of the bureaucratic management culture that many authors speak to in the literature (see specifically Bowles & Gintis, 1976 and Portelli & Solomon, 2001). However, one administrator (Mervin) provided outlying data that put far less emphasis on the influence of his superiors. Also, Morgan mentioned the hardship of trying to change school policy. This indicates that an educational leader of a specific site does have the power to lead an individual school in a specific way despite being a part of the overarching school district. As was evident in this study, these efforts

can take time and a considerable amount of effort considering that educational administrators may face challenging resistance from both superiors and subordinates.

George's comments supports many scholars' arguments on the autocratic environment of schools today. It also supports Lippman's (1925) platonic views of the incapability of the common citizen in participative governance. Many responses from George and Leah (eg. the responses from Leah about her students' reaction to her request to change the Remembrance Day ceremony), speak to the pervasiveness of a lack of student participation in the governance of their schools. The fact that students struggle with the idea that they have the power to participate in change shouldn't discourage any educational administrator from allowing students to do so. Conversely, it speaks to the need for more opportunities for students to participate in a multitude of school governance projects in resistance to dominant ideologies. George assumes that students prefer to have decisions made for them because, in his experience, students struggle with making decisions. But isn't the whole purpose of school to learn? Shouldn't the opportunity to learn how to make difficult decisions be an integral part of the public school system? Gramsci, Dewey, and Friere, to name a few, sure think so.

The power to change the dominant ideology of the system of education lies in the capable hands of those at the top of the bureaucratic chain of school administration. As the data suggests, some individuals in those roles are hesitant to share that power. Three of the four participants (George, Leah, and Morgan) expressed a desire to remain obedient to this social construct, despite concerns from members of the school community. It is of little coincidence that Morgan supports the chain of command as he is one of the very few individuals in his school district currently near the top of control. Although George and Leah do not occupy a position of power

like Morgan occupies, they do possess a great deal of power over the staff and students of their school and thus also support a system of control that places them at the top.

It is surprising that Mervin feels so differently about the power that his superiors have over him. In his responses, Mervin does say that the superintendent is "*incredibly influential*" but only in "*what I might be thinking*". These comments reveal that although his superiors are influential, Mervin mentions that they're more influential on his role as principal and less influential on the staff or students and procedures that take place within his school. It seems from Mervin's responses that decisions are not passed down to him from above. Instead, it seems that Mervin encourages his staff and students to make decisions for the school, within the boundaries of an overriding provincial or federal document (School Act), and it is his role to communicate those decisions to the top. The data also shows that Mervin feels comfortable that his superiors support what is happening at his school through trust shared between himself and his superiors. This is also evident in the way his superiors have taken a "*hands-off approach*" to the procedures in the school. In this instance, obedience is not the preferred method of systemic order.

From their responses, it seems that a commonly held perspective among Morgan, George, and Leah that an obedient staff and an obedient body of students results in an effectively run school. George admitted that he "*look*[ed] *for answers*" from his superiors while being careful not to "*overstep* [his] *bounds*". George felt this helped "*keep* [the school administrators] *in tune*" and "*focused*" so that "*no one can stray*". Leah mentioned that this was desirable because the board can help the administrators by giving them the "*bigger picture than we actually know in our school".*

The three examples that Leah used as policy issues that affect her school and another school were the initiation of a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), the Lord's Prayer as a daily routine,

and Christmas concerts having a religious connotation. Contradictions were abundant in her description of her position on these examples. She stated that the norm of the community needed to considered and that it "*really depends on the community*". Immediately after, however, she stated that "[the administrators] *have to follow policy*". She continued to explain the issue by mentioning that "*there is always going to be conflict between community and policy*" and that somehow it is "*indicative of* [the] *school board's values*".

Here we can see that despite a minority of members (perhaps a student, an educational leader, or community member in this case) within a school community's desire to change site specific school policy, both Leah and George mention an inability to do so because educational administrators prefer to follow policy. It appears that no matter what is deliberated, both George and Leah prefer to adhere to school board policy and that "*in the end, we support the board's policy*". It is clear that Leah and George prefer to be obedient to overriding school policy rather than taking an active position to challenge it.

I found the greatest abundance of contradictions between statements of democracy and obedience in Morgan's statements. When asked how influential his superiors were on his day-to-day activities, Morgan responded that he had autonomy and flexibility while also stating that he was "*given very clear boundaries and guidelines*" where his "*responsibilities are clear*". Morgan then mentioned that his superiors trust him to make decisions that "*are in the best interests of all* [the] *stakeholders*". Regardless of whether his superiors trust Morgan or not, the clear boundaries and guidelines provided to him will obviously influence any decisions he makes. Although Morgan chose to begin his response with a democratic theme, he quickly morphs his answer in a more authoritative direction. Morgan, not unlike George and Leah, finds comfort in abiding by direction from above by arguing that "*we all work well with structure*". It is the clear

boundaries and guidelines that structure Morgan's role that relieve his superiors of their trust in his professional decisions.

It was also evident that when Morgan attempted to change policy, he faced resistance – so much so that he felt the need to use a physical metaphor of abuse to describe it (cut marks). The resistance Morgan describes here is similar to the push-back that Shields (2014) described in her study spoken to in the literature review where educators faced resistance from all directions when attempting to initiate more democratic procedures and policies in their schools. This resistance is indicative of an organization of individuals that prefer to remain obedient in a system of control.

Morgan was able to express that the Board is established by a representative democratic system where citizens of the county are able to vote for members of the Board. He feels that this justifies their ability to create and reform policy that "*guides* [his] *work*". He mentioned that having rules and laws that everyone abides by is a founding principal of democracy. He then argued that those laws ought to reflect the societal context and the same must be said about policy that the Board creates and passes down to the schools.

Morgan states that trust flows in two ways within his profession. I gather from Morgan's statements that he has trust in the democratically established school board to create policies that represent the values of the school district. As explained above, it is not important that the school board trust Morgan to adhere to the policies because the policies dictate how he is to act accordingly. However, it is important for the very existence of the school board that Morgan trusts in them, for if he does not, he may begin to question their authority. Moreover, the school board can demand Morgan's trust to a certain extent because they have the authority to eliminate him professionally from the position. This places Morgan in a precarious position because he

must convince his subordinates to enact school policy created from his superiors. And if he does not, the school board does have the capability to remove him and find someone who will.

Overall, it is clear Morgan, George, and Leah are obedient to the policy that their Board creates and are hesitant to resist or reform them. It is also clear that all three of these participants trust and are obedient to the system that has put them in varying degrees of positions of power. Outlying data has been presented in Mervin's case where his superiors do not create policies for his school and have given Mervin the autonomy to do so on his own. Even with this extraordinary amount of power, however, Mervin has chosen to redistribute this power to his staff and prefers an educational institution free from control and obedience.

Administrative Obligations as Limiting Factors to Democratic Leadership: Democracy the Last Task.

"I think once you get that management piece under control…then you can move on" (Interview, Leah).

"Get that stuff into place, now we have an effectively running school. Now I can deal with the leadership side of stuff" (Interview, George).

"The vice principalship is by far the hardest job in the school. You find yourself in no-mans-land between the staff and administration. That's when I really felt like I was a manager more than anything. Not a leader, not an administrator. Management to me means you don't really move things forward – you manage situations. My role is about moving things forward." (Interview, Morgan)

"In reality we don't have a lot of rules. It's a pretty self-governing group" (Interview, Mervin)

It goes without question that an educational administrator has an enormous range of duties within their professional role. The responses from George and Leah revealed that their ability to lead a school staff was limited by their administrative obligations. Simply put, there is too much 'stuff' to do as an administrator that keeps them from leading a school in a more democratic way. Especially in Leah's case, budgetary, paper work, and email obligations restrict her role as a leader in the school. George mentioned that disciplinary issues took the majority of his time spent in the office. This seems as no surprise considering that a consequence of such a rule-based system requires so much discipline. The result of a system organized this way will place democracy as the last task to be done.

The administrative experiences of George, Leah, and Morgan present a school system modeled after neoliberal ideologies where efficiency and effectiveness are of primary institutional importance. As Apple (2007) argued, the neoliberalization of the public school system has convinced people that this is the proper way to run a school and these three participants' responses proved to reflect the literature. Mervin's statements, however, were reflective of Carr (2014), Giroux (2005), and Gutmann's (1987) contentions that a fundamental purpose of schools is to develop democratic competencies. Mervin stated that once he relinquished his power to both staff and students, much of the daily managerial issues that plagued his position earlier in his career seemed to disappear.

Once the management pieces of their daily responsibilities have taken place, both Leah and George felt that only then was leadership possible. In Mervin's case, however, his responses revealed an incredibly different approach to staff and student participation in school governance. Mervin found that when given the opportunity of choice, students and staff felt empowered to take responsibility and ownership over their school. Not only did this result in "*students*

achieving better", it resulted in an educational environment with less rules and less disciplinary issues. It also resulted in teachers being so passionate about their school that the school became a UNESCO ASPNET designated school (en.unecso.org). Mervin's school showcases how participative governance can lead to great things while also giving the opportunity for staff and students to live and learn a democratic lifestyle in an environment mostly free of obedience.

Morgan's comments show that individuals in a position at the district office level have the capability to 'lead' where school administrators do not. Having been removed from the school, Morgan mentioned that his ability to lead became easier as he had less to manage. Throughout the interview with Morgan, I sensed that he was much more comfortable and satisfied in his current role than his past careers as principal and vice principal. He spoke repeatedly about the capability of his current role in leading groups of staff members and administration. Although his comments on his leadership style were undemocratic, leadership was a theme revealed much more often than management or administration. It is clear that his high occupational position within the school district allows him to experience more power.

Morgan felt he had the power to propose changes and influence others while the data revealed that George and Leah had far less power to do so. Morgan referred to himself as middle management but I found through George and Leah's responses that they suited this title much more than Morgan did. Morgan consistently spoke to leadership as a dominant feature of his job. The directions that Morgan wanted the school district to move towards were communicated to administrators at administration meetings. From these meetings, the administrators were responsible to bring those initiatives to their specific school. It is, in fact, the principal and vice principal that holds the title "*puppet regime*" that Morgan ascribed to his role. Although Leah stated that being an instructional leader was her primary role, she did not reveal one example of

what this entailed in the entire interview. It became most clear that Leah's role lacked few characteristics of leadership when she seemed confused about how to describe her role as a leader within the school.

Mervin's case presented outlying data respective of George and Leah's comments that showed his ability to lead the staff by redistributing power to others. Mervin found that allowing students to choose their educational path resulted in very few students being involved in disciplinary actions. He felt that upon taking ownership over their own learning, students became more responsible for their actions. This kept them out of the office and allowed more time for Mervin to lead his staff and students by having less to manage.

Pseudo-democracy, Limited Areas of Citizenship, and Authentic Citizenship.

The data exposed many examples of undemocratic practices by both staff and students in policy creation and reform. Practices mirroring the findings of Saxena (2011), White (2011), and Leal (2011) of participation in school governance in most cases in this study were non-evident, pseudo-democratic, or limited to few un-meaningful areas. I learned from the perspectives of George, Leah, and Morgan that democracy as an ideology was unclear, impossible, and/or undesirable in their educational environments. Mervin's case, however, proved to be different.

Mervin made it clear very early in his interview the perspective he takes on a top-down approach to policy creation and reform. In his 36 years of educational experience, he said that he has not seen a top-down approach "*work*". I interpret this to mean that Mervin has witnessed resistance of one sort or another to policy that has been introduced from the top. It is important that we locate from which level of the school institution that resistance is coming from. If the staff members are displeased, it is obvious that an opportunity to include input arising from their

professional experience and personal beliefs into the policy creation and/or reform has been denied. If resistance is being displayed by the students, it is clear that their collective voice as the beneficiary of the education system has been ignored as is often typically the case. Either way, resistance experienced from the teaching staff and/or the student body is a great indicator that policy that has been introduced is void of any input from the most important people in the school; those that learn and those that teach them. It also serves as a constant reminder to those same individuals that their position of power is very limited as is likely never to change.

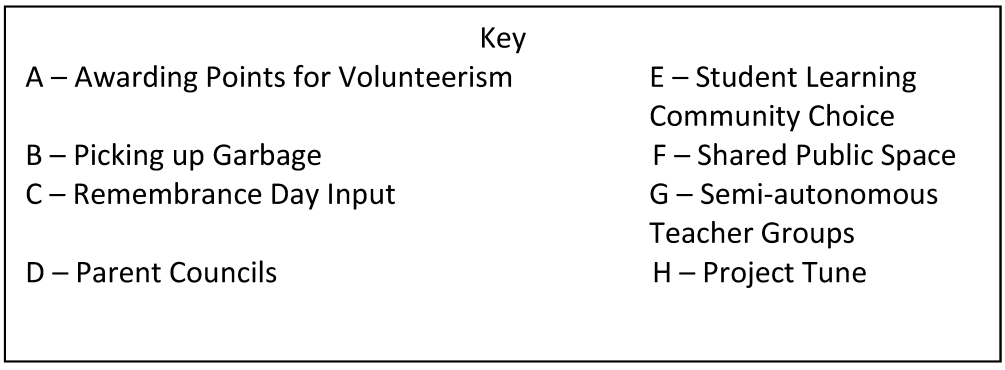
In terms of the reproduction of a docile and technically literate workforce, some have argued that policy creation from the top-down is proving that the education system is actually 'working' very well (Apple, 1982; Apple & Beane, 2007; Bowles & Gintis, 1976, Portelli & Solomon, 2001). Considering Mervin's comment, it seems there are staff members and students cognizant of their position of power and have expressed their desire for a more democratic procedure into policy creation and reform.

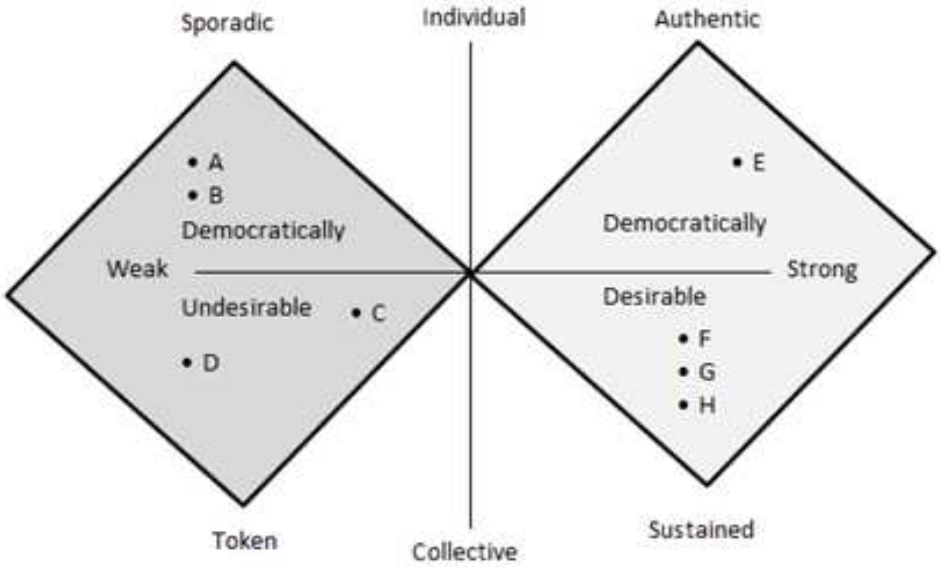
Apple and Beane (2007) express that long lasting and meaningful democratic processes are created from bottom-up collaboration. Perspectives of the inclusion of voice in procedure and policy creation and reform were evident in all four participants but of varying degrees and in different positions. George and Leah spoke to the importance of being approachable as a school leader in order for staff and students to voice their concerns but only to the point where it doesn't interfere with policy. Being approachable is one thing, but as Woods (2005), Woods and Gronn (2009), and Starratt (2004, 2010) have all argued, encouraging the opportunities necessary for staff members to have direct input into policy creation and reform is far more substantially democratic. George and Leah also mentioned that the capability to include the voice of the staff in policy matters within the district was important, as did Morgan. By being involved in the

community in some ways, Leah felt that she is attempting to create some kind of direction of citizenship in her school community. Although this is an admirable attempt by Leah to involve her school in the community, the examples that she provided (shown in the chart below) are mostly closed spaces where very little authentic democratic form or publicness is evident.

All three made it clear that bottom-up collaboration was not currently practiced. Information (concerns/ideas/voice) from the bottom (students, staff, parents) had to be filtered through the administrator first before being brought to the school district meetings. This is a process reflective of a representative system of governance. Again, this gives the administrator a great deal of power. They can choose to voice that information or not when they meet with members of the top (directors, superintendents, school board). As the administrator continues to have the power to make the decisions at the top, nothing in terms of creating a more democratic school environment is likely to occur. In these two cases, the administrator is a barrier to democratic control. Direct communication links between parents, students, and staff to those in the school district office and school board are lacking. Without this kind of process, bottom-up collaboration is nonexistent. In George, Leah, and Morgan's cases, no administrator risked adopting procedures that challenged this process.

I asked George, Leah, and Mervin to provide examples of democracy or citizenship education in their respective schools. Here is a graphic along with a key that represents where these examples fit in terms of democratic theory on four continuums (weak to strong participation, individual or group form, authentic or token power, and sporadic or sustained duration):





George and Leah gave an abundance of examples that are very similar to the token nature that Arnstein (2011) describes and the research projects of Saxena (2011), White (2011), and Leal (2011) spoken to in the second chapter. There were also some examples of democracy and citizenship education provided by George and Leah did not fit anywhere in the above graphic because they fundamentally lack any defining characteristics of democratic or citizenship education. Those are: *"Mee*t*-the-Teacher Night*", "*emphasizing the relationship between student and teacher",* holding a *"spring BBQ", "inviting speakers of values and motivational ideas once a month",* and *"*[administrator] *initiating a chess club for students"*. All of these examples are democratically undesirable as they represent procedures weak in participation, token in nature, and cannot be sustained over time.

In Mervin's case, however, procedures in his school prove to be theoretically aligned with authentic democracy and citizenship. The examples Mervin provided are democratically desirable as they encourage a strong amount of participation, are authentic in nature, and are sustainable over time.

Although the above examples, including plotted points A, B, and C, can be perceived as positive things George and Leah are doing/encouraging within their school, they are by no means strong authentic forms of citizenship or democracy. What is most alarming is that George and Leah seem to understand that these are meaningful ways to educate and practice democracy and citizenship in a school community.

Leah felt that her school "*really understands the important part about citizenship education*" but clarified that "*a bit of it ha*[d] *been lost*" by "*focusing more on Math instead of Social Studies and citizenship*". In an attempt to understand why this was the case, I asked Leah where the pressure to do this was coming from to which she admitted, "*from us*". She felt the "*community deserve*[d] *us to focus on the academic piece as much as the citizenship piece".* It is evident in this comment that Leah has made a decision for the school and the community; a decision that prioritizes academia over citizenship.

Other than asking the students themselves to describe the democratic environment of their schools, the next best option available to me in this study was to ask the participants how they thought students in their schools would answer. Two of the four participants (George and Leah) felt that their students would not describe their school as democratic. Of the other two that felt that their students would describe their schools as democratic, Mervin's case presented the best examples of democratic control. Morgan stated that he would "*hope* [the students] *would say it is democratic*". He failed to mention any reason why that would be the case. Hoping the students would think that the schools are democratic would serve Morgan well. Whether the students would actually say that or not is still questionable. It is interesting to note that Morgan's subordinates (George and Leah) disagreed with him on this matter. It must also be noticed that

George and Leah deal with students on a regular basis where Morgan does not. These two points lead me to conclude that Morgan's hope is sure to be distant and unrealized.

Morgan's response to the loss of democratic and citizenship educational pieces in today's accountability era was perhaps most telling. Although it was unclear whether Morgan understood the question completely or not, he did state in his response that students are losing valuable lessons in citizenship because of class structures of grades used as currency being developed. He explained this by equating that the students with high grades are the high class that is winning awards and accolades, the middle grades with the middle class, and the low grades as "*impoverished*". Morgan mentions that the system is teaching kids "*at a young age that there's social classes and society sees or has a particular value for each of those social classes*". Much of the literature agrees and deems this knowledge as cultural capital (Apple, 1982; Apple & Beane, 2007, Apple & Buras, 2006; Hyslop & Morginson, 2000; Portelli & Solomon, 2001).

Perhaps the greatest area of control for the students was provided by Mervin's explanation of the opportunity given to the students to choose which of the five different learning committees they would be involved with. Having students take ownership and responsibility for their choices is a democratic lifestyle that Mervin allows and Dewey and Friere would approve of. This educational practice also supports Slater's (1994) argument that people's desire and capacity to lead democratic lives ought to be reflective of the democratically committed goals of the educational institution.

Teachers were also given some control into the educational practice of Mervin's school. Having five different learning communities effectively *"decentralized"* the school and provided the teachers the opportunity to be *"five semi-autonomous groups"* that are somewhat able to decide how their respective learning community functioned.

By sharing the building with the public as a "*working building"*, Mervin felt that students can learn to be "*citizens in the greater community*" and learn valuable lessons in citizenship. Although this is not reflective of Mervin's leadership practice, it does demonstrate how the physical design of an educational environment can lend itself to democratically desirable elements that encourage public involvement in public education.

Democratic Leadership.

As Hoy and DiPaolo (2009) argued, school administrators can choose to act authoritatively or democratically. In either instance, the school principal plays the key role. One sees the administrator as school autocrat dictating how the school will function. And the other sees the administrator in redistributing her power to others within the school. The choice to practice democratic leadership is ultimately the administrator's.

However, as is clear in Mervin's case, acting as a democratic leader, and being able to keep your job, may only be possible when the powers above allow for those below to participate in the governance of the school.

Two of the four participants agreed with Heck and Hellinger's statement that the principal has the greatest effect upon the school community, culture, and academic results. Ironically, it was the two principals interviewed in this study that felt differently. One felt that the plurality of views within the school staff alone rendered her incapable of playing such an important role. The other principal felt that it wasn't his duty to be the most important figure.

In Mervin's case, it was revealed through the expansion of his answer that the principal could play the most important role if he/she chose to control certain aspects of the job. After relinquishing that power, Mervin found that he didn't need to be the most important figure in the

school. The group of staff, principal included, turned into a collective group of individuals sharing power together. He also stated that in order to lead in a democratic way, the principal ought to "*be patient enough to wait for* [a desired change in the school] *to come from* [the] *teaching staff*." Mervin speaks against Morgan's leadership style saying that, "*it never works very well when it comes the other way – someone sitting in an office saying, 'I think we need this policy and this is what I want to do"*". Although both Morgan and Mervin agree that the leader is in a key position to encourage a more democratic environment, they disagree on how that takes place. In Morgan's response, the leader ought to promote democracy by establishing democratic structures and policies that encourage voice while still leaving the power in the leader's hands. In Mervin's response, the leader ought to remove him/herself from policy creation and reform and facilitate change by encouraging staff to take charge despite personal desires to change the school.

Mervin's capability to lead students in a democratic way was evident in his statement that he would abide by decisions that the students make. He described this process as a direct democracy with a shared responsibility. In Leah's case, her response, however humble, seemed unjustified. This was then further supported by George's response that in his perspective, as her subordinate, she was the most important figure in the school.

Both George and Morgan explained that as the leader of a school, the principal has the most influence on school community, culture, and academic results simply by assuming the title of the job itself. Being the principal involves many duties, one of which involves communicating with the staff in the school. George and Morgan both felt that the communication piece had a tremendous effect on the day-to-day activities within the school because any decision made in the building would have been influenced by the communication between staff and principal.

Morgan and Mervin both felt that to lead is to cultivate leadership capabilities in others. These perspectives mirror Starrat's (1994) argument that by redistributing power to staff members, the principal has the very unique ability to facilitate change by encouraging individual members within a group of staff to take ownership over policy creation and reform. In this way, Mervin modeled Starrat's 'first among equals' approach to leadership. Morgan did not. On two instances, Morgan spoke to his capabilities to lead others by proposing changes that he alone decided while being careful to do this in a way that would not overwhelm both educational administrators and teaching staff.

Mervin's perspectives on the difference between policy and procedure were intriguing. Mervin felt that by defining these two terms in specific ways, he was able to avoid stagnation and undemocratic issues of school control. By attaching the term policy to the school board and "*overriding things tied to the School Act*", Mervin expressed that procedure was a better term that suited what he, the staff, and the students at the school did on a regular basis. He felt that procedures had to change consistently. His articulation of the word procedure as being democratic guides him to lead in a democratic way by allowing change to occur as needed. His avoidance of the term policy is democratic because he "*know*[s] *that that is just not an environment that* [he] *would facilitate*". Even his choice in using the word 'facilitate' instead of something like 'allow' or 'condone' is especially admirable. Mervin's democratic leadership style is also evident in other ways he chooses to articulate himself. This is evident in the passage when he explains his use of the pronoun 'our' instead of 'my' when describing the school to which he belongs.

Mervin's statement on how a principal can encourage and facilitate democracy in schools is indicative of democratic leadership. His first sentence, "*by being an active participant in it*", is

most revealing. He describes himself as but one individual of many teachers working with a bunch of students. Acting and behaving in democratic way has allowed Mervin to participate in changes within the school as a colleague and not direct it as a principal. By focusing on this leadership style, he is able to open school governance for all to participate in.

Conclusion

Themes reflective of the literature were revealed upon analysis of the data: obedience in educational contexts, administrative obligations as limiting factors to democratic leadership, pseudo and authentic democracy and citizenship education, and democratic leadership. Three of the four participants' (George, Leah, and Morgan) understanding of democracy and citizenship education were reflected in the democratically challenged schools that they led. Mervin's responses provided examples of policies and procedure in his school that were democratically rich and authentic.

George, Leah, and Morgan revealed through their responses a sense of comfort in the bureaucratic chain of command. Each of them expressed in different ways a preference to this kind of system of leadership and control. Mervin, however, expressed that upon reflecting on current and past administrative practice, he has noticed a positive change in student behaviour after adopting more democratic procedures in his time as principal of the school.

George and Leah struggle professionally because administrative obligations limit their ability to lead in an effective way. In George, Leah, and Morgan's case, democracy can only take place once order has been established, and when it does, participation of staff and students is sporadic and token in nature. Having distributed his leadership to the staff at his school, Mervin

found his administrative obligations less troublesome and far less constrictive on his ability to facilitate democratic efforts initiated by his staff and students.

Mervin provided some examples of democratically rich procedures of control for both the staff and students of his school while George and Leah provided examples either limited in scope and duration or democratically void altogether (see Arnstein's (2011) ladder). These examples proved to be reflective of their understanding of democracy.

Mervin's leadership practices align with what Woods (2005), Woods & Gronn (2009), and Starratt (2004) have determined as democratic leadership while any leadership practices revealed from George, Leah, and Morgan were found to resemble a more authoritative style approach to school leadership typical of the business ideological model of organizational leadership brought about in the early 20th century by Weber (1924) and Taylor (1912).

In conclusion, the physical design of Mervin's school combined with Mervin's democratic leadership practice, have affected the democratically rich educational environment of the school while Leah and George's educational environment, also affected by their perspectives on democracy and democracy, lead educational institutions that are severely democratically challenged.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions, Reflections and Recommendations

The goal of this study was to understand educational administrators' perspectives on and experience with democracy and citizenship education relative to their specific contexts. Achieving a better understanding of this topic is important if we are to aid educational leaders in their capacity to encourage an educational environment that will cultivate the necessary skills and knowledge of a democratic life that will contribute to a strong and legitimate public sphere. A strong and legitimate public sphere has the potential to bring about a society that possesses the competencies to lead a more democratically empowered life. This is the promise of democracy. With that in mind, I have some reflections and recommendations to make that I would like to discuss before closing.

Each one of my participants was able to tell me a tremendous amount about how an educational leader deals with democracy and citizenship education. Through their responses, it became evident that three of them (George, Leah, and Morgan) shared similar conceptions of how democracy and citizenship is to exist in the public education system while another (Mervin) shared a completely different understanding and experience of the same topics. In all four participants, there is a strong correlation between how each of them understands democracy and citizenship education and the policy and procedures that take place in their schools. In that regard, it can be concluded that the perspectives held by educational leaders of democracy and citizenship education do indeed have an effect on how individuals in the buildings learn about and participate in these tremendously important matters.

What this means, of course, is that educational leaders must be properly prepared to lead a school in a way that encourages an education steeped in democracy and citizenship, whether that be by initiating or reforming school policy conducive to such an environment or by

practicing leadership in a manner that is untypical of our time. This requires a very different kind of leader: one that is capable of enacting the role so well described by Woods (2005), Woods and Gronn (2009), and Starratt (2004, 2010) in order to bring about a society that can solve the problems plaguing the public sphere (Dewey, 1927; Habermas, 1964). It also means that certain educational policy and leadership practices ought to be avoided or challenged in order to avoid creating an educational environment that is inhibits the cultivation of the skills and behaviors an individual needs in order to enter and participate in the public sphere.

George, Leah, and Morgan paint a picture of an education system incapable to meet these demands. These three participants described policy and procedure that either completely lacked student or staff participation or, at the very most, was token in nature. The kind of education system that these three participants revealed presents a disheartening future of democracy and citizenship. If there are more school environments and school leaders that share similar patterns and themes of school function as these, I can conclude that democracy is in a lot of trouble.

I do not intend to bereave the point that there may be many educational leaders that are doing fine democratic work. In this study, Mervin is an example of this kind of leader. Mervin's case presents many points from which recommendations can be made. In general, Mervin represents a model educational leader to which others can aspire to. The democratic school environment that Mervin leads is reflective of his desire to include more participation from the students and staff in the building. He is capable of doing this because he leads by democratic example. He attends to democracy and citizenship first, unlike the other three participants in this study. He distributes his power to the staff and supports procedures that begin from a ground-swell of teacher ideas and work. He encourages his staff and students to take risks, learn from their mistakes, experience success, and take ownership over their decisions and actions while

remaining accountable to the group. By encouraging a high level of participation in policies and procedures that are sustainable and persistent, students and staff are learning the skills demanded of a strong and legitimate public sphere.

If social justice is to become a prominent theme in public schools, let it be recommended that individuals that hold power within the public school system (superintendents, directors, school principals and vice principals) do what they can under the current circumstances to create policy and act in a manner that is theoretically practical to the democratic ideal. I feel this is an honorable goal for a public school leader to make and work towards, for at the very minimum, the struggle in the journey of achieving that goal will implore a critical and reflective leadership practice of selflessness and powerful public potential.

Insofar as democracy and citizenship remain important concepts in our current and future society, I am also able to recommend that educational administrator and leadership preparation courses (like the very one I am currently enrolled) place a significant importance on including the themes of democracy and citizenship in the course-work in all required classes and not simply include them as the focus of a stand-alone optional course on its own. Democracy and citizenship are staples of school leadership, not supplements. With more educational leaders properly prepared to lead democratically, the school will begin to function as an institution truly *for and by* the public and lead our future society on a righteous path towards the public good.

Emerging Questions

There are a number of questions that come to the fore upon reflection of this study. Questions of this kind are valuable to the new horizon that is the study of democratic school leadership because they may help focus future research endeavors in the field.

Upon reflection, this study would have benefitted from understanding how the participants' Master level education helped or impeded their democratic school leadership practices. All four participants had mentioned in a description of their journey to their current role that they had obtained a Master degree. I did not dwell on this information because I felt it was beyond the scope of this study. Now I feel studies similar to Shields' (2014) on the effect of graduate level school leadership preparation courses on school leadership practices should be widespread and prominent. It was revealed to me near the end of writing this thesis that graduate courses that focus on democracy, social justice, and critical pedagogy are rather new to the educational administration field of study. If educational administrative programs of study were to include mandatory courses of this kind, would there be more school leaders attempting to encourage democratic and citizenship education and would it change their day-to-day leadership practice? Would democratic leadership in schools become the norm? Would democracy and citizenship permeate through all education that takes place in the building? Would more schools be designed to include the physical spaces needed to encourage more public participation?

There are some specific questions about school leaders' daily practices that traditionally do not allow for other's input that I would like to understand. Discipline of students is currently one of those specific practices. Should students be allowed to participate in the disciplinary duties of other students? Would this help students understand and realize what the public sphere demands of them according to the rule of law? Would it help them realize the public effect of their behaviors and actions and hold them accountable to the public group? Even more broadly, what effect would democratic education have on the amount of disciplinary issues? As it was revealed through Mervin's case, much less of his time disciplining students resulted after initiating the procedure of allowing students to choose their learning community. Other than

mentioning that the students had a strong sense of ownership over their learning, Mervin did not discuss why that was the case. I wonder if this would be the case for more students and administrators of other schools that adopted similar policy and procedures.

While on the topic of administrative obligations, another question emerges: what is the effect of democratic leadership procedures (distributed leadership) on the amount of time an educational administrator has to lead a school instead of managing what happens within it? It was very clear with George and Leah's case that they were often over-burdened with managerial and administrative tasks to effectively lead their staff members. If managerial and administrative duties typically expected of the school leader were passed to other members of the school community, would school leaders be able to demonstrate a more authentic practice of leadership? What would be expected of a school leader in terms of managerial demands once democracy and citizenship becomes their chief duty?

As was mentioned early in this thesis, the limitations of this study prevented me from interviewing individuals in the highest positions of control. It would have been preferable to interview members of a school board or a superintendent – those that occupy the top spot in the chain of educational command – in an attempt to challenge Heck and Hellinger's (1999) research. That was not possible in this study and more needs to be learned about how those key positions affect democratic and citizenship education in schools; specifically how they affect the principal's ability to initiate more authentic means for the staff and students to participate in school governance.

The last questions I offer attempt to focus on the topic of fear and other accompanying emotions that may be being felt by public school administrators. To my knowledge, Canadian schools are not burdened to the same degree that American schools are by mandates such as

achievement test results and their accompanying federal grant money allotments. Therefore, I feel Canadian public school administrators are in an opportune position to challenge the status quo and introduce more democratic education policies and procedures in their schools. So, why is it not the case that democratic educationally focused policies and practices are more widespread? Are school administrators afraid of this kind of change? If so, what are they afraid of? Is it that losing their jobs is a real possibility because they may be seen as challenging their superiors – "*upsetting the apple-cart*" as Morgan said? Or is it more for selfish reasons – losing their own sense of control and power of the school and people within the building? Or are they simply unaware of the current democratic educational research in the field? For those that are attempting to initiate and maintain democratic education in their schools, how has it been received? Do they feel isolated and ostracized as a result? Or do they feel more empowered and fulfilled in their professions?

Closing Reflections

Before my graduate work, even as a young student and then a young teacher, I was always confused as to why students and teachers (the two groups of people most involved in teaching and learning) were constantly left outside a position of power when it came to school policy creation and reform. It seemed antithetical that a public institution of learning would not allow its citizens to learn how to participate in the public domain. If public education were to attempt instilling democratic ideals in its students, the students should be given opportunities to learn and function within an institution of learning by participating in its governance. I was curious as to why a contradiction existed between our democratic society and our fundamentally undemocratic school system.

Conducting this research has clarified much of my previous confusions. I now understand just how important the educational leader is in the democratic environment of the school. I know that the democratic environment of the school hinges on the interpretations and understanding of democracy and citizenship of the school leader and the kinds of policy and procedure the leader is willing to enact or engage with. I am able to understand the kinds of policy and procedures that block student and staff participation. This study has also allowed me a look into what is democratically possible in a school with the right kind of leader.

This study presents a tragic story of democracy in schools and an even more tragic story of the misunderstanding of democracy and citizenship by educational leaders. This is a serious concern for the public sphere and the promise of democracy. But this study has revealed a silver lining. There is much to be learned from the experiences of my participants that can guide school policy and reform and educational leadership practice as well.

Bowles and Gintis' (1976) book *Schooling in Capitalist America*, an important text on the effects of external structure on the system of education, suggests administrators that are attempting good work towards a more egalitarian social order will remain incapable of meaningful change in an educational environment that is inherently undemocratic in foundation. This study has at once confirmed that argument and challenged it as well.

Democratic change in the larger context is proving to be difficult, but not impossible. It is the courageous work of individuals like Mervin that allow me to remain optimistic in today's educational climate. It is also the painful contradictions evident in George, Leah, and Morgan's responses between what ought to be done and what is actually happening in their educational environments that lead me to the conclusion that there is much more that needs to be researched

in regards to the training and education of administrators in democratic and citizenship education.

It is hoped that this study has added further evidence to past research in democratic and citizenship education with a focus on the effect of the perspectives of educational administrators on such areas. In that regard, I offer this small study to the field of educational administration in hopes that we can gain a deeper understanding of the great importance public education has on the promise of democracy and the awesome potential of the public sphere. I am now able to say that with a democratically capable educational leader, the public school has the opportunity to develop democratically capable citizens who yearn for a life of public participation and greater freedom.

References

Alberta Education. (2005). *Social Studies Program of Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12.* DOI: https://education.alberta.ca/media/774369/ss6.pdf

Alberta Education. (2013). *Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans.* Alberta Education Cataloguing in Publishing Data.

Apple, M. (1982). *Education and Power.* New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Apple, M. (2007). Schooling, markets, race, and an audit culture. In Carlson, D. & Gause, C.P. (Eds.). (2007). *Keeping the Promise: Essays on Leadership, Democracy and Education.* New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Apple, M., Au, W., & Gandin, L. A. (2009). *The Routledge international handbook of critical education*. New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Apple, M. & Beane, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Democratic Schools: Lessons in Powerful Education,* Second Edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinmann.

Apple, M. & Buras, K. (Eds.). (2006). *The Subaltern Speak*: *Curriculum, Power, and Educational Struggles*. Routledge.

Arnstein, S. (2011). A ladder of citizenship participation. In Cornwall, A. (Ed.). (2011). *The Participation Reader*. London, UK: Zed.

Ball, J. (2009). Privatising education, privatising education policy, privatising educational research: network governance and the 'the competition state'. *Journal of Education Policy*, 24(1), pp. 83-99.

Barber, B. (1996). Foundationalism and democracy. In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bates, R. (1982). Towards a critical practice of educational administration. *Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration,* 27, pp. 1 -12.

Benhabib, S. (Ed.). (1996). *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Benhabib, S. (2002). Excerpt from the claims of culture: equality and diversity in the global era. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Blackmore, J. (2011). Bureaucratic, corporate/market and network governance: Shifting spaces for gender quality in education. *Gender, Work, and Organization,* 18 (5), pp. 443 - 466.

Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life.* New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

Bredeson, P. V. (2004). Creating spaces for the development of democratic school leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration, 42*(6), pp. 708-723.

Brooks J. & Miles, M. (2008). From scientific management to social justice...and back again. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership and Learning,* 10(21), pp. 1 - 15.

Carlson, D. & Gause, C.P. (Eds.). (2007). *Keeping the Promise: Essays on Leadership, Democracy and Education.* New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Carr, P. (2009). Transforming educational leadership without social justice? looking at critical pedagogy as more than a critique, and a way toward democracy. *Teacher Education Quarterly,* pp. 117-136.

Carr, P. (2014). Standards, accountability, and democracy. *Democracy and Education, 17*(1), pp. 7-16.

Clegg, J. W. & Slife, B. D. (2009). Research ethics in the postmodern context. In Mertens, D. M. (2010). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Third Edition.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Cohen, J. (1996). Procedure and substance in deliberative democracy. In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cornwall, A. (Ed.). (2011). *The Participation Reader*. London, UK: Zed.

Dahl, R. (1996). Democratic theory and democratic experience. In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Darder, A. (1991). Creating the conditions for cultural democracy in the classroom. (Second edition). In Darder, A. *Culture and Power in the Classroom: Educational Foundations for the Schooling of Bicultural Students*. NewYork, NY: Bergin & Garvey.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education.* New York, NY: The Free Press.

Dewey, J. (1927). The public and its problems. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Dryzek, J. (2006). *Deliberative Global Politics: Discourse and Democracy in a Divided World.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Dryzek, J. (2010). *Foundations and Frontiers of Deliberative Governance.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Dryzek, J & Dunleavy, P. (2009). *Theories of the Democratic State.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Edelsky, C. (2004). Democracy in the balance. *ProQuest Educational Journals, 82*(1), pp. 8-16.

Elster, J. (1986). The market and the forum: Three varieties of political theory. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

English, F. (2002). The point of scientificity, the fall of the epistemological dominos, and the end of the field of educational administration. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 21*(2), pp. 109-136.

English, F. (2008). *The Art of Educational Leadership: Balancing Performance and Accountability.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Fischman, G. & McLaren, P. (2005). Rethinking critical pedagogy and the Gramscian legacy: from organic to committed intellectuals. *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies, 5*(4), pp. 425-447.

Fraser, N. (1996). Gender equity and the welfare state: a postindustrial thought experiment. In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Friere, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.

Giroux, H. (2005). *Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Democracy's promise and education's challenge.* (Second Edition). Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Gould, C. (1996) Diversity and democracy: representing differences. In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Green, M. (1988). *The Dialectic of Freedom.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Greenfield, T. (1979). Organization theory as ideology. *Curriculum Inquiry,* 9(2), pp. 97 - 112.

Gutmann, A. (1987). *Democratic Education.* Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press.

Gutmann, A. (1996). Democracy, philosophy, and justification. In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Habermas, J. (1964) The public sphere: An encyclopedia article. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Habermas, J. (1992). Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Harvey, D. (2010). *A Companion to Marx's Capital.* London, UK: Verso.

Heck, R. & Hellinger, P. (1999). Next generation methods for the study of leadership and school improvement. In J. Murphy & K. S. Louis (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration, Second Edition,* p. 141-162. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hegel, G., W. (1821). Excerpt from philosophy of right. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Hess, R. & Torney, J. (1967). *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children.* New Jersey, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Hickey, S. & Mohan, G. (2004). From tyranny to transformation? Exploring new approaches to participation. In Cornwall, A. (Ed.). (2011). *The Participation Reader.* London, UK: Zed.

Hickman, L. & Alexander, T. (Eds.). (1999). *The Essential Dewey.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Honig, B. (1996). Difference, dilemmas, and the politics of home. In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hoy, W. & DiPaola, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Studies in School Improvement.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc.

Hyslop-Morginson, E. J. (2000). The market economy discourse on education: interpretation, impact, and resistance. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research,* 46.3, p. 203.

Johansson, O. (2004). A democracy, learning and communicative leadership? *Journal of Educational Administration, 42*(6), p. 697-707.

Kahler, M. & Lake, D. (Eds.) (2003). *Governance in a Global Economy: Political Authority in Transition.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kant, I. (1784). An answer to the question: what is enlightenment. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), p. 464-491.

Leal, P. A. (2011). Participation: the ascendency of a buzzword in the neoliberal era. In Cornwall, A. (Ed.). (2011). *The Participation Reader.* London, UK: Zed.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. Mertens, D. M. (2010). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Third Edition.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Lippmann, W. (1925). Excerpt from the phantom public. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Mertens, D. M. (2010). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Third Edition.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Mill, J. S. (1859). Excerpt from on liberty. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Morrow, R. & Torres, C. (2002). *Reading Habermas and Friere: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Mouffe, C. (1996). Democracy, power, and the "political". In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mouffe. C. (1999). Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism? In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Negt, O. & Kluge, A. (1972). Excerpt from public sphere and experience: toward an analysis of the bourgeois and proletarian public sphere. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Online Etymology Dictionary. DOI: http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=participation

Oxford Dictionaries. DOI: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com.

Portelli, J. & Solomon, S. (2001). *The Erosion of Democracy in Education.* Calgary, AB: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.

Price, J. M. (2008). Educators' conceptions of democracy. In Lund, D. & Carr, P. (Eds.). (2008). *Doing Democracy: Striving for Political Literacy and Social Justice.* p. 121-137. Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Pring, Richard. (2007). *John Dewey: A Philosopher of Education for Our Time?* London, UK: Continuum.

Pryor, C. (2008). Dilemmas of democratic thought for educational leadership: considerations of social justice scholarship. *Teacher Development (12)* 4. p. 279-288.

Pugh, D. (2007). *Organization Theory: Selected Classic Readings.* (Fifth Edition). London, UK: Penguin Books.

Ranson, S. (2008). The changing governance of education. *Educational Management and Administration, 36*(2), p. 201-219.

Rawls, J. (1971). *Theory and Justice.* Cambridge, MS: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Rawls, J. (1997). The idea of public reasons revisited. In Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., Murdock, G. (2010). *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader.* London, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Rorty, R. (1996). Idealizations, foundations, and social practices. In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Sarantakos, S. (2013). *Social Research, Fourth Edition.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Saxena, N. C. (2011). Title unknown. In Cornwall, A. (Ed.). (2011). *The Participation Reader.* London, UK: Zed.

Schugurensky, D. (2008). The twin project of widening and deepening democracy: implications for education. In Lund, D. & Carr, P. (Eds.). (2008). *Doing Democracy: Striving for Political Literacy and Social Justice.* p. 369-378. Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Schwandt, T. A. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social construction. In Mertens, D. M. (2010). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Third Edition.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Sensoy, O. & DiAngelo, R. (2012). *Is Everyone Really Equal: An Introduction to Key Concepts of Social Justice Education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1994). Organizations or communities? Changing the metaphor changes the theory. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 30*(2), p. 214-226.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46*(4), p. 558-589.

Shields, C. M. (2014). Can we impact leadership practice through teaching democracy and social justice? In Carr, P., Zyngier, D., & Pruyn, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Can Education Make a Difference? Experimenting with, and Experiencing Democracy in Education.* Charlotte, NC. Information Age Publishing.

Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Slater, R. O. (1994). Symbolic educational leadership and democracy in america. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 30*(1).

Starratt, R. J. (2004). Leadership of the contested terrain of education for democracy. *Journal of Educational Administration, 42*(6), pp. 724-731.

Starratt, R. J. (2010). Democratic leadership theory in late modernity: an oxymoron or ironic possibility? *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice, 4*(4), pp. 333-352.

Taylor, F. W. (1912). Scientific management. Pugh, D. (2007). *Organization Theory: Selected Classic Readings.* (Fifth Edition). London, UK: Penguin Books.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. DOI: http://www.en.unesco.org.

Wallace, J. (2004). Educational purposes economicus: Globalization and the reshaping of educational purpose in three Canadian provinces. *Special Edition on Globalization of Canadian and International Education,* 33(1), pp. 99-117.

Weber, M. (1924). Legitimate authority and bureaucracy. In Pugh, D. (2007). *Organization Theory: Selected Classic Readings.* (Fifth Edition). London, UK: Penguin Books.

White, S. (1996). Depoliticizing development. In Cornwall, A. (Ed.). (2011). *The Participation Reader.* London, UK: Zed.

Woods, P. A. (2005). *Democratic Leadership in Education.* London, UK. Paul Chapman Publishing.

Woods, P. A. & Gronn, P. (2009). Nurturing democracy: the contribution of distributed leadership to a democratic organizational landscape. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 37*(4), p. 430-451.

Yanow, D. (2000). *Conducting Interpretive Policy Analysis.* Accessed online. DOI: http://dx.doi.org.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/10.4135/9781412983747. pp. 1 – 27.

Young, I. (1996). Communication and the other: beyond deliberative democracy. In Benhabib (Ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Young, J., Levin, B., Wallin, D. (2008). *Understanding Canadian schools: an introduction to educational administration* (fourth edition). Toronto, ON: Nelson Education Ltd.

Appendix A

STUDY INFORMATION LETTER

Study Title: School Administrator Perspectives on Democracy and Citizenship Education

Research Investigator:
Jordan Long
Department of Ed. Policy Studies
Faculty of Education
7-104 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5
jcl@ualberta.ca
1(780) 966-5664

Supervisor:
Dr. Lynette Shultz
Department of Ed. Policy Studies
Faculty of Education
7-104 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5
lshultz@ualberta.ca
1(780) 492-7625

Much has been written about democracy and citizenship education in schools. There is an abundance of literature that suggests that the school is an ideal location within the public sphere to harness the power of education to include the practice of democracy through citizen participation within students. However, there is a lack of information on the administrator's role within that area of study.

I am doing research on school administrator perspectives on democracy and citizenship education. As the policy maker and/or instructional leader of a school or many schools, your input into the complexities of this topic is crucial.

I am interested to know what democracy and citizenship means to you as a school administrator. More specifically, I am interested to know how you feel those two topics ought to be promoted and educated for in a public school setting. I'm also interested to know how you feel about how policy within your educative context (Canada, Alberta, and your school district) influences your ability to initiate and maintain democratic education.

This study does not require any in-class or student-based research. I am simply interested in the perspectives of individuals in an administrative position and therefore do not require any students to be involved in the study.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please sign the attached consent form.

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact:

Jordan Long: 1(780) 966-5664; jcl@ualberta.ca OR
Dr. Lynette Shultz: 1(780) 492-7625; lshultz@ualberta.ca

Respectfully,
Jordan Long, University of Alberta

Appendix B

STUDY CONSENT FORM

Study Title: School Administrator Perspectives on Democracy and Citizenship Education

Research Investigator:
Jordan Long
Department of Ed. Policy Studies
Faculty of Education
7-104 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5
jcl@ualberta.ca
1(780) 966-5664

Supervisor:
Dr. Lynette Shultz
Department of Ed. Policy Studies
Faculty of Education
7-104 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5
lshultz@ualberta.ca
1(780) 492-7625

I am doing research on school administrator perspectives on democracy and citizenship education. As the policy maker and/or instructional leader of a school or many schools, your input into the complexities of this topic are crucial.

This study will examine the personal viewpoints of many administrators at multiple levels (primary and secondary, principal and assistant principal, director and superintendent) in multiple Albertan public school districts.

I am inviting you to participate in two personal interviews at two different times within the fall of 2015. The interviews will be 30 minutes to 1 hour. The discussion will be about your interpretations of democracy and citizenship education and your past experiences in regards to the same topic. You can choose not to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable discussing. If you agree, I will audio-record the conversation so that I can type responses later.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You will be given multiple opportunities to withdraw from the study. You can choose not to participate at any point, up until the analysis stage of the research. You will be provided with a written transcript of the data collected during the interview. You will be given 3 weeks upon receiving this transcript to review, edit, or remove any information you choose. If you choose to withdraw from the study, the information you provided during the one-to-one interview will be removed and destroyed. There is no penalty for withdrawal from the study.

Information from this study will be used to complete my thesis and for potential research articles and presentations. No personal information about you or the school will be released in any of these. Your personal information and responses will be kept confidential and only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor will see the data. Data will be kept on an encrypted digital device and/or stored in a locked cabinet for at least five years after the project is completed.

Please be aware that all data that is collected from the participants and the school will be reported anonymously.

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact:

Jordan Long: 1(780) 966-5664; jcl@ualberta.ca OR
Dr. Lynette Shultz: 1(780) 492-7625; lshultz@ualberta.ca

Respectfully,

Jordan Long, University of Alberta

I, _____ have read and understood the above and agree to participate in this study.

I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview and the focus group.___ Yes ___ No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant, or how this study is being conducted, you may contact the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615. This office has no affiliation with the study investigators.

Appendix C

KEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How long have you been acting in this role?

Please describe to me your role as a leader.

How influential are your superiors on your day-to-day activities?

In what ways do you feel that this school/district is supportive of democratic systems of decision-making?

How do you believe students learn to enter and participate in the public political sphere?

What are some ways that you like to encourage staff members to participate in creation and reform in policy?

What can school principals do to facilitate democracy and citizenship education in schools?

How can educational leaders promote an educational environment conducive to democratic and citizenship education?

How do you position yourself as the leader in order to initiate democratic and citizenship education? What actions have you taken in order to represent this position?

How do you feel a student might describe the democratic environment of a school within the school district?

What is your position on the effectiveness of the bureaucracy of school leadership?

What is your position on the effectiveness of a multi-leveled approach to school policy creation and reform?

How important do you feel citizenship education is at your school?

Do you agree with this statement: the principal has the greatest effect upon the school community, culture, and academic results?

How does your school encourage community involvement in the school?