'Creating smooth spaces in striated places': Toward a global theory for examining social justice leadership in schools

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Abstract:

This chapter shares an original social justice framework that emerged in conjunction with conducting a 2-year ethnography studying the culture of an urban all-girls' secondary school. I refer to this new interpretive lens as "Facilitating social justice by creating smooth spaces in striated places" or the striated-smooth construct. The meaning-making that occurred during and after the study did not follow a firm temporal chronology or emerge linearly within tidy categorical disciplines. Essentially, my path of learning was a porous and rhizomatic interlacing of past, present, and future – germinating from the intellectual, spiritual, and corporeal – scaffolding upon knowledge, faith, and lived experience. In short, this theory-building experience was more akin to dialogue between mind, soul, and body. Rather than "own" this theory of social justice and explicitly detail a list of "rules" one must follow, I offer this inspiration as just one conception of social justice that might be used to facilitate the creative thinking of others that has potential to move the field forward as well as be applied to other societal contexts.

Keywords: social justice | cultural capital | school culture | educational leadership

Article:

The purpose of this chapter is to share an original social justice framework that emerged in conjunction with conducting a 2-year ethnography studying the culture of an urban all-girls' secondary school. I refer to this new interpretive lens as "Facilitating social justice by creating smooth spaces in striated places" or the striated-smooth construct. The meaning-making that occurred during and after the study did not follow a firm temporal chronology or emerge linearly within tidy categorical disciplines. Essentially, my pathway of learning was a porous and rhizomatic interlacing of past, present, and future – germinating from the intellectual, spiritual, and corporeal – scaffolding upon knowledge, faith, and lived experience. In short, this theory-building experience was more akin to dialogue between mind, soul, and body.

To convey my sensemaking, I first describe my readings of St. Pierre (2000) and the concepts of "striated" and "smooth" spaces. Then, the ancient spiritual words of Isaiah (c. 792 BCE) are

explored and compared to the teachings of modern-day prophetic voices such as Martin Luther King, Jr. (Washington, 1986) and Mahatma Gandhi (Fischer, 1962). These constructs are then considered alongside the modern educational-philosophical works of Paulo Freire (1970) and Patti Lather (1991). Thereafter, I situate my empirical study as illustrating the new framework as well as show how the striated-smooth construct relates to prior theory. Finally, I explain how the striation-smooth construct goes beyond prior theory toward a new global theory for examining social justice leadership in schools that has potential to move the field forward as well as be applied to other societal contexts. Rather than "own" this theory of social justice and explicitly detail a list of "rules" one must follow, I offer this inspiration as just one conception of social justice that might be used to facilitate the creative thinking of others.

The Striated-Smooth Construct

Elizabeth A. St. Pierre (2000) wrote of her desire to study "how women construct their subjectivities within the limits and possibilities of the discourses and cultural practices that are available to them" (p. 260) and the importance of confronting "the constraining framework of one's past." To wit, St. Pierre emphasized the necessity of learning to what extent one is able to free oneself from the subjectivities embedded in one's history, thus enabling the self to "think differently" and form a new future (p. 260). St. Pierre highlighted the process of de-identifying with destructive subjectivities and the revolutionary re-identification that must occur when confronting the past and present in the attempts to build a new future. According to St. Pierre, this revolutionary process includes deep internal reflection that reveals knowing where you stand to enable one to judge where you are and thereby construct where you might rather be (p. 260).

Contemporary political discourse often engages two opposing arguments: the "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" mentality versus the notion that outside forces engulf our identities and mold us into something that we cannot control. Rather than entertain either argument, St. Pierre (2000) encouraged us to consider these apparent dichotomies as interacting energies. For instance, forces in specific places provide "especially fertile conditions, exquisitely dynamic intensities, that make us 'available' to a transformation of who we are, a contestation which compels us to rethink our selves, a reconfiguration of our 'place' and our 'ground'" (p. 260). In other words, there is a negotiation between internal and external – or there is reciprocal influence between self and place – and "if we wish to practice identity improvisation, attention to places may be required" (p. 260).

St. Pierre (2000) noted, through Game (1991), her interest in the "practices of space": Certain places make certain practices possible; consequently, certain places also close off opportunity (p. 261). She described how Deleuze and Guattari differentiated between striated space and smooth space (p. 263): Striated space is bordered and restricted where individuals might have innate determination, but their movement in striated space is defined in advance, and the relationship between person and space may be structurally impenetrable. Striated spaces place limitations on people and are often the result of centuries of prejudice (St. Pierre).

Within "smooth space," people's identities and roles as well as access to knowledge and other forms of social capital are not defined in advance but are constantly in flux. There are no binding patterns or fixed roles and identities in smooth space. While St. Pierre (2000) did not assert that

smooth space is enough to "save us," she did affirm that smooth space allows more freedom for the individual to "deterritorialize" than striated space does.

Ancient Wisdom Poetry and Contemporary Mystic Activists

While contemplating what St. Pierre had to say, I was reminded of a phrase that has appeared in popular culture for almost 3,000 years:

> Every valley shall be exalted
> and every mountain and hill made low;
> The crooked straight,
> and the rough places plain.

The ancient words first appeared in the servant songs of Isaiah (c. 792 BCE) in the Hebrew Scriptures, were famously interpreted by Georg Friedrich Händel's 1742 production of the *Messiah* (Swafford, 1992), and subsequently used as a revolutionary call to action by modern-day prophet and civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1960s:

> I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character…I have a dream that one day *every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places shall be made straight…* This is the faith that I go back to the South with. (Washington, 1986, p. 219, italics added)

In the memorable 1968 "I Have a Dream" speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. conjured the words of ancient writers as he pointed to the ways "the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination" (p. 217) and how "the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity" (p. 217). Dr. King was very cognizant of the existing striations that needed to be broken down and transformed into smooth spaces.

Mahatma Gandhi, born in India, was a contemporary of Dr. King, albeit his civil rights agenda started about a decade earlier in South Africa. Though both leaders and their followers maintained discourse, they were never able to complete a face-to-face meeting as they both so greatly desired (Fischer, 1962; Washington, 1986).

Like King, Gandhi's spirit was sensitive to the plight of people who had no voice; thus, he would not be satisfied until freedom and justice were accomplished for all people: "My soul refuses to be satisfied so long as it is a helpless witness of a single wrong or a single misery" (Fischer, 1962, p. 271). Gandhi added that he felt great responsibility to protect the least powerful from the most dominant: "I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by [people] from the cruelty of [people]" (p. 52, more inclusive language added). Within this view from the margins, Gandhi was well aware of the geographic and social striations that existed for the African people he was working alongside:

If you think of the vast size of Africa, the distance and natural obstacles separating its various parts, the scattered condition of its people and the terrible divisions among them, the task might well appear to be hopeless. But there is a charm which can overcome all these handicaps. The moment the slave resolves [to] no longer be a slave, [the] fetters fall. [The person frees oneself] and shows the way to others. (p. 282, more inclusive language added)

Again, akin to Isaiah millennia earlier, humanity's refrain speaks to the obstacles and restraints – the loneliness and isolation – of oppression. However, Gandhi was a great believer in the power of education to lift people to new thoughts, actions, and ways of being. Gandhi was able to use both his privilege *and* his minority status to speak to both sides of the conflicts in which he engaged. He emphasized to the colonists that those colonized loved their children, too, and had "the same dislike to have any slight upon them. [Furthermore,] there is no place on earth and no race, which is not capable of producing the finest types of humanity, given suitable opportunities and education" (p. 69).

Like King, Gandhi believed in a "spirit force" that could not be squelched. It took *both sides of the divide working together* to achieve the greatest good for all:

I do not believe in the doctrine of the greatest good for the greatest number. It means in its nakedness that in order to achieve the supposed good of fifty-one per cent the interest of forty-nine per cent may be, or rather should be, sacrificed. It is a heartless doctrine and has done harm to humanity. The only real, dignified, human doctrine is the greatest good of all, and this can be achieved only by uttermost self-sacrifice. (p. 265)

Gandhi continued:

The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world…What is more, that force resides in everybody, man, woman and child, irrespective of the color of the skin. Only in many it lies dormant, but it is capable of being awakened by judicious training. (p. 293)

Moreover, Gandhi emphasized the importance of those in a position of strength to constantly examine their labors on behalf of others:

When you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest [person] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to *[them]*. Will [they] gain anything by it? Will it restore [them]? Then you will find your doubts and self melting away. (p. 275, italics in original, more inclusive language added)

Contemporary Educational Activists

Further reflection on striated and smooth space channeled memories of Patti Lather's (1991) book, *Getting Smart*, wherein she stated: "given enabling conditions, every woman has something important to say about the disjunctures in her own life and the means necessary for

change" (p. xviii). Lather wrote of "clearing out a semiotic space" by "challenging disciplines at the level of the basic categories and methods involved in the possibilities for knowledge" (p. 34). Lather's words are prescient of St. Pierre's notion of creating "smooth mental spaces" and "smooth textual space," making sense of our educations, religions, and other ways of knowing and learning. Important, for me, Lather's term of "clearing out" elicited a picture of strong women (Lather is a feminist after all) forging through thick brush, using effectual tools such as machetes, rather than a polite clearing of the tea set off the dining table. During the theory-building process, there was a constant cycling back and forth between St. Pierre's work, the ancient servant songs, and contemporary activists. My reading of Lather's description of "clearing out" is reminiscent of Isaiah's ancient description of justice work as intense labor:

> I will break down gates of bronze
> And cut through bars of iron…
> …I will turn the darkness into light before them
> And make the rough places smooth.

Importantly, Lather (1991), like Gandhi before her, noted the difficulties in "speaking for others" or "doing for others." She promoted a "shift" in the role that "critical intellectuals" play, from "universalizing spokespersons to *cultural workers who do what they can* to *lift the barriers* which prevent people from speaking for themselves" (p. 47, italics added). Again, Lather's choice of words reflect the intense justice labor depicted in the servant songs of Isaiah as well as in St. Pierre's call for dismantling striated – and creating smooth – spaces.

Additionally, Lather (1991) spoke to the "politics of empowerment" and cautioned researchers to clarify what they meant by "empowerment." She found distasteful the notion that empowerment is "individual self-assertion, upward mobility and the psychological experience of feeling powerful" (p. 3). Instead, Lather defined empowerment as "analyzing ideas about the causes of powerlessness, recognizing systemic oppressive forces, and acting both individually and collectively to change the conditions of our lives" (p. 4). She added that "empowerment is a process one undertakes for oneself; it is not something done 'to' or 'for' someone…" (p. 4). In other words, while justice laborers may come alongside "others" as allies to craft the conditions necessary for change, they do not entertain the notion that they can somehow change a person or be prideful when change occurs. This type of "servant leadership" inherently requires an attitude of humility (Greenleaf, 2002).

Patti Lather's and other critical scholars' educational philosophy clearly follow Paulo Freire's (1970) earlier, seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* which reflected a similar approach: The "radical, committed to human liberation" does not consider oneself as a hero or liberator, but rather a servant that comes alongside the oppressed (p. 39). The struggle of liberation is found primarily in the educational processes that enable "the vocation of becoming more fully human" (p. 44). Collectively, people work to diminish barriers and create breathing space to accomplish full, human creativity and capacity. "Freedom is not an ideal located outside of [a person]; nor is it an idea which becomes a myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion" (p. 47).

According to Freire (1970), oppressive conditions are those which one must criticize, reject, struggle against, and transform. Dismantling striations is a *laborious process* which is born when the oppressed "discover within themselves the yearning to be free" and the transformation of this yearning into reality through action. Freire even described liberation as an act *as painful as childbirth* in which the individual "emerges [as] a new person" (p. 49). But, in order for the oppressed to "wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (p. 49).

Striations and Smooth Spaces in Schools

The concepts of striated and smooth spaces are important to research on school cultures because schools often unintentionally perpetuate inequality in the ways they structure their organizations (Oakes, 2005; Oakes, Wells, Jones, & Datnow, 1997). As such, particular aspects of the school culture directly influence student outcomes in positive or negative ways (Garza, Reyes, & Trueba, 2004; Mansfield, 2011; Paredes Scribner, 1999; Valencia, 2002a; Valenzuela, 1999; Welton, 2011; Wyn & Wilson, 1997; Zigarelli, 1996).

For example, it is well known that organizations that configure curricular offerings based on tracking pupils more often than not deny minority students participation in gifted and talented (GT) programs and advanced placement (AP) coursework (Mansfield, 2011; Oakes, 2005; Oakes & Wells, 1998; Oakes et al., 1997; Southworth & Mickelson, 2007; Valencia, 2002a; Valencia & Suzuki, 2001; Welton, 2011). Research has indicated that opening up GT and AP opportunities to all interested students, and providing support systems such as mentoring and tutoring, facilitates academic excellence in elementary and secondary schooling and access to future higher education and career opportunities to students who otherwise would be locked out of these networks (Mansfield, 2011; Margolin, 1994; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Oakes, 2005; Oakes & Wells, 1998; Oakes et al., 1997; Pallais & Turner, 2007; Southworth & Mickelson, 2007; Valencia, 2002b; Welton, 2011). The practice of tracking is just one illustration of an organizational striation that must be dismantled in schools, while providing supportive networks facilitates the development of smooth space.

In addition, aspects of the school culture (such as whether female students have an advocate from an adult school representative) often determine whether minority female students are able to penetrate upper-level math, science, and/or computer courses (Margolis & Fisher, 2002; Spears, 2008). An organizational culture that includes mentorship demonstrates smooth space by encouraging girls to take upper-level science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) coursework, whereas the absence of such support could be considered a striation. While it is difficult to prove a direct cause-effect relationship between adult advocacy and student success, I propose the dismantling of striations and promotion of smooth space enables the conditions necessary to facilitate social justice in schools. Studies have shown that many teens – especially those negotiating a variety of identities such as socioeconomic status, race, and gender – need active adult encouragement and other interventions to view taking upper-level STEM coursework as means to achieve future goals of college and career and to improve educational outcomes overall (American Association of University Women [AAUW], 2002a, 2002b;

Gilson, 2002; Kirst, 2007; Margolis & Fisher, 2002; Mickelson, 2003; Parker, 1997; Pipher, 1994; Sadker, 1999; Spears, 2008; Tyack & Hansot, 1992; Wyn & Wilson, 1997).

Finally, school leaders and teachers who endeavor to develop an organizational culture committed to developing high levels of trust between school personnel and families, as well as among relationships within the school, experience greater levels of parent participation, higher levels of student achievement, and enhanced teacher collegiality (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Scribner, Young, & Pedroza, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Zigarelli, 1996). A principal and faculty implementing specific practices to develop trusting relationships at school is another example of creating smooth space in organizations. Ignoring this aspect of organizational culture can act as a striation because organizations that lack caring and/or elicit distrust often aid high teacher turnover and poor student attitudes among other difficulties (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Scribner et al., 1999; Valenzuela, 1999; Zigarelli, 1996).

The Empirical Setting

The purpose of the original ethnography was to capture the story of the implementation of one major US city's first and only single-sex public school and the consequent shaping of the school culture according to its unique context (please, see Mansfield 2011; Mansfield, 2013a, b, in press for additional details). The secondary school Young Women's Leadership School (YWLS) is located in Southtown Independent School District (SISD) in one of ten largest urban centers in the USA and was founded to meet the specific needs of racial and ethnic minority girls living in lower economic circumstances. For decades, urban schools in the USA, Texas, and Southtown have struggled with racial and economic segregation and isolation such that inequality perpetuates throughout the preschool to postsecondary pipeline. In addition to a high incidence of teen pregnancy, a soaring dropout rate, and a leaky college pipeline of poor and minority students, SISD has continued to experience significant enrollment decreases as families relocate to the suburbs and exurbs.

Findings, collected over a 25-month period of ethnographic field work, substantiated the complex interface between historical, political, and sociocultural contexts; stakeholder decision making in the ethnographic present; and the enactment and negotiation school culture vis-à-vis the intersectionalities of student identities. A comprehensive literature review demonstrated student identities matter. Race, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, and other contextual factors are important considerations when probing educational access and achievement and the development of school cultures. Moreover, organizational elements matter. Educational leaders – their individual attributes and the cultures they create – are key to understanding and interrogating equitable practices in schools.

Archives and oral history interviews highlighted a variety of complex reasons local constituents favored the development of single-sex public options including a robust history of single-sex parochial schools in the region, a record of racial segregation of students of Mexican descent, acute enrollment decreases due to "white flight," and increases in teen pregnancy and dropout rates. Interviews with district administration indicated that the new single-sex magnet school helped them address a plethora of complex needs. The USDOE changes to Title IX were viewed

as an invitation to establish single-sex schools and served as a means to repurpose empty school buildings, bolster enrollment, and curtail school closures. Additionally, supporters believed that female student outcomes would significantly improve as a result of the design and implementation of this all-female school. Interviews with parents revealed that families viewed the single-sex schooling options as a form of resistance whereby students and families could place identities such as race, class, and gender front and center to better negotiate future possibilities for their daughters. Taken as a whole, providing a single-sex public option was viewed by state and local stakeholders as a symbol of providing "the best" for their children.

Findings also showed that the teachers and leaders at the school were leading and laboring for equity and excellence in very specific material, intellectual, and emotional ways. While their inspiration emanated from a variety of sources, all were committed to making a difference for their students. Although their efforts did meet with some resistance, it was clear that the principal and teachers were committed to making this uncommon school exceptional for more reasons than merely being the first and only single-sex public school in a major urban center in Texas. Findings also indicated that the efforts of leadership and faculty did not go unnoticed by those their actions were meant to serve: parents and students. The girls and their families extolled the caring and sacrificial attitudes and actions of the teachers and building administration. Parents and students were able to iterate specific ways the professional staff was working to enact and negotiate a culture conducive to meeting the needs of students. The voices, taken together, describe a place devoted to learning and flourishing, a place where people respected each other, grew, and learned together. The story, in its entirety, described how leading for equity and excellence permeated all relationships inside the school.

Examples of Striations in the Current Context

While pondering the inspiration of striated and smooth spaces, I reflected on the findings of my study and began to recognize patterns and ask pertinent questions: Are there striated spaces in Southtown? If so, what policies and practices create(d) them? As I considered findings garnered via archives and interviews concerning the historical racism, housing policies and poverty in Southtown, as well as the specific needs of this particular group of young women, I was reminded again by St. Pierre (2000) that "Nothing is innocent, particularly places striated from centuries of patriarchy and racial prejudice and unremarked poverty" (p. 268). Thus, the students attending YWLS came to the educational setting with an inheritance their parents did not earn or wish to pass on. Parents were very clear in interviews that they viewed the creation of YWLS as a form of resistance against societal roadblocks to opportunity. Parents believed that attending this alternative prep school would endow their daughters with the tools they needed to combat barriers to opportunity due to their situated subjectivities such as their race/ethnicity, sex, and humble backgrounds. Conversations with parents and students as well as the principal and teachers revealed their belief that poverty was a key striation that would likely hold the girls back unless specific steps were taken by families and educators to smooth their way, to make alternatives visible and achievable. It was not just a matter of lack of financial resources for food, clothing, or ultimately college tuition. Parents and students clearly indicated that they saw the school and the social justice laborers within the school as those possessing important nonmonetary capital that could and would be shared within this safe space, thus paving the way for a brighter future for the students.

Illustrations of Smooth Space That Is Being Created

Considering St. Pierre's (2000) belief that smooth spaces facilitate self-regeneration, I observed numerous ways the participants at YWLS were attempting to construct smooth spaces for the girls. There were specific leadership practices, curriculum, pedagogy, health, and nutrition programs that were an attempt to create smooth spaces facilitating the freedom the girls needed to "deterritorialize." It was clear that some of the actions taken by faculty and administration were understood and supported, such as providing a rigorous college prep curriculum and strict behavioral codes. But certain attempts to create smooth space by faculty caused consternation among some parents – for example, some teachers' attempts to discuss racism and sexism in the classroom. These educators believed that teaching girls to think critically about the constraints they may face in society due to their intersecting identities (female, poor, Latina), along with identifying specific actions to overcome these constraints, was essential to bringing up a generation of strong, successful women. Ironically, some parents felt their daughters were too fragile or sensitive to learn about particular topics notwithstanding the fact that such knowledge might ultimately strengthen their abilities make more mature decisions in the future.

Ensuing conflict notwithstanding, the faculty and administration did take specific steps to create smooth space for the girls. For example, girls were offered self-defense classes to combat possible physical attacks. The girls also had access to seminars on public speaking from how to effectively introduce themselves in a professional environment to practicing research presentations in a university forum on a local university campus. Students participated in leadership training as well as workshops that bolstered their math, science, and technological skills.

In addition to college prep coursework, students and their families visited postsecondary campuses and attended clinics that detailed the college application, financial aid, and college entrance exams processes. The faculty and administration believed sharing this information and coming alongside family and student in the college admission process were appropriate and caring form of assistance that smoothed the girls' paths for future opportunities.

Connections with Prior Theory

As I pondered the striation-smooth construct and the pertinence of my observations in the research setting, I was reminded of Pierre Bourdieu's (1979/1984, 1990) work on cultural capital and social reproduction theory. Reminiscent of Bourdieu, I reject the notion that students and families lack cultural capital: Striations are situated outside human beings in societal contexts. Similar to Bourdieu, I acknowledge that the families and students I observed do indeed possess cultural capital. However, what they possess may or may not be recognized by the dominant society as a valid form of currency within certain contexts. Since certain settings value certain cultural capital differently, social justice workers at YWLS deemed it necessary to teach what is valued in certain fields or contexts to show students how they, too, can acquire negotiable currency to gain entrance and navigate new contexts (e.g., higher education). Ultimately, YWLS is also addressing Bourdieu's idea of *habitus* which is defined by Winkle-Wagner and McKinney (2010) as "the sets of actions that one sees as available" based on one's location and outlook and

the accumulations of one's cultural capital (p. 5). Habitus entails the socialization process which, according to Bourdieu, functions below the surface of consciousness that prompt individuals in regard to the rules of interaction as well as the actions and opportunities that one views as available and obtainable.

This connects with the striation-smooth construct when YWLS faculty view the girls' new socialization processes as learning the "rules of the game," that is, knowing the expectations of college students as well as encouraging the girls to critically examine their social location due to their intersecting identities. They also share the numerous opportunities available to the girls and facilitate goal setting. Then, the faculty mentor students as they craft a plan of action to reach those goals. They smooth space by practicing new skills (e.g., dining etiquette and making research presentations). Rather than denouncing their students' existing cultural capital, they help the girls *add* to their existing cultural capital.

The literature on leading schools for social justice resonates with the current discussion. Blount (2008), Dantley and Tillman (2009), and Walker (2006) purported building an organizational culture committed to achieving just outcomes for all students requires specific, political, personal, and professional steps: If the goal of public education is the "full and equal participation of all groups in society, where resources are distributed equitably, members are physically and psychologically safe, and members interact in a self-determining and interdependent manner" (Walker, p. 115), then a major effort is needed to transform our school cultures by leaders who are "democratic, participatory, and inclusive" and who help others recognize "issues of inequality, inequity, and oppression" (Walker) due to intersecting identities in historical context (Blount).

Specifically, Dantley and Tillman (2009) forwarded the notion that school leaders recognize context and understand students' realities. Moreover, according to Shields (2004), if the school director forefronts student identities while developing their leadership practices, a more caring pedagogy will emerge. Further, the five specific characteristics of social justice leadership forwarded by Dantley and Tillman dovetail with the new striation-smooth social justice theory, namely, leaders for social justice show an awareness of the broader socio-politico-cultural contexts of schooling, actively critique marginalizing behaviors and attitudes, profess and practice democratic leadership, demonstrate a moral obligation to students to balance knowledge of negative probabilities with hopeful possibilities, and commit to laboring for social justice for students rather than merely talking about it.

Going Beyond Prior Theory

While considering the generation of theory building promoted by "Facilitating social justice by creating smooth spaces in striated places," it is important to note the ways in which this new construct goes beyond what has come before. While Bourdieu's (1979/1984, 1990) theories are helpful for understanding and identifying the ways inequities are socially reproduced in our society – especially in educational contexts – it does not help us explain how school leaders might resist socially reproduced inequities or come alongside students as coworkers of resistance. Similarly, Dantley and Tillman's (2009) description of what leadership for social

justice in schools should entail was useful toward (re)imagining what specific steps might be taken by faculty and administrators for facilitating social justice in their schools.

The construct I forward here scaffolds upon prior theory by additionally detailing specific ways school workers labor for social justice in their schools and hopefully presents a catalyst for future researchers to improve upon my ideas. Rather than "own" this new theory of social justice and explicitly detail a list of "rules," I wish to share my ideas to facilitate the creative thinking of others. Thus, as a summary of the striation-smooth construct, I list questions that may act as a framework to scaffold future research concerning educational inequalities and how school workers might come alongside students and families in their activism. First, reflecting on the ideas of St. Pierre (2000):

1. What are examples of how the students' lives are "coded, defined, bounded" where they have agency, yet their movement is defined in advance?
2. How are stakeholders constructing their subjectivities within the limits and possibilities available to them?
3. How are students confronting the constraints of the past and learning to what extent they can free themselves from subjectivities embedded in their history, and thus, form a new future?
4. What are examples of deep, internal reflection that reveal the students are learning to know where they stand to enable them to judge where they are and construct where they might rather be?

Secondly, reflecting on the ideas of Lather (1991):

5. How are stakeholders facilitating Lather's idea of empowerment?
6. Are stakeholders analyzing ideas about the causes of powerlessness, recognizing oppression, and acting collectively and individually to change conditions?
7. In examining a specific school site, what are some examples of allies coming alongside students?
8. Is the concept of humility present? If so, how? If not, how is an opposing attitude manifest?

Thirdly, considering Freire's (1970) work:

9. How are stakeholders collectively working to diminish barriers while creating breathing space to accomplish full, human creativity and capacity?
10. How are stakeholders facilitating conditions that encourage the quest for human completion?
11. What are some examples of liberation being as painful as childbirth?
12. How are stakeholders struggling to recognize realities of oppression without succumbing to a fatalistic mindset; rather identifying transformational opportunities?

While specific striations may be historically and geographically constituted, and tools for crafting smooth space is context – and individual – dependent, the theory presented here has potential to be translated globally in a variety of circumstances. In addition to researching

educational organizations, the above questions can be asked in other societal settings. Researchers in other fields such as political science, sociology, and urban planning can interrogate the striations that may exist in their particular contexts and how policy and practice can be used to break down existing striations as well as to create smooth space. The framework shared here can be used to scaffold future research in other social contexts and help a wide variety of "cultural workers" (Lather, 1991), from civil rights attorneys to real estate agents, problematize inequalities and how they, too, might come alongside those facing oppressive obstacles.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to share an original social justice framework that emerged during a long-term empirical study of an urban all-girls' secondary school. Drawing insights from social justice laborers radiating from five continents, the striated-smooth construct is a new interpretive lens that builds upon prior theory. Importantly, this framework reaches beyond prior theory toward a new global theory for examining social justice leadership in schools that has potential to move the field forward as well as well as be applied to other societal contexts.

I am optimistic that the questions above will inspire other educational leadership scholars interested in analyzing school cultures vis-à-vis social (in)justice intent, actions, and/or outcomes. I look forward to seeing how my colleagues around the world might use and expectantly improve upon my meaning-making as they come alongside the communities and schools they love and aspire to serve, thus further scaffolding our knowledge together as a global community to pave the way for *smooth spaces in striated places*.

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