Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Leadership styles and multicultural education approaches: an exploration of their relationship

MICHALINOS ZEMBYLAS and SOTIROULA IASONOS

This paper discusses the results of an exploratory study that sought to identify elementary school principals' perspectives of diversity and multiculturalism in relation to their leadership styles. In particular, we examine the approaches to multiculturalism of a group of principals who lead multicultural schools in Cyprus and analyse the findings with regard to both multicultural and leadership theory. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 17 principals. The major findings show that almost half of the principals adopted a combination of conservative multiculturalism and transactional leadership style. However, a small number of principals took a somewhat different stance that indicated perspectives of critical multiculturalism embedded in critical and social justice leadership. The implications of this study are discussed with respect to issues of practice and leadership preparation as well as at the systemic, school and personal levels.

Introduction

In a recent study of principals' perceptions about diversity and multicultural education in relation to their leadership styles, McGlynn (2008) shows that the perceptions of a number of principals in Northern Ireland's integrated (mixed Catholic, Protestant and other) schools are consistent with liberal interpretations of multiculturalism, although there is also evidence of pluralist perspectives. McGlynn suggests that there is a relationship between leadership styles and approaches to multiculturalism and argues that an integration of multicultural and leadership theory may help define the characteristics of school leaders' responses to multicultural societies. As she argues: 'For it may be that certain forms of multiculturalism cannot be implemented without certain types of leadership style' (2008: 14). McGlynn (2008: 14) urges researchers to conduct further studies 'to confirm a relationship between

Michalinos Zembylas is an Assistant Professor of Education at the Open University of Cyprus, Schools of Humanities and Social Sciences, 5 Ayiou Antoniou Str., Strovolos 2002, Nicosia, Cyprus. Email: m.zembylas@ouc.ac.cy. His research interests lie in the area of exploring how discursive, political and cultural aspects define the experience of emotion and affect in education. He is particularly interested in how affective politics intersect with issues of social justice pedagogies, intercultural and peace education, and citizenship education. *Sotiroula Iasonos* is an elementary teacher and a graduate student at the Open University of Cyprus, Schools of Humanities and Social Sciences, 5 Ayiou Antoniou Str., Strovolos 2002, Nicosia, Cyprus. Email: sotiroula.iasonos@students.ouc.ac.cy. Her research interests lie in the area of exploring the relationship between leadership styles and multicultural education approaches. She is particularly interested on how elementary school principals deal with the challenges associated with diversity and multicultural education on an everyday basis.

leadership style and approaches to multiculturalism'. The study that is reported here is a response to this invitation in the context of Cyprus.

Greek Cypriot principals, like those in many other countries, face the new reality of working with children from multiple countries, who speak different languages and bring with them various cultural values and practices. With increased migration, diversity creates new challenges and opportunities for schools and has a major impact on the work of teachers, particularly those in leadership positions (Billot *et al.* 2007). Recent scholarship draws attention to the important role that school principals play and emphasizes the need for leadership studies that 'identify the particularity and diversity of cultural and contextual conditions within which leadership takes place' (Dimmock and Walker 2005: 2). A number of editorials in special issues of journals during the last five years (e.g. see Marshall 2004, Coleman and Cardno 2006, Goddard 2007) have pointed out the scarcity of studies that investigate issues of diversity, multiculturalism and social justice in the context of school leadership. This paper addresses this need and seeks to add to the body of research by investigating how some elementary school principals in Cyprus perceive and lead their visions of multicultural education.

In particular, we discuss the results of an exploratory study that sought to identify elementary school principals' perspectives of diversity and multiculturalism in comparison to their leadership styles. We examine the approaches to multiculturalism of a group of principals who lead 'multicultural schools'[1] in Cyprus and analyse the findings with regard to both multicultural and leadership theory. Central to this study is whether the principals who subscribe to a particular multicultural approach also subscribe to a particular leadership style. The implications of our findings are discussed with respect to issues of school leadership and multicultural education in Cyprus and elsewhere.

Theoretical perspectives and previous research

Social scientists and educators have long debated the concepts of diversity, social inclusion and multiculturalism and the respective merits or disadvantages for schools and the society. Educational reform discourses in the last 20 years argue that schools, teachers and educational leaders should be responsive to diversity within their communities (Day *et al.* 2003). Despite this seemingly progressive stance, the discourse of diversity and multiculturalism 'has been mobilised and operationalized in educational policy and practice within market and managerialist frames that tend to limit the possibilities of delivering its promise of more inclusive and equitable schooling' (Blackmore 2006: 182). According to Blackmore, neoliberal managerialist discourses during the 1990s have had a negative effect on multicultural approaches in schools because neoliberal discourses privileged learning for self-interest and leadership as an individual accomplishment rather than as a collective practice. Consequently, dominant discourses of multicultural education reforms in Western societies are more in alignment with the deregulatory aspects of the increasingly managerial and market orientation of schooling, dismissing earlier social concerns

about social justice, transformation and the reduction of inequality (Gewirtz and Ball 2000). The standards movement, the privatization of education and the growing achievement gap between privileged and under-privileged students are only few of the issues affecting leadership in relation to multiculturalism and social justice (Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy 2005). It is such issues that have gradually constituted multiculturalism a 'risky business' for school leaders favouring high scores in student outcomes as evidence of success (Blackmore 2006).

The different discourses on leadership in relation to multiculturalism and diversity may be classified under two major approaches. On the one hand, there is the discourse of *managing diversity* and multiculturalism that is based on maximizing individual potential so that recognizing and using diversity/multiculturalism adds value in terms of students' learning (Blackmore 2006, Gunter 2006). The aim is to assimilate differences through celebratory practices of diversity, multiculturalism and heteroge-neity. The structural inequalities and disadvantages are not recognized, and concerns about social justice, equity and care are put aside (Gewirtz and Ball 2000). School management through funding based on enrol-ments and a market focus on comparable national and international performances, as measured by standardized educational outcomes, are indications of the commodification of education and the inability of school leaders to deliver equity (Blackmore 2006). This market radicalism and the reduction of funding in education ignores equity implications, increases accountability demands for compliance on outcomes and loosens compliance with regard to equity and social justice (Gewirtz 2002). Such policies tend to promote a trend for 'like' students to concentrate in particular schools, and thus promote social exclusion. As Blackmore (2006: 188) writes: 'Diversity framed by neo-liberal discourse of choice is thus reduced to meeting the preferences of individual choosers in terms of offering a diversity of schools and programs, while ignoring how some have more choices, or how choice facilitates any disposition to be with those "like themselves"'.

On the other hand, there is the discourse premised on *social justice* and critical transformative perspectives on multiculturalism as values placed at the heart of educational leadership (Hodgkinson 1991, Greenfield and Ribbins 1993, Gewirtz 1998, Bogotch 2002). In their review of literature on educational leadership and social justice, Larson and Murtadha (2002) call for school leaders to collectively work towards 'social justice leadership'. Social justice leadership means that school leaders make issues of social inclusion and multiculturalism (race, class, gender, disability and other historically marginalized conditions) central to their leadership practice and vision (Theoharis 2007). Taking this approach enables questions to be asked about how social, political and economic advantages and disadvantages are replicated in school organizational structures and cultures. The purpose of school leaders from this standpoint is to achieve more equitable outcomes for all (Blackmore 2006). Therefore, this approach sees schools as contested sites of social, political and cultural differences. Contrary to managing diversity discourse's assimilationist view, as Blackmore emphasizes, the social justice and critical multiculturalist perspectives recognize and respect

difference rather than assimilating it and struggle for more equitable redis-
tribution of resources (see also Gewirtz 1998, Theoharis 2007).

Given that the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between
multicultural education approaches and educational leadership styles, the
following two sections review briefly the major approaches and perspectives
that have been developed in these areas. It is important to highlight that the
two approaches that are identified—that is, managing diversity and multicul-
turalism on the one hand, and educational leadership for social justice and
critical multiculturalism, on the other hand—are manifest in the various
multicultural education approaches and educational leadership styles that
are discussed below. It is also helpful to keep in mind that these categoriza-
tions into approaches and styles are somewhat reductionist; yet, this is an
exploratory study in which we aim to map the terrain and set the ground for
a deeper level of analysis in future studies.

Multicultural education approaches

In general, it is important not to assume that multicultural education is
homogeneous (Sleeter 1992, Banks 2007). Hence, it is useful to present
some of the differences in various approaches to multiculturalism that have
been proposed over the years; these approaches focus to varying degrees on
societal unity or diversity (Gutmann 2004). Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997)
suggest four major approaches to multiculturalism: conservative multicul-
turalism/monoculturalism, liberal multiculturalism, pluralist multicultural-
ism and critical multiculturalism. The first three are basically manifestations
of 'managing diversity', while the last one takes a transformative approach
grounded on social justice issues. We engage in this brief discussion on the
basis of Kincheloe and Steinberg's scheme because the differences among
the multicultural approaches are clear enough to allow for potential differ-
entiations with and comparisons to the leadership models that are reviewed
in the following section (see McGlynn 2008).

Conservative multiculturalism. places emphasis on one dominant culture
and particularly on the superiority of Western patriarchal culture. Nieto
(1996) criticizes this approach and asserts that it ignores issues that are rele-
vant to social injustices and the marginalization of certain groups. Also, she
argues that this approach leads to monoculturalism as it is grounded in a
white, middle-class culture (Nieto 1999). The teachers and school leaders
who accept this approach often view 'different' children as inferior and with
lower abilities. The ultimate goal of this approach, as Tiedt and Tiedt
(2002) explain, is the assimilation of diversity into the normative culture.

Liberal multiculturalism emphasizes similarities and particularly the
notion that diverse groups share equality and common humanity. However,
the emphasis on similarities can lead to colour blindness and cultural invis-
ibility (Sleeter and McLaren 1995, Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997). In this
approach, existing inequalities are attributed to the absence of social and
educational opportunities; thus, liberal multiculturalists claim that positive
ideals—particularly, liberty and equality—need to be endorsed (Duarte and
Smith 2000).

By contrast, *pluralist multiculturalism* focuses on difference rather than similarity. Diversity and cultural heritage are celebrated, but once again, as in the previous two approaches, power relations and structural inequalities are not challenged (Nieto 1996). There is, instead, a naive and simplistic celebration of diversity—what has been called by some as 'boutique multiculturalism' (Fish 1997)—and consequently, the issue of equality is diminished to a matter of good intentions.

Finally, *critical multiculturalism* challenges inequalities and acknowledges the role of power relations in shaping dominant discourses and practices. Attention is not focused on superficial differences but on those differences that are linked to social injustices. Central to this approach is the recognition of the ideological mission of schooling and the role of teachers as cultural gatekeepers who transmit values of the dominant culture (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997). Critical multiculturalism has also been critiqued (e.g. see Dimmock and Walker 2005) that it is idealistic and does not pay attention to the actual practices of achieving social change; it is also argued that the highly political nature of this approach makes it more difficult to be accepted by teachers and school leaders.

Leadership styles

The leadership literature provides many insights on the important role of principals in school development and transformation (Fullan 2001, Gunter 2001, Day 2004). Although there have been propositions about different 'models' or 'styles' of leadership, it needs to be acknowledged that the distinction of styles does not represent the everyday practice of school leadership, and it is generally acknowledged that there cannot be a single leadership style that is best suited to bring success in any particular setting (Portin 1999). Nevertheless, analysing the underlying assumptions of different perspectives of school leadership contributes to a better understanding of the role of principals in school development. Four models are briefly presented below in order to make clearer the exploration of the principals' style against their perceptions of multicultural approach in our study. The models discussed are transactional leadership, transformation leadership, values-led contingency leadership and critical and/or social justice leadership. In relation to the two approaches that have been discussed earlier, the first two leadership models are more relevant to 'managing diversity', while the last two are related to values of social justice, equity and critical transformation.

Transactional leadership focuses on the smooth running of the school (Huber 2004, Webb *et al*. 2004) and makes sure that the system is maintained and the goals are clearly set and fulfilled (Day *et al*. 2003). It is a practice enacted only by one individual who puts emphasis on administrative issues and assesses the needs of those under his or her leadership to satisfy those needs in exchange for work, that is this model is based on 'leadership by bartering', as Sergiovanni (1990: 31) writes. *Transformational leadership* views school leaders as those who actively work to shape and transform the school culture by constructing a shared vision through which

respect, autonomy and the pursuit of higher goals are valued (Webb *et al.* 2004); this is 'leadership by building' (Sergiovanni 1990: 32).

The *values-led contingency model*, according to Day *et al.* (2003), is based on the notion that leadership is guided by values. In their research, Day *et al.* have found out that moral values—for example, respect, equality, honesty and so on—are at the core of what educational leaders do and thus influence the construction of a shared vision (see also Gunter 2001, Huber 2004). *Critical leadership* (Foster 1989) and social justice leadership (Gewirtz 1998) emphasize the critical role of school leaders in the struggle for social justice and equality. This style focuses on the critical intervention of school leaders in redefining school leadership so that the values of social justice, inclusion and democracy are pursued; therefore, a central component of this style is the critical analysis and interrogation of power relations and structural inequalities (Gunter 2001). Critical and social justice leadership acknowledges that school leaders can make a significant contribution to the transformation of the school organization and its social context. This approach differs from the transformative model in that there is an explicit concern for social critique and the role of leadership in tackling social inequalities.

Previous research on school leadership in relation to multiculturalism

In the last part of the theoretical framework, we briefly review research on leadership issues in relation to multiculturalism; this is important to do for one reason. Although many of the issues raised here may be true for schools, in general (not only those hosting students with diverse backgrounds), we adopt Theoharis's (2007) view that there are distinctions between a 'good leader' and a 'social justice leader'. Theoharis, after Ladson-Billings' similar effort to redefine the distinction between 'good teaching' and 'social justice teaching', argues that social justice leadership goes beyond good leadership. It is, therefore, important to re-examine the historic norm of what is considered good leadership to understand how leadership may not always serve all students (Bogotch 2002, Scheurich and Skrla 2003, Dimmock and Walker 2005).

Research in this area, then, demonstrates that school principals[2] can have a decisive effect on racist and anti-racist practices in their respective schools (Ryan 2003, Aveling 2007). It is also shown that school principals feel overwhelmed by school and community discussions on racism and multiculturalism and view diversity and multicultural education in 'negative' ways (Mabokela and Madsen 2003, McCray *et al.* 2004). The existing evidence shows that school leaders often do not understand how racism works (Young and Laible 2000), portray equity and diversity issues as 'no problem' (Rusch 2004), and are influenced by 'deficit thinking', trying simply to 'manage diversity' (Skrla and Scheurich 2001).

A number of other studies have highlighted the positive characteristics and inclusive practices of school leaders who are led by values of social justice, diversity and equality in their school communities. Walker (2005), for example, highlighted that successful principals were committed to the

implementation of explicit values that promoted an agenda of equality, fairness and respect. These school leaders articulated the values of attacking societal inequalities, particularly racism and poverty, and were proactive in taking actions towards that direction. The school leaders' beliefs were also dedicated to recognizing 'cultural difference' rather than 'cultural deficit'. Cultural deficit is the notion that students from minority backgrounds often fail in school because of the culture in which they grow up (Banks 1994). Walker connected these school leaders' approach with the values-led contingency model and more specifically to social justice values (see also Hodgkinson 1991). These values are clearly needed in all schools and for all students; however, the studies reported here focus on the particularities of leadership for multicultural schools. Other studies by Goddard *et al*. (2006) and Theoharis (2007) investigated the characteristics of principals in multicultural schools and the challenges of decision-making in these contexts. Both studies highlighted the importance of principals' values of social justice in leading multicultural schools through transforming the culture, the pedagogical practices and the priorities of the school organization so that marginalized students could benefit.

Also, the results of an international comparative study provide insights into the extent to which principals facilitate or deny access to schools for children from minority and marginalized cultural groups (see Goddard 2007). For example, studies by Leeman (2007) and Mahieu and Clycq (2007) concluded that principals in the Netherlands and Belgium, respectively, focused on the recognition of difference and the provision of equal opportunities for success and the future preparation of children as citizens and employees in a multicultural society. On the other hand, Goddard and Hart (2007) found that the principals in their study resisted any attempts to recognize diversity and difference because they supported that all students should be treated the same according to the school board policies. This approach, as Goddard and Hart pointed out, was assimilationist and avoided dealing with the inherent cultural differences and diverse needs of the students.

Multicultural education in Cyprus

Immigration to Cyprus has grown over the last few years, consisting of immigrants and labour workers from East Asia, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and the Middle East; there has also been some internal movement of Turkish Cypriots from the north (occupied by Turkey since 1974) to the south of Cyprus, especially after the partial lifting of restrictions of movement in 2003 in force for 30 years. Of the current inhabitants, 13.7% are non-Cypriots (Statistical Services of the Republic of Cyprus 2006). The changing profile of the population in Cyprus has affected the schools and the educational system. While in the school year 1995–1996, the percentage of non-indigenous students was 4.41%, in 2007–2008, this percentage has risen to 7.7% (Ministry of Education and Culture 2007a, 2007b). There are now some Cypriot schools in which non-indigenous children constitute the large majority (80–90%) of the school population.

Multicultural education is relatively new to Cypriot schools and society (Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou 2007). The first serious attempt to address the issue took place in 2002, when the Ministry of Education and Culture sent a long circular letter to public schools (under the title 'Intercultural Education') and explained the government policy on the issue. The policy focused on two things: first, the provision of measures for language support, that is the teaching of Greek as a second language to non-indigenous students; and second, the provision of measures for facilitating the smooth integration of non-indigenous students in the Greek Cypriot educational system and society.

However, the Commission for Educational Reform (2004)—which was appointed by the government—expressed concerns about the narrowly ethnocentric and culturally monolithic Cypriot educational system that basically ignored multiculturalism. The measures and policies suggested and implemented were considered inadequate by the Commission because they primarily targeted non-indigenous students and their 'language deficiency' in Greek, while neglecting wider issues of nationalism, racism and intolerance; the Commission considered intercultural education for all students to be a necessary response to these issues. Also, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI 2006) emphasized the lack of thorough understanding of and genuine sensitivity to human rights by many teachers and school principals. Other studies by researchers in Cyprus emphasize that the policies enforced both at the philosophical and the practical level are mostly grounded in the notion of assimilation rather than in integration, and that the educational system views the diversity of non-indigenous children as a type of deficiency that needs to be treated quickly so that these children can be assimilated (Angelides *et al*. 2004, Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou 2007).

The current model of intercultural education being implemented in Cyprus (with respect to elementary education) is a mainstreaming programme in which language learners attend classrooms with indigenous Greek-speaking children. There are a number of schools that become part of a Zone of Educational Priority (ZEP) (following the example of the French Zones Educatif Priorité, and less of Educational Action Zones in England). ZEP networks have schools with high numbers of non-indigenous students, but this is not the rule; there are a number of other schools in Cyprus with high numbers of non-indigenous students that are not in a ZEP network. ZEP schools receive additional help—such as extra hours for assisting non-indigenous students to learn the language—yet the work of ZEP schools is not just to provide language support, but they promote multiculturalism and foster closer links between the schools and the community. Finally, the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus organizes in-service training seminars for teachers in multicultural education, but attendance is voluntary on teachers' own free time. Also, newly promoted principals receive a year-long training programme in which they attend a four-hour meeting once a week (starting in October and ending in May, there are 20 such meetings); one of those meetings covers issues of multicultural education.

Methodology

We decided that a qualitative approach (Miles and Huberman 1994, Denzin 1997) was most appropriate for this study because it enabled a comprehensive and in-depth examination of the issues through comprehension of personal experience and its interpretation as was lived, understood and portrayed by individuals (Merriam 1998). Our examination focused on the following research questions:

(1) What are the elementary school principals' perceptions about multiculturalism and diversity?
(2) Which leadership views do these principals adopt in relation to issues of diversity and multicultural education at their school?
(3) What is the relation between the principals' multicultural approach and their leadership style?

It is acknowledged that this research is limited by the fact that only the views of principals have been sought in this study. However, given the exploratory nature of the research, it is argued that the principals' perceptions constitute an important point of departure in examining the above research questions.[3] The selection of participants for this study was based on two criteria: (1) diversity of the elementary school, and (2) willingness to participate in the study. For the first criterion, specifically, we chose those schools in which the percentage of non-indigenous students was on or above the district's mean population of non-indigenous students; this percentage was 7.1% for this study. With regard to the second criterion, out of the 46 possible participants in the capital district of Cyprus, 17 elementary school principals (nine men and eight women) agreed to be interviewed; the overwhelming majority of these principals lead urban and suburban schools. In line with standard ethical procedures, we do not use any details that would provide any identification for the principals in order to preserve confidentiality; instead, we use numbers to identify the principals.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with all the participants. A list of open-ended questions was compiled, focusing on collecting information about the principals' perceptions on diversity, the government policies and school practices that principals adopt in relation to multicultural education, and the challenges of leading a school with diverse student population. All interviews, which lasted approximately an hour, were tape-recorded and transcribed. Data analysis was performed in a number of stages. First, open coding was conducted (Strauss 1987) during which preliminary categories were derived. Following this, axial coding was performed (Strauss 1987) in two stages. During the first stage, coding was done on the vertical axis, examining relations and content similarities and differences between the preliminary categories defined in each interview and outlining more general categories. During the second stage, the horizontal axis was analysed, examining vertical axis categories in depth and comparing them among all interviews. Finally, categories were formed according to connections of similarities and differences between categories (Strauss 1987).

A number of steps were taken to ensure internal validity, credibility and reliability (Strauss 1987, Mason 1996). First, though all the interviews were conducted by one interviewer, we both followed the research process from its very beginning to the writing of this paper. The process, procedure and results of this research were examined during different stages of the analysis in accordance with the conceptual and theoretical perspective relating to this research area. Second, the final results and conclusions were presented before all the participants, who expressed their opinion regarding the validity of the study's final findings and commented on them. All results and findings were validated by the vast majority of the participants.

Findings

Principals' perceptions about multiculturalism and diversity

In general, three main approaches to multiculturalism were identified: the conservative, the liberal and the critical approaches, while four principals exhibited elements from two approaches. Specifically, almost half of the principals (8 out of 17) provided evidence supporting a conservative multiculturalist approach, one principal combined elements of both conservative and liberal multiculturalism, three principals displayed elements of a liberal understanding of multiculturalism, one principal articulated a liberal approach with some elements of plural multiculturalism, two principals combined the liberal and the critical multicultural approach and finally two principals displayed views of critical multiculturalism. Given the space limitations to present all the results in details, in this paper, we focus on providing evidence of the principals' perceptions of conservative multiculturalism (the most frequent approach) and its 'opposite', that is the critical multiculturalist approach, so that their differences are made clearer.

Conservative multiculturalism. Of the 17 principals interviewed, eight (six women and two men) displayed what could be described as a conservative understanding of multiculturalism. Evidence of this understanding is found in the following themes: the principals' conviction that their culture (i.e. the Greek culture) is superior to other cultures; the principals' perception that all 'foreigners' (i.e. non-native Cypriots) have a bad influence on the Cypriot society and finally, the principals' preference for an assimilationist policy, with an emphasis on homogeneity. These themes are briefly discussed below.

The perception that the Greek culture is superior to other cultures, as well as the belief that the presence of 'foreigners' poses a danger to the Cypriot society is expressed by almost all of the principals in this subgroup. One of the principals wonders, 'Why should we let so many foreigners come and ruin our country?' As she explains:

> The foreigners are a necessary evil at this stage. We need them for economic reasons. But we have to force ourselves to make them better … This is the truth. We always consider them inferior; inferior to us. Unfortunately, they've come and ruined our country, they have come and changed our habits, they have brought all these bad influences … unfortunately. (P4)

Another principal (P15) highlights the cultural superiority of the Greeks in terms of their values, their better behaviour and their character. This principal believes, however, that the different cultural groups that are present in Cyprus can be improved culturally; as she points out, Greek Cypriots can 'acculturate' non-native children. She explains that there is a clear 'lack of values' in many non-native children because of their parents' 'background'—a 'background' that 'is inferior to that of the Greek-Cypriot parents … their parents are culturally deprived'; she asserts and further elaborates:

> As far as values are concerned, these students [i.e. non-native ones] may lie, may do something wrong and not admit it … let's say that a certain gentleness of the soul is absent. There seems to be self-interest above everything else; how can I explain this lying? … Values are absent.

References to the dangers and other negative consequences as a result of the presence of non-natives in the society are made by other principals in the sample. More specifically, other principals refer to 'numerous problems created by foreigners' such as the increasing use of drugs, the increasing number of divorces, moral corruption and crime.

When it comes to education, however, many of these principals refer to feelings of understanding, caring and love towards non-native children and state that their goal is to make sure that all students are happy. For example, two principals state directly that the best policy is that of assimilation, a policy that, in their view, is rightly followed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus. The first principal (P15) argues that her goal is 'to help all non-native speakers of Greek to learn the language so that they can assimilate to our culture'. She argues in favour of this policy, maintaining that assimilation will not lead to problems such as competitiveness, racial discrimination and rivalry. The second principal (P3) suggests that an alternative solution to the 'problem' (her expression) of the presence of non-native children is for them to attend separate schools because 'education in this manner will improve for all children'. In fact, she has expressed concerns that if non-native children are not assimilated, 'We [i.e. Greek Cypriots] will end up being a minority group in this land and will in turn be assimilated by them'. Phrases such as 'We do not want children to differ, we want them to be the same' and 'They [i.e. non-native children] are all the same, they are just like *our* children' are examples of these principals' assimilation views.

Critical multiculturalism. There are two principals (P14 and P17) who approach diversity from a social justice and critical multiculturalist perspective and two others (P5 and P12) who combine elements of liberal and critical perspectives. Evidence of this understanding is found in the following themes: the principals' convictions about the importance of social justice goals in education; beliefs about the positive role of diversity in children's education and perceptions about the significance of empathy in promoting critical thinking and diversity. These themes are briefly discussed below.

All four principals acknowledge the negative implications of educational practices that are grounded on the belief that Greek culture is superior to other cultures. They argue that such beliefs hinder cultural exchange and

mutual understanding and result in further social injustices because schools and the government avoid establishing mechanisms to support the integration of immigrants in the society. Also, these principals express concerns that parents' xenophobia and racist attitudes are transferred to children; therefore, teachers and school leaders seem to be engaged in an 'unequal' social struggle to establish a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding.

One of the principals (P12) states that many Greek Cypriot children are slow to accept diversity and wonders 'whether it is really that bad if, in the end, Greek Cypriots are influenced positively by others' cultures and beliefs'. Another principal (P17) emphasizes the importance of 'common humanity' in accepting those who are different. As she explains:

> Unfortunately, we [i.e. Greek Cypriots] underestimate others. […] I did a small research study in my school and found out that there is a lot of racism at all levels … Children, for example, don't accept someone if he or she is 'fat' or 'not pretty' (by their standards) … We have a long way until we become *real* human beings. I tell my staff and students all the time that if we want to be called humans, we better act like humans toward *all* beings. I realize that it requires strength and courage to do so, which is something we currently lack.

All four principals express the belief that schools can act as agents of change, despite strong social attitudes and practices that maintain the status quo. One principal (P5) mentions that, in collaboration with local officials, his school has promoted a number of initiatives that welcome and support immigrants to integrate in the community. The other principals also maintain that schools need to have practical goals pertained to social justice, such as school initiatives that bring the school and the community closer and provide opportunities to adults and children alike to learn and collaborate with people from different cultures. The principals' concerns are that the students from different cultural backgrounds eventually become assimilated in the dominant (Greek Cypriot) culture because schools promote homogeneity for all. As one principal (P12) says, children from different backgrounds 'are essentially forced to follow *our* system, the Greek culture and only that, if they want to survive', while someone else refers to the conscious efforts of many of these children to 'appear Cypriot' because of the pressure to be accepted by members of the dominant group.

Finally, one of the principals (P14) suggests that a truly humanistic education would have to be critical education, that is, an education that 'respects each and every child and promotes critical thinking, empathy and respect for all'. This principal also emphasizes that teachers and especially school leaders should be working towards transforming their schools into places in which 'social justice and equity are enacted at all levels'. For example, to be able to do that, as he elaborates, 'We need to learn to "see" reality from the others' point of view … We need to be able to put ourselves in the place of others and take action to alleviate social injustice'.

Leadership views in relation to diversity and multicultural education

With regard to the findings of our study in relation to leadership styles, there were indications of four styles: transactional leadership, transformational

leadership, critical leadership and values-led contingency model. In particular, it is shown that the principals who shared conservative multiculturalist views also provided indications of transactional leadership, with the exception of two principals who did not provide adequate evidence for categorizing their leadership style. On the contrary, the principals who adopted either a liberal or a critical multiculturalist approach displayed elements of values-led contingency model and social justice or critical leadership. Due to space limitations, here, we provide evidence of the leadership style adopted by those principals who displayed either conservative multiculturalism or critical multiculturalism, again to show the potential connection between a particular model of multiculturalism and the leadership style that was adopted.

Profile of educational leaders following the transactional leadership style. Seven of the principals who view multiculturalism from a conservative perspective adhere to a transactional leadership style. Even though a cause–effect relationship is not attempted, it is worthwhile to explore this link between principals' perceptions of leadership and their views on multiculturalism. For example, there are strong indications made by several of these principals that they prefer to maintain organizational harmony at their school without the 'problems' (their expression) that are usually associated with multicultural schools. However, there seem to be some contradictions in these principals' views about maintaining the desired harmony in their schools. On the one hand, there is recognition that there are 'no problems' as a result of the multicultural population of a school and, therefore, no special initiatives are needed. As one of the principals (P9) asserts, her role does not change in multicultural schools because 'the foreign-language speaking children do not create serious problems to justify appointing someone to deal with them', and so, 'there is no need for any special initiatives to address intercultural education … The school has to continue to do its normal work according to the Ministry's policies. There should be no exceptions because of the presence of foreign-language speaking children'.

On the other hand, there seems to be a realization that there are indeed challenges in leading multicultural schools. For example, the same principal (P9) points out that she 'would not want to be a principal at a school with a lot of children from different cultures'. Instead, she prefers to lead a school that does not have such a large percentage of foreign language-speaking students. When asked whether something changes, if someone is a principal at a multicultural school, she admitted that 'there would have been different goals, different programs', something she would not prefer because it would change the 'normal school program'. As she explains, 'teachers in my school do not use any particular activities about cultural diversity, because I told them to treat everyone the same'.

A preference for 'treating everyone the same' seems to be shared by another principal (P2). In replying to a question about his vision, this principal feels that his school 'is fine the way it is now' and what is needed is to 'regularly emphasize respect for the differences of some children'. This principal's concern, as he explains, is 'to ensure that the goals set by the Ministry of Education and Culture are accomplished', an indication on how connected he views his role to a higher power. He further elaborates:

> We provide the issue of diversity the necessary attention, but we do not stop providing education as it should be offered to all children … everything is done according to the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture …We respect the particularity of foreigners, we respect their roots, but all within the context of the Ministry's guidelines.

A similar position is also adhered to by other principals in this subgroup. For example, one of the principals insists that his role is simply to follow the policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture and thus focus on assimilating non-native children. This statement complies with his preference to lead schools with no cultural diversity, as he considers that leading such schools is 'full of managerial problems that mess up the normal school life of our [i.e. Greek Cypriot] children'.

Profile of educational leaders following the critical/social justice leadership style. One principal who follows the critical multiculturalist approach and the two principals who combine the critical and liberal multiculturalist approaches subscribe to social justice and/or critical leadership models. In general, all three principals consider that it is a 'challenge' (their expression) to lead a culturally diverse school and not a 'problem', as it is often assumed, because 'it is much more interesting to lead a multicultural school' (P5).

All these principals highlight their vision for transforming their school so that it becomes a school 'for all children' and not a school that categorizes children on the basis of criteria such as culture, colour, language or race. According to one of these principals (P17), it is important for the school leader, the teachers, the children and all the community to work collaboratively and form 'a vision of change and social justice … [that] celebrates difference, yet cares for all children'. He mentions that the centralized educational system in Cyprus often stalls progress and discourages initiatives that build on students' diversity 'as an asset rather than a problem'.

Another principal (P5) highlights the importance of including everyone (teachers, students, parents) in processes that promote democracy, social justice and equity, such as participatory decision-making, problem-solving and projects that bring the community together. 'We have to act together and see multiculturalism as an opportunity to come closer as a community', he explains, because 'unless there are democratic schools that respect all forms of diversity, we will never learn how to live democratically'. More specifically, the vision of this principal is grounded on two aspects, as he points out: first, the social and cultural renaissance of the community in which his school belongs—an area that has been neglected and abandoned by Greek Cypriots because they consider it a low income/social status area and second, the promotion of critical thinking so that children from a variety of backgrounds are accepted and considered to be proud members of their community. In addition, as this principal explains, his role is not simply to take care of 'the educational or the managerial side of the school' but also 'to build community relations and teach others to view diversity as a source of pride for the community'.

Finally, another principal (P12) mentions that in spite of the low flexibility and autonomy in the centralized educational system of Cyprus, it is important to make every effort to enact a vision that promotes critical thinking and transformation in the school and the community in which the school

belongs. She indicates that the general goals are set by the Ministry of Education and Culture, yet each school has to devise a plan to enact its vision; so there is always some space to exercise autonomy 'that is sensitive to issues of multiculturalism and social justice'. Consequently, it is important, as she asserts, that school leaders 'pursue higher goals … that respond to students' different needs, especially those that are usually left behind'. Her objective is for all teachers and students 'to have a say in the school, to take initiatives, to have responsibilities and to exhibit their sensitivity for everyone's wellbeing, especially the disadvantaged children'.

Discussion

The analysis of the findings shows that approximately half of the principals in this sample adopt the conservative multicultural approach and use criteria from the dominant culture to place emphasis on the similarities among students within an assimilationist framework. At the same time, this group of principals links foreign-language speakers with a number of social problems that exist in the Cypriot society; in this way, these principals blame those outside the boundaries of their own ethnicity, class and origin (see Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997). Principals who adopt conservative multiculturalism also subscribe to transactional leadership, while those who display critical multiculturalist views hold critical and social justice leadership perspectives.

It is interesting that some of the principals who subscribe to conservative multiculturalism do not perceive diversity as an issue or claim that it does not exist in their schools, something that has also been established through the research findings of Goddard and Hart (2007) in Canada regarding the *resistance* of principals to recognize diversity. On the other hand, a group of these principals focus on similarities between students and perceive diversity 'as a problem … as something to be assimilated, covered or hidden' (Garcia and Lopez 2005: 437); according to these principals, the emphasis on diversity can cause racial problems.

On the contrary, principals who display critical multiculturalist views speak in terms of the great and persistent inequalities within schools and understand that school leaders should be proactive in leading for equity, diversity and social justice—such as providing opportunities and practices that critically interrogate the ways in which various myths and stereotypes promote inequality or silence certain individuals and groups; these principals also emphasize the importance of engaging students in school projects that aim at community cohesion.

The second major finding of this study is the close connection between particular multicultural approaches and leadership styles, an idea that is in line with McGlynn's (2008) hypothesis. While the literature dealing explicitly with multicultural education and school leadership is not extensive, particularly in Cyprus, in reviewing the responses of the group of school principals who participated in the present study and comparing those with principals' responses in other studies, there are some trends that are not idiosyncratic to this group of principals. For example, similar to many of the

interviewees in this study, Ryan (2003) and Aveling (2007) reported that many principals in their studies prided themselves for treating all children 'the same', 'thereby missing the point that the playing field is not a level one and that equal treatment does not guarantee equitable outcomes' (Aveling 2007: 79). As Ryan (2003) also writes, it is not always an easy thing for principals to acknowledge the diverse needs of non-indigenous students in order to support their learning and to view this diversity as a source of enrichment for everyone rather than as a deficit. While there are exceptions, many school principals in this study are reluctant to acknowledge the contribution of non-indigenous children and justify this idea with the argument that they comply diligently with the government policies or that the current measures are quite sufficient to deal with diversity because everyone is obliged to follow the same (i.e. national) curriculum. Such views suggest a pattern of assimilation (Goddard and Hart 2007).

There are a number of reasons why the majority of school principals in our study (and perhaps in other settings too) may adopt conservative ideas. First, the centralized educational system of Cyprus seems to encourage a transactional model of leadership (see Pashiardis 2007), and so, it appears that the application of assimilationist policies creates a restrictive environment for school leaders and teachers alike. The underlying assumptions of these policies appear to be politically conservative, and thus, it is not surprising that a large number of principals adopt conservative multiculturalism (Aveling 2007). This assimilationist view of multiculturalism is clearly associated with the approach of 'managing diversity'. The present educational system in Cyprus may not have at the moment some of the concerns that trouble Western societies (e.g. the standards movement), yet the achievement gap between indigenous and non-indigenous students and the privatization of education provide serious obstacles in efforts to reduce inequality and discrimination.

Rizvi (1993) also explains that most administrative work takes place in a conservative context that does not encourage radical reforms, especially when it comes to issues of diversity and multiculturalism. Most schools strive to find ways to get everyone to meet common goals and purposes (Ryan 2003); after all, many principals in this study emphasized that non-indigenous students should 'follow the curriculum of the country that hosts them temporarily'. Even though many schools may on the surface promote values of diversity, democracy and inclusion, 'they actually operate under conditions that embody a competing set of values, like obedience, compliance, routine, conformity and homogeneity' (Ryan 2003: 160). As Ryan maintains, the effects of this process into which school principals are socialized are enhanced by the investment that they have in the system that have made it possible for them to acquire their current comparatively elite positions. Therefore, it is unlikely that they entertain any considerations of radical change. Likewise, many principals in this study were not comfortable with diversity and fundamental changes to a system and a society in which they, like Ryan's interviewees, had an investment. Most principals were more likely to attribute problems to the presence of non-indigenous families in the society. In addition, the unresolved political problem of Cyprus creates much uncertainty and scepticism to many Greek Cypriots, so they

see immigrants, asylum seekers and, in general, any non-Cypriot through very hostile lenses (ECRI 2006).

On the other hand, it is certainly encouraging that there are examples of school leaders who seem to adopt critical perspectives and social justice leadership styles. These school leaders are open to change and more fundamentally embrace its prospect in terms of capitalizing on students' diversity. They see themselves as transformational agents who could make schooling an experience that enhances the social and academic development of all students. Similar to other critical transformative school leaders, some of the principals in this study emphasize the importance of acknowledging social injustice and racism and critically analysing their implications. They also maintain the need to teach empathy and critical thinking aimed at achieving understanding of differences in positive ways (Shields 2004). This position is in line with the discourse premised on social justice and critical transformative approaches on multiculturalism and school leadership. The principals who adopt this discourse provide a contextual and conceptual framework through which to explore implications for practice and leadership preparation.

Conclusion and implications

Increased immigration to a country provides new challenges, and school leaders have an important role to play. Many principals and teachers seem uncertain and insecure about how to react to this situation. Almost half of the principals who participated in this study adopted a combination of conservative multiculturalism and transactional leadership style. However, there were exceptions, and a small number of principals took a somewhat different stance that indicated perspectives of critical multiculturalism embedded in critical and social justice leadership. It is important to avoid the temptation of drawing too many conclusions, given the nature of the methodology used here. The findings should, therefore, be interpreted with caution, yet they indicate that there may be a relationship between some leadership styles and approaches to multiculturalism (McGlynn 2008).

There is, for example, some empirical evidence about the link between transactional leadership and conservative multiculturalism as well as between critical and social justice leadership and critical multiculturalism. The findings are context-specific, and they may not represent other countries and may well reflect more on the nature of principals who were interviewed rather than anything else (cf. Billot *et al*. 2007). Yet, these findings imply that if educators and school leaders in Cyprus want to take a different multicultural approach (e.g. one that is *not* assimilationist), it is not enough to focus attention primarily on the effectiveness and efficiency of schools (Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy 2005). The fundamental assumptions and practices of the school leaders as well as the philosophy at the systemic and local levels need to be critically questioned. That is, we hardly see how a critical multiculturalist approach (which is certainly the rhetoric of the Commission for Educational Reform in Cyprus) can be implemented in a conservative context of school leadership.

Most importantly, however, the findings of this study provide provocative snapshots on the challenges and implications of school leadership in relation to multicultural education. As Blair (2002: 185) suggests:

> Strong leadership in this [multi-ethnic] context … implies the strength to deal with difficult and contentious issues and to critically examine those practices that are routinized or institutionalized in the school and to ask the crucial question, 'who is falling through the net or who is being served by our taken-for-granted ways of doing things'.

Along similar lines, Giroux (1993) urges educational leaders to create a new language capable of asking new questions and generating more critical practices. Getting principals to abandon their conservative tendencies so that they can challenge exclusion practices and inequality is not an easy task; however, it is something that needs to be done (Ryan 2003). Therefore, we want to discuss some implications of this study at two levels. The first relates to the preparation of school leaders and their professional development to lead diverse schools; the second refers to implications not only at the systemic and the school level but also at the personal level of leadership practice.

Preparation programmes for school leaders often focus their attention primarily on the effectiveness and efficiency of schools. This narrow emphasis, argue Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005), fails to prepare school leaders to engage in difficult work that requires a shift in values, attitudes and practices and limits their ability to address fundamental social justice issues. For educational leadership preparation programmes to promote a social justice orientation, future school leaders need to be provided with opportunities to critically reflect on their values and practices as well as their impact on the community (Scheurich and Skrla 2003). For example, these opportunities may include a range of ideas: participating in field-based inquiry on oppression and discrimination; shadowing successful principals in schools in which social justice is at the centre of learning and leadership; participating in workshops that analyse empirical data about racism and examine stereotypes; facilitating the creation and/or adaptation of an inclusive curriculum at the school level; and developing socially just practices among all individuals within the school community (Pounder *et al.* 2002, Billot *et al.* 2007). In other words, what is needed in educational leadership preparation programmes is to prepare a new type of school leader who is strongly committed to achieving social justice and draws on many fields (e.g. curriculum, instruction, political theory, cultural studies and so on) to enable this goal (Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy 2005).

At both the systemic and school levels, processes must be established to facilitate conversations leading to reconceptualizing leadership for social justice (Theoharis 2007). Putting equity on the policy agenda; examining how curricula, disciplinary policies and enrolment strategies exclude some students; developing inclusive school cultures and organizations; enacting in everyday practices the values of fairness, justice and equality; developing the school staff to nurture the development of all students; and establishing strong links between the school, parents and the wider community are some recommendations that can be promoted (Dimmock and Walker 2005,

Walker 2005, Blackmore 2006). At the personal level, it is important to provide ongoing opportunities for critical reflexivity in which school leaders reflect and take responsibility on the impact of their actions on students and the wider community. Through a new language and practice of critique, school leaders can gradually shape a new discourse with profound implications for social justice, diversity and multiculturalism.

Notes

1. We refer to 'multicultural schools' to describe the schools whose student population has cultural, religious, ethnic or language diversity (Dimmock and Walker 2005). We later provide more explicit information about the student population in the context of our study.
2. Hereafter, we adopt the term 'principal', instead of the more general term 'administrator', because it is more explicit to the focus of our study.
3. While writing this paper, we are building on this study by moving into the next phase, that is an ethnographic research on how elementary school principals in selected schools deal with the challenges associated with diversity and multicultural education on an everyday basis.

References

Angelides, P., Stylianou, T. and Leigh, J. (2004) Multicultural education in Cyprus: a pot of multicultural assimilation? *Intercultural Education,* **15**, 307–315.

Aveling, N. (2007) Anti-racism in schools: a question of leadership? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* **28**(1), 69–85.

Banks, J. A. (1994) *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon).

Banks, J. A. (2007) *Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society*, 2nd edn (New York: Teachers College Press).

Billot, J., Goddard, T. and Cranston, N. (2007) How principals manage ethnocultural diversity: learnings from three countries. *International Studies in Educational Administration,* **35**(2), 3–19.

Blackmore, J. (2006) Deconstructing diversity discourses in the field of educational management and leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* **34**, 181–199.

Blair, M. (2002) Effective school leadership: the multi-ethnic context. *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* **23**(2), 179–191.

Bogotch, I. (2002) Educational leadership and social justice: practice into theory. *Journal of School Leadership,* **12**, 138–156.

Cambron-McCabe, N. and McCarthy, M. (2005) Educating school leaders for social justice. *Educational Policy,* **19**, 201–222.

Coleman, M. and Cardno, C. (2006) Editorial: educational leadership and diversity. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* **34**(2), 147–149.

Commission for Educational Reform. (2004) *Demokratiki kai anthropini paideia stin evrokipriaki politeia* [Democratic and humanistic education in the Euro-Cypriot state] (Nicosia: Ministry of Education and Culture).

Day, C. (2004) *A Passion for Teaching* (London/New York: RoutledgeFalmer).

Day, C., Harris, A., Hadfield, M., Tolley, H. and Beresford, J. (2003) *Leading Schools in Times of Change* (Buckingham: Open University Press).

Denzin, N. K. (1997) *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dimmock, C. and Walker, A. (2005) *Educational Leadership: Culture and Diversity* (London: Sage).

Duarte, E. M. and Smith, S. (2000) *Foundational Perspectives in Multicultural Education* (New York: Longman).

ECRI (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance). (2006) *Third Report on Cyprus: Adopted 16 December 2005 (CRI(2006)17)* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe).

Fish, S. (1997) Boutique multiculturalism, or why liberals are incapable of thinking about hate speech. *Critical Inquiry,* **23**(2), 378–395.

Foster, W. (1989) Toward a critical practice of leadership, in: J. Smyth (ed.) *Critical Perspectives on Educational Leadership* (London: Falmer), pp. 39–62.

Fullan, M. (2001) *Leading in a Culture of Change* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass).

Garcia, O. M. and Lopez, R. G. (2005) Teachers' initial training in cultural diversity in Spain: attitudes and pedagogical strategies. *Intercultural Education,* **16**(5), 433–442.

Gewirtz, S. (1998) Conceptualizing social justice in education: mapping the territory. *Journal of Education Policy,* **13**, 469–484.

Gewirtz, S. (2002) *The Managerial School: Post-welfarism and Social Justice in Education* (London: Routledge).

Gewirtz, S. and Ball, S. (2000) From 'welfarism' to 'new managerialism': shifting discourses of school headship in the education marketplace. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* **21**, 253–268.

Giroux, H. (1993) *Living Dangerously: Multiculturalism and the Politics of Difference* (New York: Peter Lang).

Goddard, T. (2007) Editorial: school leadership and equity—results from an international comparative study. *School Leadership and Management,* **27**(1), 1–5.

Goddard, T. J., Billot, J. and Cranston, N. (2006) Decision-making by school principals: the impact of ethnocultural diversity, paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM)*, Nicosia, Cyprus, 12–17 October.

Goddard, T. J. and Hart, A. C. (2007) School leadership and equity: Canadian elements. *School Leadership & Management,* **27**(1), 7–20.

Greenfield, T. and Ribbins, P. (1993) *Greenfield on Educational Administration* (London: Routledge).

Gunter, H. M. (2001) *Leaders and Leadership in Education* (London: Paul Chapman).

Gunter, H. M. (2006) Educational leadership and the challenge of diversity. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* **34**(2), 257–268.

Gutmann, A. (2004) Unity and diversity in democratic multicultural education: creative and destructive tensions, in: J. A. Banks (ed.) *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass), pp. 71–96.

Hodgkinson, C. (1991) *Educational Leadership: The Moral Art* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press).

Huber, S. G. (2004) School leadership and leadership development: adjusting leadership theories and development programs to values and core purpose of school. *Journal of Educational Administration,* **42**(6), 669–684.

Kincheloe, J. L. and Steinberg, S. R. (1997) *Changing Multiculturalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press).

Larson, C. and Murtadha, K. (2002) Leadership for social justice, in: J. Murphy (ed.) *The Educational Leadership Challenge: Redefining Leadership for the 21st Century* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), pp. 134–161.

Leeman, Y. (2007) School leadership and equity: Dutch experiences. *School Leadership & Management,* **27**(1), 51–63.

Mabokela, R. and Madsen, J. (2003) 'Colour-blind' leadership and intergroup conflict. *Journal of School Leadership,* **13**(2), 130–158.

Mahieu, P. and Clycq, N. (2007) School leadership and equity: the case of Antwerp—a report on good practices in three primary schools. *School Leadership & Management,* **27**(1), 35–49.

Marshall, C. (2004) Social justice challenges to educational administration: introduction to a special issue. *Educational Administration Quarterly,* **40**(1), 3–13.

Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching* (London: Sage).

McCray, C., Wright, J. and Beachum, F. (2004) An analysis of secondary school principals' perceptions of multicultural education. *Education,* **125**(1), 111–120.

McGlynn, C. (2008) Leading integrated schools: a study of multicultural perspectives of Northern Irish principals. *Journal of Peace Education,* **5**(1), 3–16.

Merriam, S. B. (1998) *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass).

Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage).

Ministry of Education and Culture. (2007a) *National Report in Education* (Nicosia: Ministry of Education and Culture).

Ministry of Education and Culture. (2007b) *Strategic Planning for Education* (Nicosia: Ministry of Education and Culture).

Nieto, S. (1996) *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education* (New York: Longman).

Nieto, S. (1999) *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities* (New York: Teachers College Press).

Panayiotopoulos, C. and Nicolaidou, M. (2007) At a crossroads of civilizations: multicultural educational provision in Cyprus through the lens of a case study. *Intercultural Education,* **18**(1), 65–79.

Pashiardis, P. (2007) Cyprus, in: W. Hörner, H. Döbert, B. von Koee and W. Mitter (eds) *The Education Systems in Europe* (Dordrecht: Springer), pp. 202–221.

Portin, B. S. (1999) Manifestations of critical leadership in tides of reform: contradiction or opportunity? paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration*, Minneapolis, MN, 29–31 October.

Pounder, D., Reitzug, U. and Young, M. (2002) Preparing school leaders for school improvement, social justice, and community, in: J. Murphy (ed.) *The Educational Leadership for the 21st Century* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), pp. 261–288.

Rizvi, F. (1993) Race, gender and the cultural assumptions of schooling, in: C. Marshall (ed.) *The New Politics of Race and Gender* (Bristol, PA: Falmer Press), pp. 203–217.

Rusch, E. (2004) Gender and race in leadership preparation: a constrained discourse. *Educational Administration Quarterly,* **40**(1), 14–46.

Ryan, J. (2003) Educational administrators' perceptions of racism in diverse school contexts. *Race, Ethnicity and Education,* **6**(2), 145–164.

Scheurich, J. and Skrla, L. (2003) *Leadership for Equity and Excellence* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press).

Sergiovanni, T. (1990) *Value-Added Leadership: How to get Extraordinary Performance in Schools* (London: HBJ).

Shields, C. M. (2004) Dialogic leadership for social justice: overcoming pathologies of silence. *Educational Administration Quarterly,* **40**(1), 111–134.

Skrla, L. and Scheurich, J. (2001) Displacing deficit thinking in school district leadership. *Education and Urban Society,* **33**(3), 235–259.

Sleeter, C. (1992) *Keepers of the American Dream* (London: Falmer).

Sleeter, C. and McLaren, P. (1995) *Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press).

Statistical Services of the Republic of Cyprus. (2006) *Demographic Report* (Nicosia: Cyprus Statistical Services).

Strauss, A. L. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Theoharis, G. (2007) Social justice educational leaders and resistance: toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly,* **43**(2), 221–258.

Tiedt, P. L. and Tiedt, I. M. (2002) *Multicultural Teaching: A Handbook of Activities, Information and Resources*, 6th edn (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon).

Walker, A. (2005) Priorities, strategies and challenges, in: A. Walker, C. Dimmock, H. Stevenson, B. Bignold and D. Middlewood (eds) *Effective Leadership in Multi-Ethnic Schools* (Nottingham: National College for School Leadership), pp. 5–25.

Webb, P. T., Neumann, M. and Jones, C. L. (2004) Politics, school improvement and social justice: a triadic model of teacher leadership. *The Educational Forum,* **68**(3), 254–262.

Young, M. and Laible, J. (2000) White racism, antiracism and school leadership preparation. *Journal of School Leadership,* **10**, 374–415.