

**The State of Social Justice in Academia in Quebec: A Literature-Based Exploratory  
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## **Abstract**

This literature-based thesis presents some of the various aspects of social justice related to academia, especially the higher education sector. The domain of this research consists of the academic institutions of Quebec. Although Quebec's education system has made efforts to implement social justice criteria in institutions, there are still some gaps including discrimination, racism, leadership issues, and funding problems that must be accurately addressed and remedied. Next comes information about these gaps, followed by their examination, one by one, through a given educational social justice framework. Some suggestions for the learning goals of individuals and groups follow. The role of administration and faculty in achieving the goal of social justice is highlighted as well.

Additionally, the thesis underlines the important roles of government organizations related directly to education for facilitating learning in an inclusive and safe environment for all. Finally, the benefits for society in implementing social justice criteria in educational institutions are discussed.

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my deceased father who always encouraged my self-confidence and taught me to be brave and hardworking.

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## **Chapter One: Statement of the Problem, Research Questions, and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

In Quebec, nearly two out of three students pursue higher education and one of those two attends university (Kamanzi, 2019). However, social inequalities regarding access to this level of education continue to exist. Higher education in Quebec is an area of social reproduction, especially in university, where culture and family income along with the effects of academic pathways influence social equality (Chenard et al., 2013). In addition, discrimination and systemic racism in academia persists in Quebec (Magnan et al., 2021). This racism happens in two ways: either through clear and obvious actions by individuals, or through less obvious processes in the institution itself. This kind of racism can make racialized groups feel like they are being treated unfairly compared to the majority White group (Dhume, 2016). It seems both that White staff and students in universities do not have the knowledge to deal with racial discrimination and microaggressions and that these issues are disregarded in Quebec society in general (Magnan et al., 2021).

It should be noted that, in Quebec, studies investigating disparities in higher education and the experiences of racially marginalized student populations have predominantly concentrated on aspects of access and graduation rates rather than capturing their subjective narratives concerning university experiences (Magnan et al., 2021).

This literature-based thesis provides an analysis of the existing scholarly literature with the aim of understanding and identifying the strengths and weaknesses present in academia in Quebec. This study examines various aspects of the education system in Quebec including:

1. The impact of different types of schools



2. The role of a school leadership and principals
3. Language policies, and the relationship between diversity and excellence
4. The implementation of social justice education
5. The complexity of education in a democratic atmosphere
6. The sociology of current official discourse in Quebec
7. The importance of teaching for social justice

The analysis begins by exploring the configuration of the secondary school market in Quebec and its influence on perpetuating social inequalities in higher education. It highlights the disparities in educational quality and access resulting from varying types of schools and academic programs, as well as the stratification of the institutions and classes that contribute to the polarization of students based on their academic achievement and socioeconomic background. The education system in Quebec includes the following levels: preschool (or kindergarten), elementary and secondary school, college, university, and postdoctoral studies (Gouvernement Du Québec, 2023). Instruction is given in French at the preschool, elementary and secondary levels; however, for eligible students the instruction would be in English. At colleges and universities, the language of instruction maybe French or English depending on the institution's language of operation. Additionally, there are government schools and private educational institutions authorized by the Quebec government, which provide accredited study programs (Gouvernement Du Québec, 2023) (see Appendix A).

This study also investigates the vision of school leaders in Quebec and their incorporation of goals related to equity, inclusion, and social justice. It suggests that the current visions of school leaders often fail to adequately prioritize social diversity within a framework of equity and inclusion, highlighting their need for improvement in this area.

The language policies in Quebec are also examined, with a focus on the preservation of the French language and the challenges faced in promoting diversity and inclusion. The study examines the complexities of balancing linguistic preservation with the recognition and contribution of minority groups, shedding light on the nuanced manifestations of racism within academia.

The study delves into the relationship between diversity and excellence in higher education. It explores the tensions that arise when individual rights and collective identities intersect, and the potential for misinterpretation and marginalization of diverse groups. It also evaluates the policies and initiatives implemented in Quebec to enhance equity and access for underrepresented groups, particularly aboriginal students.

Following this section, the paper explores the implementation of social justice education, particularly in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. It investigates the progress made in integrating indigenous history, residential schools, and First Nations, Inuit, and Metis contributions to curricula, highlighting the efforts within Quebec's Community Learning Center (CLC) network. The CLC network began operating in Quebec in 2006. Schools were selected through a competition among province's English schools and school boards. The purpose of the CLC initiative is to help conventional English schools in transforming into community-oriented institutions that integrate education with educational resources like healthcare and social services.

Each CLC has its own distinctiveness, mirroring the cultural identity of its respective community. Nevertheless, all CLCs universally strive to achieve shared objectives: nurturing a lasting and advantageous connection between the school and the community, while also

promoting the academic achievement of the students (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2023) (see Appendix B).

### **Background and Significance**

The literature review serves as an essential foundation for this thesis, as it aims to present a comprehensive analysis of recent studies and research pertaining to the current state of social justice and equity within educational institutions in Quebec. The review further delves into the accessibility of higher education for all students, including those from indigenous backgrounds and diverse financial circumstances, drawing insights from existing literature.

With the ever-increasing ethnic diversity in Quebec, it becomes imperative for approaches to social justice to continually evolve and adapt to the needs and aspirations of learners with informal learning environments, classrooms, and broader society. I believe incorporating theoretical perspectives from scholars such as Nancy Fraser (2003) can help to yield significant benefits for faculty, students, and individuals invested in social justice studies and actions.

Furthermore, this exploration can effectively highlight and address existing deficiencies within the educational system, fostering a constructive and inclusive learning environment that accommodates students from all ethnic backgrounds, financial situations, and linguistic diversities. Ultimately, the literature review serves as a platform for identifying pathways to enhance social justice and equity within academia, with their overarching goal of providing equitable access to quality education for every individual in Quebec, regardless of their socio-cultural background or financial status.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The examination of how social justice is implemented in academic institutions across different countries has been a subject of discourse, but surprisingly, there is a dearth of research focusing specifically on Quebec 's academic environment. Considering the highly diverse context of Quebec, particularly concerning its higher education landscape, the commitment to social justice in this region becomes notably significant. Cision Canada (2021), citing a U.S. News and World Report news release, writes: “Canada ranks number one in quality of life and social purpose. It is also perceived as having a good job market, caring about human rights and is committed to social justice” (Para. 6). However, recent studies have raised concerns about the correct and comprehensive application of social justice principles within Quebec 's educational system.

Social justice itself is a vast and multifaceted domain, encompassing various dimensions and implications. In light of this, this exploratory literature review aims to delve into the scientific literature to analyze how academic institutions in Quebec approach certain aspects of social justice, exploring both the outcomes and manifestations of their initiatives. Additionally, the review seeks to delve into the perceptions and experiences of faculty and students within Quebec 's academic institutions concerning social justice, equity, and access. By undertaking this investigation, the research aspires to contribute to the broader understanding of social justice in the context of academia and unveil potential areas that demand attention and improvement within Quebec 's educational landscape.

## **Research Questions**

1. How do academic policies and practices in academic institutions including universities and schools contribute to social justice through Nancy Fraser’s (2007) ideology?

2. What criteria to support social justice issues have been successful in academic settings in other countries, and how can they be modified for Quebec context?
3. How do government policies and funding affect social justice and academia in Quebec, and what measures can be implemented to enhance support for marginalized groups?
4. How can academic institutions in Quebec improve the promotion of social justice within the university and in society?

### **Organization of the Paper**

The first chapter has provided the reader with an introduction that explains what this paper is about, a background of the research topic and its importance, the statement of the problem, and the research questions. It also presents the three-part methodology which I have applied to search and find sources and material for this paper, including literature search strategy, data collection and analysis, and synthesis and writing.

In Chapter Two, I will present a comprehensive literature review focusing on social justice within academia in Quebec. I have attempted to integrate contemporary resources and references with the aim of giving the reader an understanding of the current state of academia. This chapter involves several sections, and each section starts with a brief background of the topic and finishes with a conclusion paragraph.

In Chapter Three, I will discuss previously presented literature review within the framework of Fraser's (2007) ideology of social justice. The primary focus is on analyzing the application of social justice principles within the educational landscape, which encompasses the concepts of redistribution and recognition guided by Fraser's (2007) perspective on social justice. This chapter highlights the multifaceted dimensions of social justice within academia in Quebec,

encompassing topics such as equal access to education, inclusive policies and practices, diversity and representation, and the role of power dynamics.

In Chapter Four, the conclusion and possibilities for further research will be discussed. This chapter evaluates how the studies' outcomes can address gaps identified in the literature, discuss the implications of the findings, highlight their studies' limitations, and propose paths for further research. It also sheds light on the obstacles faced in achieving equitable access to education, attributed to the entrenched meritocratic principles within the education system's organizational and regulatory structures.

### **Methodology**

This study applies an integrative literature review methodology, analyzing and evaluating articles using content analysis. Utilizing a critical social justice framework, the author tries to discuss the steps that Quebec 's academic institutions have or have not taken to address injustices and inequalities among faculty and students. This framework is inspired by Fraser's social justice ideology (Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

The following methodology outlines the approach and the steps that are undertaken to conduct this literature review:

#### **Literature Search Strategy**

##### ***Identify Relevant Databases***

Academic databases such as ERIC, JSTOR, Scopus, Sofia, Google Scholar, as well as Concordia University library were searched to access scholarly literature in the field of education, sociology, leadership, and related disciplines.

##### ***Keywords***

A list of keywords related to the research questions were developed, including terms such as: academia in Quebec, higher education in Quebec, inequalities, education policies, language policies, democracy in education, diversity, excellence, social justice education, and reconciliation.

### ***Boolean Operators***

Key words were combined using Boolean operators to refine search results and ensure relevance.

### ***Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria***

Inclusion criteria were established to select relevant articles, such as publication date (within the last 20 years), peer reviewed articles, and literature specifically focused on academia and inequalities in Quebec.

### ***Language***

The search was conducted in both English and French to ensure inclusion of relevant literature.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

#### ***Screening***

The initial search yielded a large number of articles. Screening was conducted based on titles and abstracts to identify relevant literature for full-text review.

### ***Full-Text Review***

Selected articles were reviewed in detail to assess their relevance to the research questions. The articles were critically analyzed to extract key findings, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks.

### ***Data Extraction***

Key information from the selected articles was extracted and organized using a systematic approach, including authors, publication year, research methodology, and theoretical perspectives.

### **Synthesis and Writing**

The extracted data and identified themes were synthesized to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing scholarly literature on academia and inequalities in Quebec. The chapters are organized according to the research questions, with each section addressing a specific theme. The literature is critically analyzed, and key findings are presented. The chapters present a clear analysis of the literature and address the research questions. Proper citation and referencing are ensured.

By following this methodology, this literature review provides a comprehensive analysis of existing scholarly literature about academia and inequalities in Quebec.

Guided by a critical social justice framework, the study navigates the intricacies of Quebec's academic institutions, deciphering the strides taken, as well as those not yet ventured, to rectify injustices and disparities among faculty and students. This approach gives rise to a literature review that acts as a repository of knowledge, embodying the combined scholarly



understanding of the intricate relationship between inequalities and educational establishments in Quebec. The methodical exploration embarked upon, guided by the enlightening principles of Fraser's (2007) social justice framework, produces an academic contribution that not only aims to scrutinize the existing state of education in Québec but also opens the conversation for upcoming investigations into the dynamic context of academia and its pursuit of fairness.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter aims to provide an analysis of the existing scholarly literature with the intention of providing some information for understanding and identifying the strengths and weaknesses that are present in academia in Quebec regarding social justice, equity, and inclusion. First, I will provide Nancy Fraser's (2007) ideology of social justice to give the reader an idea of educational aspects of social justice through her lens. Following that, some aspects of social justice in academia in Quebec will be discussed including: educational stratification impacts, leadership, social relations of race, complexity of democratic education, Quebec's official discourse, diversity policies, and teaching for social justice.

### Social Justice in Nancy Fraser's Ideology

I started this section by Keddie's (2012) comprehensive review of Fraser's (2008) book called *Adding insult to injury: Nancy Fraser debates her critics* because it is a collection of Nancy Fraser's ideas about social justice in education. Her insights specifically focus on the applicability and usefulness of Fraser's (2008) three-dimensional model for understanding matters of justice in education. This model, which encompasses the dimensions of economic distribution, cultural recognition, and political representation, provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing and addressing social justice issues in the context of education. Keddie's (2012) review delves into the intricacies of how Fraser's (2008) model can be applied to educational settings, shedding light on its potential to enhance our understanding of the complexities surrounding justice in education.

The model's first dimension, economic distribution, probes into the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities within educational systems. By examining issues such as funding disparities, access to quality education, and the impact of socioeconomic status on educational

outcomes, Fraser's (2008) model allows educators and policymakers to identify and rectify structural inequalities that hinder social mobility and perpetuate educational disadvantage.

Moving on to the dimension of cultural recognition, Fraser (2008) emphasizes the significance of acknowledging and respecting diverse cultural identities within the education system. This dimension compels us to explore questions of representation, cultural inclusion, and the incorporation of diverse perspectives and histories in curricula and teaching practices. Keddie's (2012) analysis highlights how incorporating cultural recognition in educational settings can promote inclusivity, foster a sense of belonging among students from different cultural backgrounds, and create an environment conducive to cross-cultural understanding and learning.

The third dimension of Fraser's (2008) model, political representation, explores the democratic participation and engagement of various stakeholders in educational decision-making processes. This dimension encourages us to assess the inclusiveness and responsiveness of educational institutions and policies to the needs and voices of students, parents, educators, and the broader community. Keddie's (2012) review further explores how enhancing political representation in education can empower marginalized groups and ensure they are active involvement in shaping the educational landscape.

The struggle for recognition has become the dominant form of political conflict in the late twentieth century. Various groups are demanding recognition of their unique identities based on nationality, race, gender, and sexuality. These conflicts, often referred to as *postsocialist* struggles, prioritize group identity over class interests as the main driver of political mobilization. Cultural domination is seen as the primary injustice, overshadowing economic exploitation. The remedy for injustice and the goal of political struggle is now focused on

cultural recognition rather than social economic redistribution. However, it is important to note that these struggles for recognition occur within a context of heightened material inequality, encompassing disparities in income, property ownership, access to work, education, healthcare, leisure time, as well as disparities and nutrition and exposure to environmental hazards, resulting in differences in life expectancy and rates of illness and mortality (Fraser, 1996).

Regarding education, Keddie (2012) quoted from a secondary teacher who worked at a small English language school for refugee and immigrant students in a suburban area in Queensland. These remarks were provided as a reply to an inquiry regarding the topics of education, equity, and social justice:

I think first and foremost [we are] about advocacy. It's about who are the students at our school? What are the issues for those students? What might be barriers to their learning ... to their ability to take advantage of the opportunities of education? And then to find [out] how we act on that - what can we actually do about that (Keddie, 2012, p. 263).

For her, school is a space where opportunities and advocacy can bring about positive changes in challenging circumstances and eliminate obstacles to learning. This perspective aligns well with the concept of “participatory parity” introduced by Fraser (1996). According to Fraser (2007) justice entails:

... social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life. And the view of justice as participatory parity, overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction (p. 27).

Keddie (2012) continued that creating social systems that promote such equality revolves around understanding students' identities and taking action based on this knowledge to enhance their ability to benefit from educational opportunities. It involves acknowledging the varying circumstances and requirements of students in terms of equity and providing tailored support to address these specific needs. Certainly, in the face of the unprecedented and increasing levels of diversity in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, and social class within classrooms in the Western context, grappling with the politics surrounding student differences has become more challenging and controversial than ever before. This controversy is particularly evident in the lack of shared understanding among teachers and within schools regarding issues of justice. While most teachers acknowledge the significance of eliminating barriers that hinder certain students from participating on equal footing with their more advantaged peers, there is far less consensus on identifying these obstacles and determining the most effective means of overcoming them (Keddie, 2012).

In Western contexts, distributive principles of justice have long played the primary role in shaping equity and educational policies. These principles acknowledge the unequal distribution of material advantages within schools and the unequal opportunities students have in accessing and benefiting from these advantages. Education plays a crucial role in determining the credentials necessary for employment and subsequently influences students' access to the labor market (Keddie, 2012). An essential aspect of promoting social justice in education is to prepare students for their future participation in the labor market. It is crucial to support marginalized students in achieving similar educational outcomes as their more privileged peers, as measured by standardized tests and other indicators of educational achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This ensures that they have the skills and qualifications to compete on an equal footing and have

equal access to opportunities in society. Distributive justice principles recognize the interconnections between poverty, academic underperformance, early school dropout rates, and the potential for future economic hardship and social issues (Keddie, 2012).

Driven by recognition of ongoing educational disadvantages faced by specific student groups, particularly based on racial differences, the focus on cultural recognition has become as significant as economic redistribution in educational priorities. Similar to the impact of poverty, race has been shown to be a highly accurate predictor of educational underachievement. For instance, indigenous students in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, as well as Black students of African descent in the United States and the United Kingdom, consistently demonstrate lower academic performance compared to their racially and socioeconomically privileged peers. The concerns surrounding the underperformance of these students shed light on the cultural bias inherent in Western educational settings, which tend to prioritize White and middle-class ways of knowing and being while marginalizing alternative forms of knowledge and existence. This privileging perpetuates and reinforces inequitable patterns of cultural recognition (Keddie, 2012). Keddie (2012) mentioned that arguments supporting segregated schools, based on factors such as race, ethnicity, or religion have been motivated by similar concerns.

These issues and concerns emphasize the significance of an inclusive approach to equity in schools that acknowledges the multidimensionality of justice considerations. While the Education field has long recognized the broad range of these considerations, Fraser's (2008) model provides a valuable conceptual framework for addressing economic, cultural, and political disadvantage and marginalization among students. Additionally, her work highlights the inherent

tensions involved in striving for justice across these dimensions, which education theory, policy, and practice are still actively grappling with (Keddie, 2012).

Keddie (2012) added that culturally responsive learning environments are widely recognized as an essential component of a socially just education. They involve valuing non-dominant or marginalized cultures within the curriculum, which aligns with the principles of recognitive justice and has the potential to disrupt equitable social hierarchies (Fraser, 2000). Research indicates that such valuing improves marginalized students' participation, motivation, and outcomes in schooling. However, creating culturally responsive learning environments is not without challenges. These efforts tend to reify culture by simplifying it and associating it with specific population groups. This reification has become prevalent in recent forms of identity politics, imposing a singular and simplified group identity that denies the complexity of people's lives and discourages culture criticism and the creativity of intergroup conflict and injustice (Fraser, 2000). Fraser (2000) believed that this reification is a consequence of the shift from a predominant focus on redistributive justice to an emphasis on recognitive justice over the past few decades.

The tendency to reify culture is explored in the context of Indigenous education in Australia, where culturalism within schools perpetuates binary oppositions between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal identities. This reification of culture hinders cultural criticism and scrutiny, as the important questions about knowledge construction, privilege, and legitimacy are often ignored. This lack of debate about the relative merits of Indigenous theory and knowledge further demonstrates the reified understanding of culture, which limits critical engagement and evaluation (Keddie, 2012). Fraser (1996) raises concerns about the displacement of struggles for distributive justice by a focus on cultural recognition within the current mode of identity politics.

This displacement stems from the abstracting of culture from its institutional context and its entwinement with distributive injustice. Critics expressed concerns that culturally responsive teaching, when compromised by low expectations or separate measures of achievement for marginalized students, may dilute the focus on high academic outcomes and perpetuate the new racism in education (Keddie, 2012).

It is important to recognize that advocacy and understanding students' identities are the key elements in promoting positive changes and removing barriers to learning. This perspective aligns with Fraser's (1996) concept of *participatory parity*, which calls for dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent individuals from participating as equal as others in social life. Creating social systems that promote equality requires acknowledging the diverse circumstances and needs of students and providing tailored support to address their specific equity requirements.

Challenges and controversies surrounding issues of justice within education, particularly in classrooms, characterized by unprecedented levels of diversity in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, and social class. The lack of shared understanding among teachers and schools regarding barriers to equal participation reflects the complexities inherent in facing student differences. While there is consensus among educators regarding the importance of eliminating barriers, there is less agreement on identifying specific obstacles and determining effective strategies for overcoming them (Keddie, 2012).

It is crucial to prepare marginalized students for future labor market participation by ensuring equal access to educational opportunities and similar outcomes to their more privileged peers. It is also important to consider cultural recognition alongside economic redistribution in addressing educational disadvantages, particularly those faced by specific student groups based



on racial differences. Fraser's (2007) conceptual framework is valuable in addressing economic, cultural, and political disadvantage and marginalization among students. Her work sheds light on the tensions inherent in striving for justice across these dimensions, which remains subject of ongoing exploration in education theory, policy and practice. Culturally responsive learning environments are identified as crucial components of a socially just education, promoting the valuing of non-dominant cultures and disrupting inequitable social and hierarchies.

### **Educational Stratification Impact on Social Inequalities in Quebec's Education System**

Larochelle-Audet et al. (2019) wrote that, in 2017, the Quebec Ministry of Education introduced a new educational policy with a comprehensive vision centered around the establishment of "inclusive educational settings focused on success for all, supported by their community, where people learned to be civic-minded, creative, competent, responsible, open to diversity and fully engaged in social, cultural and economic life in Quebec." This policy reaffirms the right of education for everyone and upholds the principles of fairness and societal equity that directed the expansion of Quebec 's education system's accessibility during the late 1960s. Based on both international and domestic criteria, there is no valid reason to withhold essential necessities like education from specific individuals or communities. This requirement aligns with the principle of equal treatment safeguarded since 1975 by the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019).

Despite these legal provisions, the realization of equal educational rights has encountered numerous challenges, promoting EUNEC (2016) to call upon Quebec society, political authorities, and educational institution leaders to refocus their efforts towards achieving equity in education. This call aimed to prevent the jeopardization of the progress achieved in recent decades. In particular, the council urged stakeholders to critically assess how the functioning of

the education system contributes to the perpetuation of specific inequalities (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019). In Quebec similar to other democratic societies, the organizational and regulatory structures of the educational system reinforce a meritocratic ideology of education that has a tendency to perpetuate inequalities and exclusion (Maroy & Casinius Kamanzi, 2017).

However, the system of education in Quebec needs some considerations. The configuration of the secondary school market in Quebec, as characterized by its inter- and intra-institutional stratification, significantly impacts the perpetuation of social inequalities in higher education (Kamanzi, 2019). Kamanzi (2019) found that there are three possible interpretations. The first aspect pertains to disparities in the educational quality attributable to the varying types of schools and academic programs accessible to students. Within these institutions, the segregations observed in this differentiation result in an unequal provision of education, encompassing both cognitive and non-cognitive elements. (Bryk & Lee, 1992; Dronkers & Róbert, 2008).

The second aspect relates to variations in academic experiences. The stratification of schools and classes has a notable impact on students' experiences within the educational system (Felouzis, 2009). If students attending selective institutions and classes, such as private schools and enriched programs in the public sector of Quebec, show a strong academic performance and aspirations, it can be attributed to the development of self-confidence (Sheldrake, 2016). Consequently, enrollment in a private institution or an enriched class is perceived as a merit-based recognition of one's abilities to excel and achieve, resulting in a heightened sense of confidence and dedication towards education (Kamanzi, 2019).

The third aspect that Kamanzi (2019) mentions is the stratification of institutions and classes that tend to facilitate the polarization of students based on their academic achievement

and socioeconomic background. This polarization process leads to a homogenization of students' educational experiences, as their peers mutually influence their educational aspirations, level of dedication to studies, and perceptions of success. Within a framework of equal opportunities, underpinned by the mandatory and accessible nature of primary and secondary education, the education market functions as a mechanism of segregation that enables affluent families to uphold and safeguard their socioeconomic advantages (Kamanzi, 2019). Kamanzi (2019) concluded that in the pursuit of social justice and systemic effectiveness, the exercise of school choice privileges and sustains the tendency of the students to be grouped together based on their social background and academic achievements, thereby fostering homogeneity.

In conclusion, the pursuit of equal educational rights in Quebec has encountered significant challenges despite the introduction of comprehensive policies aimed at fostering inclusive educational settings. The organizational and regulatory structures of the education system in Quebec reinforces meritocratic ideology that perpetuates social inequalities and exclusion. The stratification of the secondary school market in Quebec plays a crucial role in perpetuating these inequalities. Disparities in educational quality, variations in academic experiences, and the polarization of students based on academic achievement and socioeconomic background all contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities within the education system. These factors lead to unequal provision of education, a homogenization of students' educational experiences, and the safeguarding of socioeconomic advantages by affluent families. To achieve true equity in education, it is crucial for Quebec society, political authorities, and educational institution leaders to critically assess and address these systematic barriers that perpetuate inequalities. By reinforcing efforts and dismantling these barriers, Quebec can work towards

achieving a more just and inclusive education system that supports the success and well-being of all students.

### **Leadership for Social Justice in Educational Administration**

In an academic context, leadership for social justice entails fostering ethical discussions aimed at promoting academic excellence and nurturing positive connections with students of diverse backgrounds and different abilities. It involves maintaining a deep understanding of one's knowledge acquisition, value system, and actions in relation to social justice. Additionally, it encompasses challenging and transforming established systems of inequality, discrimination, and injustice that advantage a few students while negatively impacting a large number. These conceptualizations of leadership for social justice serve as the foundational principles and convictions guiding principles in promoting teacher development (Turhan, 2010).

Multiple policies and reports published in Quebec have acknowledged the significance of providing training to principals and other education professionals as a crucial element in implementing practices that consider social diversity within the education system. The training process presents an ideal opportunity for administrators to engage in a more comprehensive reflection and the fundamental role of justice and democracy in educational leadership (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019). Since 2001, it has been a requirement in Quebec to successfully complete a university graduate program with at least 30 credits in leadership in order to become a practicing principal or vice-principal in an educational institution. Within the framework of professionalizing the management role, a competency-based approach holds a significant position in the structure of these training programs, particularly in specialized graduate degrees focusing on educational administration (Proulx & Shields, 2016).

Inspired by these guidelines, certain universities and school boards have created their own sets of competency standards to align with their unique administrative contexts and missions, encompassing aspects such as training, supervision, regulation, and professional development. These frameworks not only serve as tools and resources for administrators to enhance their professional growth, but also as a means for evaluating, supervising, and supporting them within their respective educational institutions (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019). The significance of these standards in the education, oversight, and professional advancement of administrators (IsaBelle et al., 2016) gives them a crucial responsibility in promoting equity, inclusivity, and social justice within educational institutions (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019). Larochelle-Audet et al. (2019) mentioned that, in 2016, in Quebec, a group of education leaders united with the shared goal of enhancing the initial and continuous training for school administrators to better equip them with the skills needed to include social diversity while promoting fairness, inclusivity, and social justice. To tackle the marginalization of groups and individuals within schools, the Working Group on Competencies and Training for Administrators in Equity and Diversity strives to transform educational institutions rather than focusing solely on individuals.

The group members firmly reject the notion that educational and social inequalities are primarily caused by personal attributes, backgrounds, perceived deficiencies, or the inability to develop specific competencies. Instead of conventional perspectives, critical concepts are adopted that challenge the operation of the education system. Its aim is to explore how specific practices and structural processes within the system undermine the rights and growth of marginalized groups, including students, their families, and school staff. These practices and processes perpetuate social inequalities and impede any efforts towards democratization and

social justice. The Group members advocate for a systematic approach and embrace principles of equity, inclusion, and social justice in education, emphasizing the need for transformative leadership (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019).

In order to develop recommendations for enhancing the Quebec standards and the training of school administrators in relation to social diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, Larochelle-Audet et al. (2019) undertook a comparative examination of eight competency standards for school administrators. The purpose of this analysis was to examine how these standards approach social diversity in terms of their concepts, perspectives, and emphasis. In alignment with the primary objectives of the Group, they specifically chose the standards, or their revised editions, that pertained to social diversity, equity, inclusion, or social justice. They incorporated Quebec's competency standards for school administrators (Ministry of Education, Recreation, and Sports, 2008) in the analysis, despite assessments indicating that it lacks the competencies related to student needs and values such as democracy, equity, respect, or diversity. The decision to include these standards was driven by the objectives of the Group conducting the analysis, specifically to develop a new competency model for school leaders in Quebec. The analysis revealed that the vision of school leaders often fails to adequately incorporate competency goals that prioritize the consideration of social diversity within a framework of equity, inclusion, and social justice (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019).

**Table 1***Comparative Table of School Leaders' Visions*

Standards	Create a space in which educational community leaders can act to counter inequalities, discriminations and social exclusions to create a more just and egalitarian society	Aims Provide all students, both young and adult, with resources and conditions for educational success while respecting their individual and collective rights, identities, experiences and needs
Australia	x	x
British Columbia		
California		x
England		
New Zealand		
Québec		
Texas		
United States		x

*Note.* Adapted from “Comparative and Critical Analysis of Competency Standards for School Principals: Towards an Inclusive and Equity Perspective in Quebec,” by J. Larochelle-Audet and M. O. Magnan, M. Potvin, and E. Doré 2019, *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27(112). Copyright 2019 by Arizona State University.

They found that the competency goals of taking social diversity into account were rarely reflected in the vision of school leaders, and only the visions proposed in the Australia, California, and U.S. Standards reflect some goals of equity, inclusion, and social justice in education.

The eight standards analyzed the valued educational success of all students in the corpus. The social categories identified in the corpus were categorized into six analytical groups, representing different types of social relationships through which groups experience exclusion and marginalization in terms of power dynamics (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019). These categories include: capacity, special needs, and disabilities; minority culture, language, race, and religion; First Nations and indigenous communities; social class and economic poverty; gender;

and sexual orientation. The authors summarized the social categories mentioned in each standard in the following table:

**Table 2**

*Comparative table of social categories named in the standards*

Standards	Social categories					
	Capacity, special need, disability	Minority culture, language, race, religion	First Nations, Indigenous	Social class, economic poverty	Gender	Sexual orientation
Australia	x	x	x			
British Columbia	x	x		G <sup>a</sup>	G	
California	x	x		x		
England						
New-Zealand <sup>b</sup>	x	x	x			
Québec						
Texas						
United States	x	x		x	x	x

*Note.* Adapted from “Comparative and Critical Analysis of Competency Standards for School Principals: Towards an Inclusive and Equity Perspective in Quebec,” by J. Larochelle-Audet and M. O. Magnan, M. Potvin, and E. Doré, 2019, *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27(112). Copyright 2019 by Arizona State University.

As table 2 demonstrates, none of their social categories are named in the standards of Quebec.

Table 3 outlines the skills and elements that can play a role in promoting the integration of social diversity within a framework of equity, inclusion, and social justice. The standards in the United States and California encompass all the analytical categories, whereas Texas only focuses on one out of the five categories. The competencies and components in the other standards, such as those in Quebec, cover three to four analytical categories (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019).



Table 3

*Comparative Table of Competencies and Standards Components*

Standard	Analytical category				
	Create a climate where human and social diversity is recognized and respected	Develop leadership and non-deficit oriented pedagogical practices that are tailored to the realities and needs of people	Guide practices and transform structures to counter inequalities and disparities between groups of students	Know, value and engage students' families and communities, especially those who are under-represented	Promote and adopt an honest and critical professional action reflecting principles of equity, inclusion, and social justice
Australia	x	x		x	x
British Columbia	x		x		x
California	x	x	x	x	x
England		x		x	
New Zealand	x	x		x	x
Québec		x	x		x
Texas			x		
United States	x	x	x	x	x

*Note.* Adapted from “Comparative and Critical Analysis of Competency Standards for School Principals: Towards an Inclusive and Equity Perspective in Quebec,” by J. Larochelle-Audet, M. O. Magnan, M. Potvin, and E. Doré, 2019, *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27(112). Copyright 2019 by Arizona State University.

Table 3 provides a comparative analysis of competency standards for school administrators with a focus on social diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. The analysis examines how different standards approach these concepts and identifies five analytical categories: recognition and respect for human and social diversity; pedagogical practices and high expectations for all students; challenging and transforming structures that perpetuate inequalities; mobilizing resources from families and communities to support marginalized groups; and ethical principles and professional development. The analysis reveals variations in

how these categories are addressed across different standards, with some standards incorporating a broader perspective on equity, inclusion, and social justice while others are more limited in their approach. The findings highlight the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive vision of leadership for social justice and educational administration.

In brief, leadership for social justice in educational administration is a complex and multifaceted concept. It involves fostering ethical discussions, promoting academic excellence, and nurturing positive connections with students of diverse backgrounds and abilities. It requires challenging and transforming established systems of inequality and discrimination, and promoting equity, inclusivity, and social justice within educational institutions. Multiple policies and reports in Quebec recognize the importance of training principals and education professionals to implement practices that consider social diversity. Competency standards have been developed to enhance administrators' professional growth and guide their actions in promoting equity and social justice. However, a comparative analysis of these standards reveals variations in how social diversity is prioritized, with some standards falling short in adequately incorporating competency goals that address equity, inclusion, and social justice. This analysis highlights the need for a comprehensive and inclusive vision of leadership for social justice and educational administration to ensure that all students receive an equitable and inclusive education.

### **Social Relations of Race in Quebec 's Educational Institutions**

During 1970s, the francophone majority of Quebec developed a highlighted concern with regards to the assimilation of immigrants, driven by the objective of safeguarding the preservation of the French language within a predominantly anglophone Canada. The Royal Commission on Education, commonly known as The Parent Commission, conducted during the

period of 1963 to 1966, affirmed that a significant proportion of individuals immigrating to the province were attracted to English-speaking Canadian culture. As a result, the Commission proposed that the francophone community be officially recognized as the host community (Magnan et al., 2021). The francophone majority in Quebec, motivated by the goal of securing “linguistic survival”, was compelled to establish its stance regarding the assimilation of immigrants and their offspring. This fresh outlook led Quebec to advocate for a community characterized by linguistic unilingualism and ethnic diversity (Lamarre, 2002).

Quebec tried to maintain French as the common language while recognizing the contribution of minority groups. This political rhetoric employs the concept of diversity as a means to establish and maintain the dominant group's position within various institutions, specifically educational establishments (Jay, 2003). With the aim of preserving the long-term viability of the “French fact” and integrating immigrants into the predominantly francophone community, the Quebec government implemented the Charter of the French Language, commonly known as Bill 101, in 1977 (<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/bill-101>). This legislation sought to establish French as the official language of the state and the legal system, as well as the customary and predominant language for employment, education, communication, commerce, and business (Magnan et al., 2021). In spite of Quebec’s educational institutions embracing ethnocultural and linguistic diversity, and the prevailing increase in the predominance of Quebec francophones since the 1970, evidently, French speaking individuals continue to perceive themselves as a vulnerable majority (McAndrew, 2010).

Furthermore, the national discourse in Quebec is characterized by a tumultuous history of colonialism, which leads to the marginalization of Indigenous groups and racialized communities, hindering their ongoing struggles for recognition (Magnan et al., 2021). Magnan et

al.'s (2021) interviews with students show that instances of racism were more overt in primary and secondary school. They believed that within the university setting, racism adopted a more nuanced and less overt manifestation. When discussing their encounters within academia, students also draw attention to the existence of boundaries and power dynamics that gave rise to processes of marginalization between Quebecers who identify as White and those from other backgrounds (Magnan et al., 2021):

... students who were White Quebecers, if I can say that. They were open-minded, but closed-minded at the same time. They really had a lot of prejudices that had to be undone. Sometimes we talked about certain aspects in our courses, then we talked about new immigrants, how to welcome them coming and then there were some who said: you have to teach them to write, you have to teach them to read. As if an immigrant can't read, can't write, an immigrant can't drive. Then ... when they said that, they were not even condescending, for them if it was OK as if it were normal (Magnan et al., 2021, p. 8).

The interviews also showed students' observations regarding racial dynamics from an institutional standpoint. They brought attention to the lack of representation of racialized groups among university staff, the use of promotional materials that promote a whitewashed image of the university, the presence of an ethnocentric formal curriculum in courses, and a sense of exclusion from student life. Many students specifically mentioned that the majority of teachers at the university are white or from the dominant group. As a result, they struggle to develop a sense of belonging and have difficulty envisioning themselves within the professional realm of the university due to the absence of role models who reflect their own racial identity (Magnan et al., 2021):

If I had people like professors who [...] maybe from whatever background, Lebanese, African, or [...] maybe it would have made me more: Okay, it is possible for someone who is not White Quebecois to succeed and it would have motivated me a little more (Magnan et al., 2021, p. 11).

They also expressed their concerns regarding the curriculum 's lack of attention to ethnocultural diversity issues:

[...] I don't know, there are some subjects that I feel are a little taboo. Perhaps the teachers do not know how to approach the subject [...] but I have never really seen any effort. Maybe it could have removed some of the taboos, prejudices (Magnan et al., 2021, p. 11).

By examining the students' narratives, Magnan et al. (2021) constructed the representation of social relations of race within the university in Quebec, as described by the participants. These narratives shed light on the unequal power dynamics between different groups, which in turn influenced their positioning and connections with the university.

### **Complexity of Democratic Education**

Public education means to strengthen democracy (Westheimer & Kahne, 2000). There are multiple definitions of democracy, age influenced by particular ideological and philosophical orientations. In situations where moral responsibility is predominantly determined by attributing fault, establishing causality, and enforcing accountability, alongside the assumptions that individuals and others can be perceived as separate from social, economic, and historical circumstances, identifying and recognizing system oppression becomes more challenging. Moreover, this perspective may encourage individuals to deny their complicity in perpetuating

such oppression (Applebaum, 2005). The evolving political environment in Western countries, characterized by a foundation in a free-market political and economic system, complicates the understanding and implementation of democratic education (Carr & Thésée, 2007). An ideal framework for democratic education should incorporate the establishment of standards, measures and indicators that reflect democracy. To address and reinforce social justice, and accountability framework should include key elements that are given equal importance as the complementary concept of academic achievement. These elements may include substantial components such as how strategic policies develop, the characteristics of leadership, the content and pertinence of the curriculum, the value of extracurricular activities and service-learning with an analysis on direct connection to teaching and learning, the depth and scope of community involvement, and the training of educators (Carr & Thésée, 2007).

Democratic education presents complexities for several reasons: The lack of consensus on its precise definition creates ambiguity; the political nature of education creates various visions; the persistent focus on short-term solutions in education that hinders long term planning and policy implementation; there is no well-established culture of assessing entire education systems, partly due to the potential consequences of exposing deficiencies; a critical analysis of the *status quo* in education poses a threat to conservative elements and elites; and structural issues within educational systems limit the development and implementation of comprehensive conceptual models, especially when genuine accountability is at stake (Carr & Thésée, 2007). Ultimately, a democratic education framework is a valuable instrument for engaging various sectors, allocating resources, planning activities, identifying gaps, needs, and outcomes, and unifying the multifaceted elements necessary for integrating democratic principles throughout the education system (Carr & Thésée, 2007).

In conclusion, public education plays a crucial role in strengthening democracy by promoting social justice, accountability, and the integration of democratic principles within the education system. However, the complexity of democratic education poses challenges that need to be addressed. The lack of consensus on the definition of democracy, the political nature of education, the focus on short-term solutions, the resistance to critical analysis, and the issues within educational systems all contribute to the complexity of democratic education. Despite these challenges, an ideal framework for democratic education should encompass standards, measures, and indicators that reflect democratic values and principles. Key elements such as strategic policies, leadership characteristics, curriculum content, extracurricular activities, community involvement, and educator training should be given equal importance alongside academic achievement. By engaging various sectors, allocating resources, planning activities, and identifying gaps and outcomes, a comprehensive democratic education framework can be developed to unify the multifaceted elements necessary for the integration of democratic principles throughout the education system. Ultimately, democratic education serves as a valuable instrument for fostering an inclusive and democratic society.

### **Sociological Analysis of Quebec's Official Discourse**

In analysis of official discourse, Côté and Simard (2009) adopted Boltanski and Thevenot's (2006) Sociology of Justification, which seeks to uncover the underlying principles of the common good invoked by individuals when they publicly justify their actions in the name of justice. After identifying the principles of justification and considering the contextual factors, they were able to interpret the significance of integration of the cultural dimension as reflected in the official discourse of Quebec. Côté and Simard (2009) wrote that Quebec 's official discourse promotes a conception of culture in which “the world is characterized by growing

interdependence.... learning too must be integrated; students must recognize that these elements are connected”. They continued that, according to the official discourse, schools are encouraged to adopt a new perspective that emphasizes collaboration and partnership with various sources and channels for the production and dissemination of knowledge. Moreover, the integration of the cultural dimension aims to educate students who are capable of establishing connections between the past and the present in order to enhance their understanding of the current reality and developed new ways of adapting to society.

Côté and Simard (2009) believed that the official discourse in Quebec appears to be influenced by the transformations within the capitalist system. They mentioned that these transformations can potentially influence Quebec 's official discourse as it devises initiatives aimed at fostering collaboration between educators, artists, writers, and cultural organizations to facilitate the integration of cultural activities. Furthermore, within the context of the evolving landscape of capitalism, notions of quality undergo transformation and place significant emphasis on personal attributes that are often considered more private and closely tied to an individual's character, such as open-mindedness, self-control, accessibility, good mood, or calmness (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2001).

This influence is reflected in the educational goals pursued by Quebec 's official discourse through the integration of the cultural dimension, as this dimension plays a role in fostering students' ability to effectively utilize the resources available to them. This includes incorporating the knowledge acquired in school, as well as drawing upon their experiences, skills, attitudes, and interests (Côté & Simard, 2009). The official discourse seeks to integrate the cultural dimension in order to cultivate individuals who possess the skills and attributes necessary for the demands of contemporary capitalism, both as workers and consumers. It



encourages artists and teachers to participate in this integration by promoting cultural goods that have been assimilated into the capitalist framework. That discourse encourages professionals in the cultural field and teachers to engage in activities that foster connections and aims to develop students' private qualities, including their attitudes, while also enhancing their knowledge in various school subjects (Côté & Simard, 2009).

Côté and Simard (2009) analyzed the extent to which sociology of justification sheds light on the meaning of Quebec 's official discourse on the integration of the cultural dimension. The findings derived from their content analysis revealed that the incorporation of the cultural dimension encompasses diverse interpretations and implications. The integration of the cultural dimension supposes that students will establish connections with culture, conceptualized as an ever-expanding network of individuals and sources of information (Côté & Simard, 2009). In this perspective, the primary focus is on activity, characterized by transitioning from one project to another. The underlying definition of culture in the integration of the culture dimension is more descriptive rather than normative as it allows for the inclusion of various objects, practices, and individuals in the classroom, to the extent that they facilitate students' exploration of new information, new people, and engagement in projects.

The official discourse in Quebec, similar to that of other countries, appears to have a vague understanding of culture when addressing the integration of the cultural dimension (Côté & Simard, 2009). Based on Côté and Simard's (2009) examination of discourse and content, the integration of the cultural dimension presents a significant challenge for educators and professionals in the cultural field who aim to actively engage in this process. Hence, it seems that the official discourse grants teachers the autonomy to determine which objects or practices should be incorporated into their classrooms to facilitate students' cultural initiation.

Furthermore, by analyzing the contextual factors that influence Quebec 's official discourse, it is suggested that actors involved in the educational system maintain a level of independence from prevailing social discourses (Côté & Simard, 2009).

### **Diversity Policies in Higher Education**

Diversity policies in higher education come with challenges and have profound consequences on individual and collective identities. Some provincial government policies lack promoting diversity elements in postsecondary admissions. Quebec has made some reforms to enhance the pursuit of equity and diversity and access for aboriginal students in higher education.

The most frequent argument used against diversity policies in higher education is that “*excellence* is often posited in opposition to *equality*” (Noddings, 1993, p. 731). In fact, the conflict does not primarily revolve around the concepts of diversity and merit or the standards of excellence. The dichotomy emerges at a deeper level, specifically between individual and collective identities, when individual rights are constrained and restricted due to their granting of special privileges to certain collective groups in an effort to create a more equitable environment (Ghosh, 2012). There is a common tendency to misinterpret differences as deviant traits rather than recognizing them as unique qualities, which can be seen as valuable assets. This notion implies the existence of otherness or alterity, often based on visible physical attributes and characteristics. Consequently, women are considered different from men, Black individuals are seen as different from White individuals, and gays and lesbians are deemed different from heterosexuals. These distinctions reflect dynamics of dominance, subordination, and hierarchical structures within social, political, and economic power dynamics (Ghosh, 2012). Assigning the label of difference serves as a means to validate, normalize, and strengthen hierarchical power

dynamics. Ghosh (2012) continued that “In Canada as a whole, the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant male is not different; the French Catholics and visible minorities are. In the province of Quebec, the French Catholic male is not different; the Anglo-Saxon anglophone and allophone cultural communities are.” (2012, p. 353)

While education is constitutionally a provincial responsibility in Canada, the majority of higher education institutions receive federal funding for research and various initiatives, and are mandated to adhere to employment equity policies when hiring faculty and staff. However, there are no specific provincial government policies in place that actively promote diversity or multiculturalism in the admissions process for postsecondary institutions. Nevertheless, certain Canadian universities have implemented preferential admission policies for individuals of Aboriginal background, who are also eligible for exclusive scholarships provided by the federal government (Ghosh, 2012). As an example, McGill University employs an Aboriginal admission evaluation process, designed to assess the relevant educational experiences of applicants. The aim is to enhance the representation of qualified aboriginal students admitted to various programs, as suggested by the principal’s task force on Diversity, Excellence, and Community Engagement. Additionally, McGill’s Faculty of Medicine has an admissions office dedicated to promoting equity and diversity, with a focus on targeting underrepresented groups for admission. Furthermore, the government of Quebec has allocated four additional positions to each medical faculty in the province exclusively reserved for aboriginal students from Quebec (Ghosh, 2012).

Ghosh (2012) wrote that the rising cost of university fees is a significant concern for students, particularly due to issues about the potential impact on equal access to higher education. Students feel that increased fees will create barriers for those who are unable to afford the higher costs, thus limiting opportunities for educational attainment and exacerbating

inequality. This concern persists despite Quebec having the lowest university fees compared to other provinces.

### **Teaching for Social Justice**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Canada has played a significant role in addressing the historical impact of residential schools on Indigenous people and promoting reconciliation. Following a comprehensive five-year cross-Canada consultation process, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) concluded its operations in June 2015 an issue 94 Calls to Action. Among these, Call to Action No. 62 specifically called upon each province and territory to “make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties, and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students” (TRC, 2015, No. 62). The TRC (2015, No. 62) further emphasized the imperative for all Canadians to acquire knowledge about the significance of historical relationships, treatise, and land claims. It contended that while education played a central role in the issue of residential schools, it also held the potential to be a vital component of the solution (Howell, 2017).

Prior to release of the Calls to Action, numerous provinces and territories had already integrated residential schools, the effects of colonization, and the contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis (FNIM) peoples to Canada into their curricula. Saskatchewan and Alberta serve as examples, where students in provincially operated schools receive instruction on Residential Schools during their Grade 4, 7, 8, and 10 Social Studies courses (Howell, 2017). Howell (2017) added that they learn about treaties throughout their educational journey from kindergarten to Grade 12, as per the provincially mandated treaty education curricula. Manitoba implemented an initiative called “From Apology to Reconciliation,” which was incorporated into the Grade 9

Social Studies curriculum and Grade 11 History curriculum in 2011. Before this initiative, students received instruction on residential schools, but teachers had limited training and fewer available materials and resources. Other provinces, excluding Quebec, have different approaches and degrees of public commitment, but they are all making progress in addressing this issue (Howell, 2017). Furthermore all three territories have mandated grade 10 curricula that include education about residential schools (*KAIROS Canada*, 2018).

In light of the Calls to Action, KAIROS, a Canadian faith-based ecumenical organization dedicated to promoting social change, initiated a campaign called Education for Reconciliation. As part of this campaign, KAIROS developed a report card that evaluated provincial and territorial curricula on indigenous peoples as a benchmark to measure progress in advancing reconciliation through education in schools throughout Canada. According to this report card, the curriculum in Quebec is found to have limited coverage of indigenous peoples and lacks any mention of residential schools (Howell, 2017).

In 2013, the Quebec Native Women's Association circulated a petition during the TRC's national event in Montreal, urging for the inclusion of First Nation, Inuit, and Metis (FNIM) people's history, including residential schools, in the high school history curriculum. They also called for collaborative curriculum reform involving Indigenous organizations and experts. However, this request did not yield any results. More recently, the Foundation for the Compulsory Study of Genocide has been advocating for the inclusion of genocide studies, specifically addressing the dark history of residential schools, in the Quebec high school curriculum (Howell, 2017). In 2015, the Foundation for the Compulsory Study of Genocide members had a meeting with the Ministry of Education. The members received communication from a spokesperson stating that in Quebec, mandatory programs do not mandate the acquisition

of specific knowledge regarding residential schools. However, these programs afford teachers sufficient flexibility in determining the historical knowledge that can be taught (Rowe, 2015).

Howell (2017) mentioned that although Quebec lacks a mandated curriculum, the KAIROS Report Card acknowledges the efforts made within the provinces network of CLC schools. These schools collaborate with all nine English school boards in Quebec. Notably, despite the absence of mandated curriculum, Quebec has emerged as a leader in implementing the Calls to Action, thanks to the initiatives carried out within the CLC network. Since 2012, numerous Quebec students and teachers have engaged in social justice and reconciliation projects, enabling them to gain insights into the historical and contemporary relationships between FNIM and non-FNIM individuals in Canada (Howell, 2017).

A significant part of discourse surrounding teaching for social justice in Canada has emerged from the argument that the schools no longer explicitly teach students about social responsibility, leading to lack of this course in curricula (Canada International Development Agency, 2003). In response to this concern, numerous ministers of education have developed frameworks for citizenship education (Philpott & Dagenais, 2012). In 2002, the Ministry of Education in Quebec introduced a curriculum initially titled “Moral Education”, which was later developed and renamed as “Ethics and Religious Culture” (ERC). ERC seeks to foster student engagement in dialogue, facilitate their comprehension of religion as a phenomenon, and enhance their ability to reflect on ethical issues (Howell, 2017). Quebec curriculum documents demonstrate a commitment to democratic ideals and citizenship, while aspiring to empower students to become advocates for human rights and engage in activities promoting social justice (Howell, 2017).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action have made significant efforts to address the historical impact of residential schools and promote reconciliation through education in Canada. As efforts continue to address the gaps in indigenous education and social responsibility, it is crucial for all provinces and territories to work collaboratively and integrate comprehensive and accurate knowledge of indigenous history, residential schools, and FNIM contributions into their curricula, fostering a more inclusive and informed society.

## **Chapter Three: Discussion**

### **Analyzing the Literature Review through Fraser's Ideology of Social Justice**

The pursuit of social justice in academia has, recently, become an increasingly important topic of discussion and analysis. In Quebec, the application of social justice principles in the educational sphere has been the focus of research and scrutiny. This chapter aims to analyze different aspects of applying social justice in academia in Quebec through the lens of Nancy Fraser's (2007) ideology of social justice. Fraser's (2007) framework, which encompasses the concepts of redistribution and recognition, provides a comprehensive perspective for examining the challenges and opportunities for achieving social justice in educational settings.

This chapter will delve into various dimensions of social justice in academia in Quebec, including equal access to education, inclusive policies and practices, diversity and representation, and the role of power dynamics. These dimensions align with Fraser's (2007) ideology, which emphasizes the importance of addressing both material inequalities and cultural recognition. By applying Fraser's (2007) framework, this analysis seeks to shed light on the current state of social justice in Quebec's academia and explore potential strategies for fostering a more equitable and inclusive educational environment.

The discussion will explore the existing policies and initiatives aimed at promoting social justice in academia, as well as the gaps and limitations that hinder their effective implementation. It will examine the role of educational institutions, government bodies, and other stakeholders in addressing systemic barriers and promoting equal opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, gender, ethnicity, or other identities.

Furthermore, the analysis will critically evaluate the extent to which social justice principles are embedded in the curricula, pedagogical approaches, and institutional practices. It



will explore the challenges faced in providing equal educational opportunities, addressing discrimination and marginalization, and promoting a more inclusive and diverse academic environment.

By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current practices and policies, it seeks to inform future efforts and provide recommendations for advancing social justice in educational institutions. Ultimately, the goal is to create an inclusive and equitable academic environment that fosters equal opportunities, empowers marginalized communities, and promotes a broader understanding of social justice within Quebec 's educational landscape.

The impact of educational stratification on social inequalities in Quebec 's education system can be assessed through Fraser's (2007) framework. Fraser's (2007) framework emphasizes the need to address both redistribution and recognition to achieve a more just society. The organizational and regulatory structures of the education system in Quebec are identified as reinforcing a meritocratic ideology that perpetuates social inequalities and exclusion. This reflects the recognition aspect of social justice, as it acknowledges the importance of addressing systemic barriers that hinder equal opportunities and contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities.

The stratification of the secondary school market in Quebec plays a crucial role in perpetuating these inequalities. Disparities in educational quality, variations in academic experiences, and the polarization of students based on academic achievement and socioeconomic background all contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities within the education system. These findings align with Fraser's (2003) focus on the need to address inequalities in both material distribution and cultural recognition. The unequal provision of education and the

homogenization of students' educational experiences are indicative of the system barriers that prevent marginalized groups from accessing quality education and hinder their social mobility.

Affluent families play an important role in safeguarding their socioeconomic advantages through the exercise of school choice privileges. This perpetuates the stratification of students based on their social background and academic achievements, further reinforcing inequality and homogeneity within the education system. The cumulative effect of this phenomenon serves to reinforce the existing disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes, ultimately exacerbating the prevalence of inequality and homogeneity within the educational context. This aspect resonates with Fraser's (2003) argument that social justice requires dismantling the mechanisms that allow for the reproduction of privilege and creating conditions that provide equal opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their socioeconomic status.

The resonance between the role of affluent families within the education system and Fraser's (2003) arguments underscores the pressing need to address and rectify this perpetuation of privilege. By acknowledging the power balances inherent in school choice practices, policymakers and educators can take concerted steps towards the cultivation of an education system that upholds the principles of equity and inclusion. There are systematic barriers and inequalities within the education system in Quebec, which hinder the realization of equal educational rights.

The identified challenges align with Fraser's (2007) ideology of social justice, emphasizing the need to address both redistribution and recognition. To achieve a more just and inclusive education system, it is essential for Quebec society, political authorities, and educational institution leaders to critically assess and dismantle the systemic barriers that perpetuate inequalities. By reinforcing efforts to provide equal opportunities and dismantling the

stratification within the education system, Quebec can work towards achieving a more equitable and inclusive society that supports the success and well-being of all students.

The leadership for the social justice section aligns with Fraser's (2007) social justice framework by emphasizing the need to challenge and transform established systems of inequality, discrimination, and injustice in educational administration. The importance of fostering ethical discussions, promoting academic excellence, and nurturing positive connections with students who have diverse backgrounds and abilities is emphasized in this section. These actions align with Fraser's (2007) focus on addressing social and educational inequalities that benefit a few students while negatively impacting a large number of others.

The central tenets of Nancy Fraser's (2007) social justice framework echo strongly within the realm of leadership for social justice, encapsulating a profound commitment to dismantling entrenched structures of inequality, discrimination, and injustice that have taken root within educational administration. This alignment underscores the imperative of not merely acknowledging the status quo but actively challenging and transforming it, ushering in a paradigm shift where equity, inclusivity, and fairness are integral components of every administrative endeavor. By infusing ethical considerations into decision-making processes, educational leaders become principals of a transformative discourse that challenges the perpetuation of systemic inequalities.

The significance of training principals and education professionals in practices that consider social diversity is highlighted, as well. This aligns with Fraser's (2003) emphasis on recognizing and respecting human and social diversity as fundamental aspects of social justice. The training process provides an opportunity for administrators to engage in reflection and understand the fundamental role of justice and democracy in educational leadership.

Furthermore, this section acknowledges the role of competency standards in enhancing administrators' professional growth and promoting equity, inclusivity, and social justice within educational institutions. This aligns with Fraser's (2007) framework by recognizing the need for transformative leadership that challenges and transforms the operation of the education system. The Working Group on Competencies and Training for Administrators in Equity and Diversity rejects the notion that educational and social inequalities are primarily caused by personal attributes or deficiencies, instead emphasizing the systemic barriers and processes within the education system that perpetuates social inequalities (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2019).

The comparative analysis of competency standards for school administrators also aligns with Fraser's (2007) framework by examining how the standards approach social diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. The analysis reveals variations in how these concepts are addressed, with some standards incorporating a broader perspective on equity, inclusion, and social justice while others are more limited in their approach. This aligns with Fraser's (2007) call for a comprehensive and inclusive vision of leadership for social justice that encompasses recognition and respect for diversity, challenging and transforming structures that perpetuate inequalities, and mobilizing resources to support marginalized groups.

Overall, the leadership for social justice section aligns with Fraser's (2007) social justice framework by highlighting the importance of challenging and transforming established systems of inequality, promoting recognition and respect for diversity, and fostering equity, inclusivity, and social justice within educational institutions. It recognizes the significance of training principals and education professionals, as well as the role of competency standards, in promoting social justice in educational administration. The analysis of competency standards reveals the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive vision of leadership for social justice, consistent

with Fraser's (2003) call for transformative leadership that addresses systemic barriers and promotes equity and inclusion.

The social relations of race in Quebec 's educational institutions section can be analyzed through Fraser's (2007) social justice framework, particularly in relation to the concepts of recognition, redistribution, and representation. The concerns of the francophone majority in Quebec regarding the assimilation of immigrants and their impact on the preservation of the French language is highlighted in this section. These concerns align with Fraser's (2000) concept of recognition, which emphasizes the need to acknowledge and value the cultural identities and languages of different groups. The implementation of the charter of the French language (Bill 101) in 1977 reflects an attempt to establish French as the official language and ensure its predominance in various spheres, including education (<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/bill-101>). This can be seen as an effort to recognize and protect the linguistic identity of the francophone majority.

However, the ongoing struggles faced by marginalized groups, including Indigenous communities and racialized individuals in Quebec is acknowledged in this section. This highlights the limitations of the recognition approach in addressing social justice issues. The colonial history of Quebec and the marginalization of these groups demonstrate the need for the redistribution of resources and power to address systemic inequalities. This section suggests that racial dynamics persist in educational institutions, with students from racialized backgrounds experiencing marginalization and a lack of representation among staff and in the curriculum. This points to the importance of addressing power imbalances and redistributing resources to ensure equal opportunities and outcomes for all individuals, regardless of their racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Furthermore, the issue of representation is highlighted in this section. Students express the need for role models who reflect their racial identity and experiences, as well as a curriculum that addresses ethnocultural diversity issues. This aligns with Fraser's (2000) call for inclusivity and the representation of diverse voices and perspectives. The absence of racial representation among university staff and the lack of attention to diversity in the curriculum contribute to feelings of exclusion and hinder students' ability to envision themselves within the university setting.

In conclusion, this section relates to Fraser's (2007) social justice framework by addressing the concepts of recognition, redistribution, and representation. It recognizes the concern of the francophone majority in Quebec to preserve their language and culture, but it also highlights the ongoing struggles faced by marginalized groups in terms of racial dynamics, representation, and inclusion. It emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach that combines recognition, redistribution, and representation to achieve social justice and ensure equal opportunities and outcomes for all individuals.

The Complexity of Democratic Education section resonates with Fraser's (2007) social justice framework, particularly in relation to the concepts of recognition, redistribution, and representation. It emphasizes the role of public education in strengthening democracy and promoting social justice. It acknowledges that there are multiple definitions of democracy influenced by different ideological and philosophical orientations. This aligns with Fraser's (2007) concept of recognition, which emphasizes the need to acknowledge and value diverse perspectives and definitions of democracy. It recognizes that moral responsibility and accountability in education can be challenging when individuals and systems are seen as separate from social, economic, and historical circumstances. This highlights the importance of

recognizing and addressing systemic oppression within educational systems, rather than attributing fault solely to individuals.

This section also addresses the complexity of democratic education, which relates to Fraser's (2003) concept of redistribution. It mentions the evolving political environment characterized by a free-market political and economic system, which complicates the understanding and implementation of democratic education. This suggests that power imbalances and structural issues within educational systems may hinder the development and implementation of comprehensive conceptual models that promote social justice and genuine accountability. To address these challenges, this section argues for the establishment of standards, measures, and indicators that reflect democratic values and principles. It emphasizes the need to give equal importance to elements such as strategic policies, leadership characteristics, curriculum content, extracurricular activities, community involvement, and educator training alongside academic achievement. The redistribution aspect of Fraser's (2007) framework, which calls for the equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and power within educational systems supports these arguments.

Additionally, this section touches upon the issue of representation by highlighting the need for a comprehensive democratic education framework that engages various sectors, allocates resources, and plans activities. Since Fraser (2007) believed in the representation of diverse voices and perspectives in decision-making processes, it can be said that democratic education relates with Fraser's (2007) framework as well. By unifying the multifaceted elements necessary for integrating democratic principles throughout the education system, democratic education serves as a valuable instrument for fostering an inclusive and democratic society.

In conclusion, addressing the concepts of recognition, redistribution, and representation in the context of democratic education is related to Fraser's (2007) ideology. This section recognizes the complexity of democratic education and the challenges it poses, while also emphasizing the need to promote social justice, accountability, and the integration of democratic principles within the education system. By acknowledging diverse definitions of democracy, addressing systematic oppression, and advocating for equitable standards and measures, the importance of fostering an inclusive and democratic society through public education is emphasized in this section.

The sociological analysis of Quebec 's Official Discourse that is conducted by Côté and Simard (2009) regarding the integration of the cultural dimension in education can be analyzed through Fraser's (2007) ideology of social justice, as well. The integration of the cultural dimension aims to educate students who can establish connections between the past and the present, enhance their understanding of the current reality, and develop new ways of adapting to society. This aligns with Fraser's (2003) concept of recognition, which emphasizes the need to value and incorporate diverse cultural perspectives and practices within the educational system.

Côté and Simard (2009) argued that the official discourse in Quebec is influenced by transformations within the capitalist system. They mentioned that within this context, notions of quality undergo transformation and emphasized personal attributes such as open-mindedness, self-control, accessibility, good mood, or calmness. The integration of the cultural dimension in education aims to cultivate individuals who possess the skills and attributes necessary for the demands of contemporary capitalism. This aligns with Fraser's (2003) concept of redistribution, which focuses on the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. In this case, the



integration of the cultural dimension is seen as a means to equip students with the skills and attributes valued in the capitalist framework.

However, Côté and Simard (2009) also highlighted that the official discourse in Quebec has a vague understanding of culture when addressing the integration of the cultural dimension. This ambiguity poses a challenge for educators and professionals in the cultural field who aim to actively engage in this process. It suggests that there is a need for clearer and more normative definitions of culture to guide the integration efforts. This relates to Fraser's (2003) call for clear principles and standards that reflect democratic values and promote social justice within the educational system.

The analysis conducted by Côté and Simard (2009) revealed that actors involved in the educational system, including teachers, maintain a level of independence from prevailing social discourses. This highlights the importance of autonomy and agency within the educational system, which aligns with Fraser's (2003) emphasis on the representation of diverse voices and perspectives in decision-making processes.

In conclusion, addressing the concepts of recognition and redistribution in the context of the integration of the cultural dimension in Quebec 's official discourse how relates to Fraser's (2007) social justice ideology. The emphasis on the importance of valuing diverse cultural perspectives and practices within education while also highlighting the influence of capitalist transformations and educational goals. The text underscores the need for clearer definitions of culture and emphasizes the importance of autonomy and agency within the educational system. By analyzing the official discourse and contextual factors, this section sheds light on the challenges and implications of integrating the cultural dimension in education.

Considering diversity policies in Higher Education through the lens of Fraser's (2007) social justice ideology, showed that there are some challenges and consequences regarding diversity policies in Quebec. Diversity policies that have profound implications for individual and collective identities. However, there are provincial government policies that lack the promotion of diversity elements in postsecondary admissions, indicating a gap in addressing social justice concerns.

Fraser's (2007) social justice framework emphasizes the importance of recognizing and challenging hierarchical power dynamics that perpetuate social inequalities. The misinterpretation of differences as deviant traits rather than recognizing them as valuable assets is one of the challenges. This reflects the dynamics of dominance, subordination, and hierarchical structures within social, political, and economic power dynamics. The labelling of individuals as different serves to validate and reinforce those hierarchical power dynamics, further marginalizing certain groups based on visible physical attributes and characteristics.

In terms of policies in higher education, while education is constitutionally a provincial responsibility in Canada, there are no specific provincial government policies in place that actively promote diversity or multiculturalism in the admissions process for postsecondary institutions. This can be seen as a limitation in addressing the systemic inequalities and barriers faced by marginalized groups in accessing higher education.

However, there are positive initiatives taken by certain Canadian universities, such as McGill University, to implement preferential admission policies for individuals of Aboriginal background. These universities aim to enhance the representation of qualified aboriginal students by assessing their relevant educational experiences and providing targeted support. These efforts

align with Fraser's (2007) framework by recognizing the need to address historical and systemic inequalities and promote equity and diversity within higher education.

Fraser's (2007) social justice ideology provides a framework for analyzing *teaching for social justice* in terms of promoting social justice and addressing hierarchical injustices. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Canada has played a significant role in acknowledging the historical impact of residential schools and promoting reconciliation. Fraser's (1996) framework emphasizes the need to address social inequalities and promote inclusivity, particularly for marginalized groups such as indigenous people.

TRC specifically calls for integration of curriculum on residential schools, treaties, and the historical and contemporary contributions of indigenous people into mandatory education requirements. This aligns with Fraser's (1996) emphasis on addressing historical injustices and promoting inclusivity through education.

Nevertheless, there are challenges and gaps in implementing these recommendations, particularly in the province of Quebec. The Kairos Report Card evaluation revealed limited coverage of indigenous peoples and the absence of mention of residential schools in Quebec's curriculum. This indicates a gap in addressing historical injustices and promoting a comprehensive understanding of indigenous history and contributions. Efforts for change have been made, including petitions and advocacy for the inclusion of residential schools and indigenous history in the curriculum. Despite the absence of a mandated curriculum, initiatives within the Community Learning Center (CLC) network in Quebec have emerged as leaders in implementing the TRC's Calls to Action. These initiatives promote social justice and reconciliation through student and teacher engagement in projects that foster understanding of the relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous individuals.

Teaching social responsibility and citizenship education in the context of social justice is important. Quebec 's curriculum, particularly the Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) framework, aims to foster student engagement in dialogue, comprehension of religion, and reflection on ethical issues. This demonstrates a commitment to democratic ideals, citizenship, and human rights, aligning with Fraser's (2007) framework of promoting social justice.

In conclusion, the TRC's efforts have made significant strides in addressing historical injustices and promoting reconciliation through education in Canada. However, challenges remain, particularly in Quebec, where gaps in curriculum coverage and lack of mention of residential schools persist. It is crucial for all provinces and territories to collaborate and integrate comprehensive and accurate knowledge of indigenous history, residential schools, and the contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people into their curricula to foster a more inclusive and informed society.

## **Chapter Four: Conclusion, Findings, and Recommendation for Further Research**

This chapter will start by giving some brief answers to the research questions of this study. The answers will be explained more in the following paragraphs. This section of the thesis will, also, analyze the findings derived from the comprehensive examination of the literature. Through this discussion, we will evaluate how the outcomes of these studies can contribute to addressing the previously identified gaps in the literature. Following this, the study's findings are discussed in terms of their implications. Additionally, this section will highlight the limitations of the study and propose recommendations for future research in this area.

### **Conclusions and Findings**

Nancy Fraser's (2008) three-dimensional framework, that includes economic distribution, cultural recognition, and political representation, is directly related to applying social justice in academia. Economic distribution considers equitable distribution of resources and opportunities in the education system. Cultural recognition deals with cultural inclusion and the incorporation of diverse perspectives and histories and curricula and teaching practices. Political representation is about democratic participation and engagement of educational stakeholders in decision-making processes.

Based on this research, I found that race, similar to poverty, has been a highly accurate predictor of educational underachievement. Indigenous students in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada, as well as Blacks students in the United States and the United Kingdom, has consistently shown lower academic performance compared to their White peers. This study found that there is a cultural bias in Western educational settings that prioritizes White and middle-class ways of knowing and being while marginalizing racialized groups. Thus, regardless of implementing or not implementing criteria to apply social justice in other countries,

Western countries have not been successful in contributing social justice in educational institutions. Regarding government policies and funding that influence social justice, in Canada, many higher education institutions receive federal funding for research and different initiatives and they are supposed to adhere to applying equity policies in hiring faculty and staff.

Several gaps were identified in the literature on social justice in academia in Quebec, which this study aims to address. These gaps, as presented in chapter 1, are results of ignorance of providing comprehensive curriculum, marginalized people's needs, and lack of enough knowledge of how to implement social justice in educational Institutions. In chapter 2, each section of the literature review is analyzed through Fraser's (2013) social justice framework. In this chapter, a conclusion for each section of the literature review will be provided.

In Quebec, the practical application of inclusive educational policies has encountered considerable obstacles in achieving equitable access to education. These challenges stem from the entrenched meritocratic principles within the organizational and regulatory frameworks of the education system, which inadvertently reinforce social disparities and exclusionary practices. Central to this issue is the hierarchical structure of the secondary school market, which plays a pivotal role in perpetuating these inequities. As a result, there exist marked differences in educational quality, academic opportunities, and student division based on both academic performance and socioeconomic status. These cumulative factors collectively contribute to an unequal distribution of educational resources, a standardization of educational experiences for students, and the preservation of socioeconomic privileges predominantly among affluent families.

To attain genuine educational equity in Quebec, it is of utmost importance for society, political authorities, and educational institution leaders to engage in a rigorous examination and

resolution of the systematic implements that sustain disparities. This necessitates a dedicated endeavor to dismantle prevailing structures that obstruct the attainment of equitable educational opportunities. By actively pursuing a fair and inclusive educational system, Quebec can foster an environment that fosters the success and well-being of all students, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. This requires A unified commitment to advocate for social justice and systematic effectiveness in education, guaranteeing that every student is afforded an equal opportunity to flourish and make valuable contributions to society.

Regarding educational administration, leadership focused on social justice encompasses a range of dimensions, including ethical deliberations, academic excellence, and fostering positive relationships with diverse student populations. This form of leadership necessitates the challenging of existing systems of inequality while actively promoting equity, inclusivity, and social justice within educational institutions. Quebec has acknowledged the significance of training principals and education professionals to address social diversity, and in this pursuit, competency standards have been formulated to guide their endeavors. However, a comparative examination of these standards reveals disparities in the emphasis placed on social diversity, underscoring the necessity for a more comprehensive and all-encompassing vision of leadership for social justice. The analysis in this study emphasizes the importance of promoting equity and inclusivity to ensure that all students receive a just and inclusive education.

The historical context of Quebec reveals the francophone majority's concerns about the assimilation of immigrants to preserve the French language within a predominantly anglophone Canada. The implementation of the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) in 1977 aimed to establish French as the official language and promote its predominance in various sectors, including education. Despite efforts to embrace ethnocultural and linguistic diversity in Quebec

's educational institutions, challenges persist. Marginalization of indigenous groups and racialized communities continues due to the tumultuous history of colonialism, hindering their struggle for recognition.

The research conducted by Magnan et al. (2021) highlights students' perspectives on social relations of race within the educational setting. Interviews with students reveal direct racial dynamics in primary and secondary schools, whereas in universities, racism takes on a more nuanced and less overt form. Students noted a lack of representation of racialized groups among university staff, a whitewashed image promoted by promotional materials, an ethnocentric formal curriculum, and the sense of exclusion from student life. The absence of role models who reflect their racial identity hinders their sense of belonging and envisioning themselves within the university's professional realm.

Furthermore, students expressed concerns about the curriculum's lack of attention to ethnocultural diversity issues, which perpetuates taboos and prejudices. The narrative compiled by Magnan et al. (2021) provides insight into the unequal power dynamics between different groups within the university, influencing their positioning and connections within the institution.

To address these challenges and create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment, Quebec must continue critically evaluating and reshaping its policies and practices. Acknowledging the historical context and systematic barriers contributing to marginalization is crucial, alongside actively promoting diversity, representation, and social justice in all aspects of education. By cultivating a supportive and empowering atmosphere that embraces students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, Quebec can strive to construct a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape for the future.



Public education plays a vital role in strengthening democracy through the promotion of social justice, accountability, and the integration of democratic principles within the educational system. However, the complexity of a democratic education presents various challenges. The lack of consensus on the definition of democracy, the political nature of education, the focus on short-term solutions, resistance to critical analysis, and structural issues within educational systems all contribute to the complexities of democratic education. Nevertheless, an ideal framework for democratic education should encompass standards, measures, and indicators that reflect democratic values and principles. Key elements such as strategic policies, leadership characteristics, curriculum content, extracurricular activities, community involvement, and educator training should be given equal importance alongside academic achievement. By engaging various sectors, allocating resources, planning activities, and identifying gaps and outcomes, a comprehensive democratic education framework can be developed to unify the multifaceted elements necessary for the integration of democratic principles throughout the education system. Ultimately, democratic education serves as a valuable instrument for fostering an inclusive and democratic society.

The examination of Quebec 's official discourse on the incorporation of the cultural dimension reveals diverse interpretations and consequences. The official discourse emphasizes the importance of interdependence and recognizing connections between different elements of culture. It encourages collaboration and partnerships with various sources to produce and disseminate knowledge. However, the understanding of culture in this context is more descriptive than normative, allowing for a wide range of objects, practices, and individuals as long as they facilitate the students' exploration and engagement. This lack of specificity poses

challenges for educators and cultural professionals who seek to actively participate in the integration process.

The influence of transformations within the capitalist system is evident in Quebec's official discourse, which highlights personal attributes associated with individuals' character and their adaptability to contemporary capitalism. The integration of the cultural dimension aims to develop individuals with the necessary skills and attributes for the demands of the capitalist framework. It encourages professionals in the cultural field and teachers to engage in activities that foster connections and enhance students' personal qualities while expanding their knowledge in various subjects.

To effectively address the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities arising from the integration of the cultural dimension, it is essential for educators and cultural professionals to have the autonomy to determine which objects and practices are most relevant and beneficial in their classrooms. They should actively engage in the process and maintain independence from prevailing social discourses. Several solutions can be considered to enhance the integration of the cultural dimension in Quebec's educational system. Firstly, a clearer and more comprehensive definition of culture should be established within the official discourse, providing educators with a solid foundation for incorporating cultural activities. Secondly, collaboration and partnerships among educators, artists, writers, and cultural organizations should be encouraged and facilitated to ensure a holistic approach to the integration process. Thirdly, professional development opportunities should be offered to educators and cultural professionals to deepen their understanding of cultural diversity and their ability to effectively integrate cultural activities into the curriculum. Lastly, ongoing research and evaluation should be conducted to assess the impact

of integrating the cultural dimension on student learning and well-being enabling continuous improvement and refinement of practices.

By implementing these solutions and actively engaging in the integration of the cultural dimension, Quebec can establish a more enriching and inclusive educational environment that fosters students' exploration, connection, and cultural initiation.

Diversity policies in higher education have both challenges and profound consequences on individual and collective identities. While some provincial government policies lack promotion of diversity elements in postsecondary admissions, Quebec has implemented reforms to enhance equity, diversity, and access for aboriginal students in higher education. The main argument against diversity policies revolves around the perceived conflict between excellence and equality, but the underlying dichotomy emerges at a deeper level between individual and collective identities. The misinterpretation of differences as deviant traits instead of recognizing them as valuable assets reinforces hierarchal power dynamics and perpetuates dynamics of dominance and subordination. The label "difference" is often assigned to certain groups to validate and strengthen existing power structures.

Although education is a provincial responsibility in Canada, many higher education institutions receive federal funding and are mandated to adhere to employment equity policies. However, there are no specific provincial government policies actively promoting diversity or multiculturalism in the admissions process for postsecondary institutions. Nevertheless, certain Canadian universities, such as McGill University, have implemented preferential admission policies for individuals of aboriginal background and provide exclusive scholarships for these students. McGill University has also established an aboriginal admission evaluation process and dedicated admissions office to promote equity and diversity, with a focus on underrepresented

groups. Furthermore, the government of Quebec has reserved additional positions exclusively for aboriginal students from Quebec in medical faculties.

Despite Quebec having the lowest university fees compared to other provinces, the rising cost of fees remains a significant concern for students. To address this issue, it is crucial for provincial governments to develop specific policies that actively promote diversity and multiculturalism in the admissions process for postsecondary institutions. This can include implementing preferential admission policies for underrepresented groups and providing financial support to ensure equal access to higher education. Additionally, universities should continue to develop and strengthen their initiatives and programs that promote equity and diversity, ensuring that underrepresented groups have equal opportunities for admission and success. Ongoing research and evaluation should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of these policies and initiatives in achieving greater equity and inclusivity in higher education. By actively addressing these challenges and implementing comprehensive solutions, Quebec and other provinces can create a more equitable and inclusive higher education system that benefits all students.

### **Further Research**

What follows are some concepts and ideas that, based on the available research reviewed in this paper, are necessary to apply social justice principles to academia in Quebec. This section provides those who are interested and have the opportunity to continue research on this topic with some ideas.

### ***Exploring Comprehensive Curriculum Design***

In the context of educational institutions in Quebec, the concept of comprehensive curriculum design involves a thorough examination of the curriculum and development process to enhance its inclusivity and effectiveness. However, this study showed that there are some gaps that need to be addressed. These gaps could be related to underrepresented cultures, marginalized communities, historical events, or contemporary social issues. This research area seeks to explore how educational institutions in Quebec can create an execute comprehensive educational curricula that bridge the existing gaps in instructional content. This exploration would better serve if it included the evaluation of both the difficulties and advantages inherent in the integration of a range of viewpoints and cultural frameworks into the curriculum resources, aiming to cultivate an educational setting that is more encompassing and just.

To develop and implement comprehensive curricula entails a detailed analysis of steps, methodologies, and considerations involved in revising and enhancing the curriculum content. This may involve reevaluating the subjects and topics covered, the pedagogical approaches used, and the resources employed to ensure that they align with the evolving educational needs and the multicultural nature of the student body. This research area promotes the idea that when students encounter a curriculum that reflects their own identities and experiences, they are more likely to engage, excel, and develop a sense of belonging. It aspires to equip students with a well-rounded, culturally sensitive education that prepares them for an increasingly diverse and interconnected world.

### ***Teacher Training for Social Justice Education***

The concept of teacher training for social justice education revolves around the preparation of educators to effectively integrate social justice principles into their teaching methodologies and practices. This research area delves into the effectiveness of training

programs that aim to equip teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and pedagogical approaches to address issues of inequity, diversity, and representation within the classroom context. Investigating the effectiveness of teacher training programs involves assessing various dimensions of these programs. This may include examining the content of the training, the methods used, and the duration of the program.

The crucial aspect of this exploration is evaluating the impact of teacher training on educators' ability to incorporate social justice principles into their teaching practices. This assessment may involve observing classroom interactions, and next examining the strategies teachers use to address sensitive topics related to social justice. Understanding the extent to which educators feel equipped to address these issues is a key component of this research area. Surveying or interviewing teachers to gather insights into their perceptions, challenges, and successes in implementing social justice education are helpful. By evaluating teacher training programs, educators can be better equipped to create classroom experiences that reflect diverse perspectives, encourage open dialogues about social justice, and empower students to become active participants in building a more just and equitable world.

### ***Intersectionality in Educational Policies***

Intersectionality in educational policies involves an in-depth examination of how educational policies in Quebec address and incorporate the concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality refers to the recognition of the complex and interconnected nature of individuals' social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and more. This research area can focus on understanding how educational policies consider and address the unique challenges and experiences of individuals who belong to multiple marginalized groups.

The analysis of intersectionality in educational policies requires a comprehensive review of existing policies, guidelines, and frameworks within the education system in Quebec. This could involve viewing policies related to student support services, anti-discrimination measures, and inclusive practices. For example, policies might consider how a person's experience as a woman of color with a disability might require different types of support compared to someone with only one of those marginalized identities. Furthermore, it is important to investigate whether educational institutions effectively translate policy objectives into tangible actions that meet the needs of intersectional individuals. The examination of intersectionality in education policies contributes to the advancement of equitable and inclusive educational environments.

### ***Faculty Diversity and Representation***

A comprehensive investigation into the composition of faculty members with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities is required to examine the faculty diversity and representation within academic institutions in Quebec. This research area focuses on understanding the extent to which academic institutions reflect a diverse faculty body and the implications of this diversity on various aspects of the academic environment. Demographic makeup of faculty members in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability can be an important factor. One way can be to collect information on the proportions of faculty members from diverse backgrounds compared to the overall faculty population. It is a good idea to investigate the barriers and obstacles faculty members encounter in terms of career advancement, tenure-track positions, research opportunities, leadership roles, and participation in decision making processes. It can be explored whether underrepresented faculty members have equal access to resources, mentorship, funding, and professional development opportunities compared

to their more privileged counterparts. The study of faculty diversity and representation contributes to the broader conversation about equity and inclusion in academia.

### ***Student Perceptions of Inclusion***

Conducting qualitative research to explore student perceptions and experiences of inclusion in Quebec 's educational institutions involves delving into the perspectives and voices of the students from various marginalized backgrounds. This area focuses on understanding how students from diverse identities and experiences perceived the inclusivity efforts undertaken by educational institutions, and it aims to identify areas where improvements can be made to create a more inclusive educational environment. Qualitative research in this context often employs methods such as interviews, focus groups, and open-ended surveys to gather rich and nuanced insights directly from the students themselves. Researchers engage with students to create a safe and supportive space where they can share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to inclusion within the educational context. Through these interactions researchers seek to understand how students define and interpret inclusion. Personal experiences of belonging, acceptance, and representation within educational institutions can be explored. It can include examining how students perceive their interactions with peers, faculty, staff, and the overall institutional climate. Some challenges and barriers that students from marginalized backgrounds may face include issues related to discrimination, microaggressions, stereotyping, and exclusion. The insights gained from this research can have practical implications for educational institutions in Quebec. They provide guidance for enhancing existing initiatives, developing new strategies, and creating an environment where all students feel valued, respected, and included.



### ***Ethical Leadership in Education***

Ethical leadership in education is the multifaceted role of educational leaders in promoting social justice, equity, and inclusivity within academic institutions. This research area focuses on understanding the ethical dimensions of leadership practices and how they contribute to shaping the overall organizational culture and climate. Educational leaders, such as school principals, university administrators, and department heads, play a crucial role in shaping the values, policies, and practices of their institutions.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to examine ethical leadership practices can be useful. Qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups with educational leaders, allow researchers to gather insights into their perspectives, values, and decision-making processes. Quantitative methods may involve surveys to assess the prevalence of certain leadership behaviors and attitudes related to social justice and equity. Some key areas of exploration within this research include:

**Leadership Practices and Behaviors.** It is important to analyze how educational leaders translate their commitment to social justice into tangible actions. Also, how leaders allocate resources, make decisions, and communicate with various stakeholders to create an inclusive and equitable environment is noticeable.

**Alignment with Social Justice Principles.** Whether leadership practices align with or deviate from principles of social justice is required to be investigated. For example, leaders may be assessed on their efforts to address disparities in access to education, promote diversity and representation, and address systematic inequalities.

**Organizational Culture and Climate.** To examine how ethical leadership influences the organizational culture and climate researchers need to examine the extent to which leaders foster an environment of respect, open communication, and collaboration, where all members of the institution feel valued and included.

**Professional Development and Training.** The research may explore the extent to which educational leaders receive training and support to develop their ethical leadership skills. It may also investigate the role of ongoing professional development in enhancing leaders' capacity to promote social justice and equity.

The findings from this research can have significant implications for educational and leadership development programs, policy formulation, and institutional change efforts. By understanding the practices, challenges, and potential areas for improvement, educational institutions can work towards fostering a culture of ethical leadership that actively promotes social justice, equity, and inclusivity. Ethical leaders serve as advocates for marginalized individuals and communities, guiding their institutions towards creating a more just and inclusive educational environment that benefits all stakeholders.

This study has illuminated a series of critical concepts and ideas that are indispensable for embedding social justice principles into the academic context of Quebec. While the constraints of personal and temporal resources have shortened the extent of our exploration, the avenues presented here offer a sturdy foundation for future research pursuits. As this paper has forged a path towards understanding the intricacies of fostering equity and inclusivity within educational realms, these research domains beckon for further investigation by those inclined to contribute to the advancement of social justice in academia.

In conclusion, as researchers, policymakers, and educators rally around these domains, they contribute significantly to an educational landscape that is not only enriched by diverse perspectives but also fortified by principles of justice, equity, and inclusion - a vision that serves the common good and embodies the spirit of learning for all and together.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Education Structure in Quebec

The following information is taken from the Gouvernement du Quebec (Gouvernement Du Quebec, 2023).

##### *Preschool, elementary, and secondary education*

**Preschool education**, also called [kindergarten](#), is not mandatory. Four or five-year-old children can enter kindergarten.

**Elementary education** is a six-year period. After their sixth birthday, children need to attend [compulsory school](#) from the first day of the school year.

At the **secondary level**, the requirement for mandatory school attendance remains in effect until the final day of the school calendar within the academic year in which a child turns 16, or when they acquire a diploma granted by the Ministry of Education.

##### **General Education**

This level Takes five years. Upon completing this level, students are awarded a Secondary School Diploma (SSD).

##### **Adult General Education**

[Adult general education](#) serves individuals who have past the age of compulsory school attendance (16 years and above by June 30 prior to the beginning of the academic year). This type of education results in the attainment of either a Secondary School Diploma or a Training Certificate for a Semiskilled trade.

##### **Vocational Training**

**Vocational training** provides the students with a quick access to skills required to practice a specialized trade. This training offers:

- 181 vocational training centers
- 144 programs in 21 sectors
- Practicums
- a high job-replacement rate

Vocational training programs are tailored to closely align with the demands of the job market. These programs are specifically adjusted by educational institutions to match the skill requirements of local economic activities, aiming to nurture practical skills applicable in real-world business and industrial settings. Students must have passed Secondary III or IV (9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> year of schooling) or higher. After completing, they receive an official diploma or certificate.

### ***Higher Education***

Higher education includes college, university and post-doctoral studies.

**College of studies** is a unique feature in Quebec 's education system. It includes pre-university training (leads to Diploma of College Studies (DCS), 2 years), technical training at the college level (leads to DCS, 3 years), and **short-term college studies** (leads to Attestation of College Studies (ACS), 6 to 18 months).

**University studies** includes three cycles and leads to the following degrees:

- Bachelor's (cycle one), three or four years, depending on the field
- Master's (cycle two), one or two years
- Ph.D. (cycle three), three or more years

Most universities offer short programs (certificate, diploma of a specialized graduate studies, etc.) with different lengths. Post-doctoral studies come after university training.

## **Appendix B**

### **Community Learning Centers (CLC)**

Less than 10% of the total student population within the education system in Quebec comprises students enrolled in English schools. Many of the 325+ English schools are of a small and remote nature. These schools frequently stand as the sole remaining English educational institutions within their communities and are progressively transitioning into community hubs. They now hold the responsibility not just for students' academic progress but also for the nurturing of their language and cultural development (as cited in learn Quebec, 2023). To support Official Language Minority (OLM) education, the Government of Canada's Department of Canadian Heritage helped with the funding to initiate Community Learning Centers that were introduced in 15 schools in 2006 (learn Quebec, 2023). The Community Learning Centers initiative assists traditional English schools to become Community Schools that combined education with other resources such as health and social service (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2023). CLCs also unite different stakeholders committed to the growth of young individuals, active community engagement, and providing assistance to families. The network has expanded to over 90 English schools located in urban, rural, and distant regions throughout Quebec (learn Quebec, 2023).