Organized Agents: Canadian Teacher Unions as Alternative Sites for Social Justice Activism

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Historically teachers' federations have been some of the major organizational sites for social justice leadership in K-12 public education. Despite this history of activism, social justice teacher unionism remains a relatively underdeveloped concept. This article merges four philosophical conceptions of social justice in education: liberal recognition, critical recognition, liberal distribution, and critical distribution, with an analysis of equity-based initiatives articulated on the Web sites of 20 Canadian teachers' organizations. The resulting framework can be used by teacher union researchers interested in generating a broader conception of social justice unionism, and teacher unionists interested in investigating their organizational practices through a social justice lens.

Key words: teacher activism, teacher unionism, social justice, teacher leadership

Depuis toujours, les fédérations d'enseignants font partie des principales organisations qui militent pour la justice sociale dans le secteur M-12 au sein des écoles publiques. En dépit de cette tradition d'activisme, le syndicalisme axé sur la justice sociale chez les enseignants demeure un concept relativement peu développé. Cet article fusionne quatre conceptions philosophiques de la justice sociale en éducation – la reconnaissance libérale, la reconnaissance critique, la répartition libérale et la répartition critique - avec une analyse de diverses initiatives axées sur l'équité sur les sites Web de vingt regroupements d'enseignants canadiens. Le cadre qui en résulte peut être utilisé par des chercheurs s'intéressant aux syndicats d'enseignants et voulant susciter une conception élargie du syndicalisme et de la justice sociale et par des syndicalistes désirant analyser leurs pratiques organisationnelles à travers la lorgnette de la justice sociale.

Mots clés : activisme chez les enseignants, syndicat d'enseignants, justice sociale, leadership des enseignants

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Equity-minded teachers have faced a number of organizational barriers. Their locations in particular classrooms and particular schools limit their access to and insights about broader decision-making structures (Bascia & Young, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994); their restricted organizational mobility limits their opportunities to establish networks of like-minded, activist peers across diverse contexts within their district, province, or   territory. The resulting physical, cultural, and professional isolation of teachers, combined with their limited decision-making autonomy within a system, decreases their chance to participate in sustained social justice efforts beyond the classroom level. Fortunately, many teachers have recognized the need for socially just action at multiple levels and in multiple educational sites. Beyond the commonly identified sites of the classroom, school, district, and ministry exists an organization with a legislatively subordinate yet vital role in the education system. Historically, teachers' associations, federations, societies, and unions have been some of the major organizational sites of social justice leadership in K-12 education (Kuehn, 2007; Murphy, 1990; Urban, 1982). This history has been charted but not adequately theorized. As a result, social justice teacher unionism remains a relatively underdeveloped concept. Although many have attempted to conceptualize social justice (Barry, 2005; Clayton & Williams, 2004; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002) and social justice education (Clark, 2006; Kohli, 2005; North, 2006), few have gone beyond advocating for a social justice teacher union movement (Peterson & Charney, 1999) or describing social justice activism in the context of a single organization (Brouillette, 2006; Harrison & Kachur, 1999; Kuehn, 2007). By presenting a compilation and analysis of formal social justice initiatives articulated on the Web sites of 20 federal, territorial, and provincial teachers' organizations, this article builds a conceptual base for social justice teacher unionism in a Canadian context. It contributes to scholarly discussions on social justice teacher unionism and organized activism while simultaneously providing concrete ideas for teachers seeking educational sites for engaging in social justice work beyond the classroom.

CONCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Those who have studied teachers' organizations have laid the foundation for work on social justice unionism by (a) articulating their advocacy for a social justice teacher union movement (Peterson & Charney, 1999); (b) charting the history of teacher unionism in ways that have been sensitive to issues of gender, race, class, and occupational subordination (Murphy,

1990; Rousmaniere, 2005; Smaller, 1991); (c) exploring the extent to which diverse groups of teachers feel represented by their unions (Bascia, 1990, 1994, 1998; Gitlin, 1996); and (d) documenting instances of collective activism on the part of particular teachers' unions (Froese-Germain & O'Haire, 2007; Martell, 2006; Robertson & Smaller, 1996). Although these researchers have addressed social justice issues, they have tended not to articulate a conception of social justice or to identify social justice as the central focus of their work. As a result, it is necessary to consider philosophical traditions informing conceptions of social justice in the broader field of education.

The two most prevalent concepts used to describe social justice in the field of education are distribution (Marx, 1906; Rawls, 1971) and recognition (Cole, 2000; Collins, 1991; Irvine, 2003), with the former focussing on the allocation of material resources and the latter focussing on the attribution of social status related to identity. Fraser (1997) describes distributive justice as the absence of exploitation, economic marginalization, and deprivation and cultural justice as the absence of cultural domination, non-recognition, and disrespect. Clearly, an overlap occurs between distributive and cultural justice. Economic marginalization often leads to classism which is an example of material non-recognition, and those who are marginalized with respect to race, gender, ability, and other cultural dimensions are more likely than others to also experience economic exploitation. However, although many theorists use both conceptions of social justice in their work, they tend to be more aligned with one than the other. Those critical of economic or distributive conceptions of social justice (Kohli, 2005; North, 2006) have pointed to adherents' minimizing of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ablism, while those critical of identity or recognition-based conceptions of social justice (Fraser, 1997; McInerney, 2007) have challenged adherents' decoupling of exploitative economic realities from cultural identity politics. Taking these criticisms into account, the conceptual distinction between distribution and recognition is useful because it adds explanatory grist to the otherwise amorphous notion of social justice.

Another useful way to distinguish between conceptions of justice is to attend to ideology: in particular the distinction between critical and liberal thought. Liberal theorists support social justice by prioritizing individual freedom, human rights, and personal choice, while critical theorists work towards social justice by challenging systemic inequity and working toward revolutionary change. According to liberal thought,

inequality of resources or status is acceptable as long as all individuals in a society retain their human rights. Critical theorists, on the other hand, believe any form of inequality is itself incompatible with social justice (Giroux, 1983; Gramsci, 1971; Marx, 1906). By intersecting ideological approaches to inequality with the source of inequality (material resources or identity/status) it is possible to generate four distinct conceptions of social justice: liberal distribution, critical distribution, liberal recognition, and critical recognition. See Table 1 for a graphic display of the intersecting concepts. A description of the four conceptions along with their theoretical foundations follows.

Table 1: Conceptions of Social Justice by Ideology and Focus

		Ideological approach to inequality	
		Consensus	Conflict
Focus	Material Resources	Liberal Distribution (Rawls)	Critical Distribution (Marx)
	Identity & Status	Liberal Recognition (multiculturalism, liberal feminism, human rights)	Critical Recognition (anti-racism, critical feminism, queer theory, anti-colonialism)

Liberal Distribution of Social Justice

Building on the work of Rawls (1971), liberal distribution, which focuses on the allocation or reallocation of material resources, relies on a consensus approach to the problem of inequality. According to Rawls, a group of rational individuals unaware of their social position would ultimately generate two rules in support of a just and fair society:

First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others. Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and b) attached to positions and offices open to all. (p. 61)

Implicit in Rawls' argument is the idea that inequality is an inevitable societal condition and that rational governments striving toward fairness can maximize justice through a single set of policies for all citizens that do not worsen the lot of the disadvantaged. An example of this concept is the public school system that theoretically provides an equal education for all without regard to children's socio-economic status.

Critical Distribution of Social Justice

The concept of critical distribution shares with liberal distribution its focus on economics and material resources but differs in terms of ideology. Liberal theorists aim to minimize inequality and conflict in the existing system while critical theorists make productive use of conflict to replace unequal systems with equitable ones. The assumption underlying this concept is that human beings are not neutral. The systems that any society generates represent the values and norms of those in positions of decision-making authority. If Rawls' theory of justice provides the conceptual base for liberal distribution, Marx's (1906) historical materialist analysis of the capitalist economy lays the foundation for the concept of critical distribution. Marx argued that individuals who owned the means of production were by definition exploiting the masses who worked for them. According to Marx, economic revolution catalyzed by collective activism by the exploited masses is a necessary precondition to social justice. An educationally relevant example of this concept is the recent strike of teacher unionists in Oaxaca,[1] Mexico, against their exploitative working conditions.

Liberal Recognition of Social Justice

Like liberal distribution, the concept of liberal recognition is based on a consensus approach to the problem of inequality. The two concepts diverge, however, when it comes to the unequally distributed good. Rather than focussing on the distribution of material resources, advocates of liberal recognition focus on identity and status. Groups who advocate for human rights for all without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, geography, language, or other dimensions of privilege believe activists can work together toward social justice by recognizing and celebrating diversity. Those theorizing multiculturalism (Banks, 1997; Joshee & Johnson, 2005), liberal feminism (Bell, 1995; Friedman, 2003; Hurty, 1995), and human rights education (Bunch, 1995; Cole, 2000) inform this conception of justice. Two illustrations of this

concept are the advancement of individual women into educational leadership roles and multicultural celebrations. Although many have criticized these initiatives for their individualistic nature, liberal approaches to social justice have been more successful at infiltrating the school system and thus reaching a greater number of teachers and students than have more critical or revolutionary approaches.

Critical Recognition of Social Justice

Like the concept of liberal recognition, critical recognition is built on an analysis of identity and status. The two concepts, however, build on different ideological foundations. Adherents of the first assume that inequity can be addressed through education – teaching people to tolerate or celebrate difference and to empathize with others, while adherents of the second depend on critique and protest of oppressive cultural norms followed by systemic action. Critical feminists (hooks, 1984; Smith, 1987), anti-racists (Collins, 1991; Dei & Calliste, 2000; Spivak, 1988), and queer theorists (Anzaldúa, 1998; Britzman, 1995; Kumashiro, 2001) are among those who theorize justice in a way that is most consistent with critical recognition. A current educational illustration of this concept is the public funding of Black-focus schools, not as a form of segregation, but rather as a location where anti-racist pedagogy is prioritized over the standard racist pedagogy.

The four concepts – liberal distribution, critical distribution, liberal recognition, and critical recognition – help analysts reveal assumptions embedded in various uses of the term social justice. Although few people would advocate for social injustice, many have a particular perspective on multicultural food fairs, Black-focus schools, affirmative action policies, trade union strikes, and human rights approaches to inequity that would indicate which conception of social justice they most clearly align themselves with. It is in this move from the abstract to the concrete as well as from the diffuse to the focussed that social justice gains its meaning as an analytic tool.

METHOD

Because educational decision making in Canada is under provincial/territorial jurisdiction, and because teacher union structures and orientations are correspondingly shaped by distinct socio-political contexts within each province/territory, those interested in Canadian teacher unionism would benefit from studying organizations in as many prov-

incial/territorial contexts as possible. For this reason, the primary source of data for this article is Web-site information from 20 Canadian teachers' organizations representing each province and territory from each of these sites.

The 20 organizations included in this study are the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), its 17 provincial and territorial affiliates: The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS), Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF), L'Association des Enseignantes et des Enseignants Franco-Ontariens (AEFO), Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT), New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA), L'Association des Enseignantes et des Enseignants Francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick (AEFNB), Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (NSTU), Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation (PEITF), Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA), North West Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA), Nunavut Teachers' Association (NTA), and Yukon Teachers' Association (YTA), and two organizations that are not currently affiliated with the CTF – the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) and Centrale des Syndicats du Quebec (CSQ). Excluded from the 20 are the Colleges of Teachers in Ontario and British Columbia, which unlike the federations, associations, societies, and unions, were introduced in the late 1980s in British Columbia and late 1990s in Ontario as arms-length government initiatives.

The teachers' organizations listed above share a responsibility to represent all kindergarten to grade-12 teachers in their respective provinces working in publicly funded schools, but there are slight ideological and structural distinctions among them. These distinctions are less about the names organizations use (federations, unions, associations, societies) and more about their size, political context, and membership makeup. Unions tend to construct themselves as more labour driven than associations, societies, and federations, but the only Canadian teachers' organization with an official labour affiliation is a federation. Federations tend to distinguish themselves from unions, societies, and associations for their relatively autonomous locals, but there are larger differences among federations with respect to the autonomy of their locals than between federations and other organizations.

With the exception of the federations in Ontario and British Columbia, teachers' organizations represent not only teachers but also school administrators. With the exception of Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick, each province/territory has a single organization representing educators in all publicly funded schools. New Brunswick has two provincial organizations, one for teachers working in Francophone (AEFNB) districts and another for teachers working in Anglophone (NBTA) districts. Quebec's organizations are similarly divided along linguistic and historically religious lines – Francophone (Catholic) (CSQ) and Anglophone (Protestant) (QPAT). Ontario has four provincial organizations: (a) one representing teachers in K to 12 Catholic districts (OECTA), (b) one representing teachers in K to12 Francophone districts (AEFO), (c) one representing teachers in K to 8 Anglophone secular districts (ETFO), and (d) one representing teachers in 9 to 12 Anglophone secular districts (OSSTF). Until the late 1990s, Ontario teachers were represented by one of five federations with elementary Anglophone teachers further divided along gender lines. Similar to a number of teachers' organizations in the United States, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has recently begun to organize educational support staff in K to 12 and higher education.

Web sites as a source of data are limited because they represent the public face of an organization and as such do not necessarily represent the reality on the ground. However, they are useful sources of data for initial exploratory studies requiring a breadth of analysis. They also include the latest updated material and as such reflect the organizations' current claims and initiatives. To retain meaningful breadth of analysis, I selected teachers' organizations with Anglophone and Francophone members from every province and territory in the country. Appendix A provides a full list of these organizations, Web-site addresses, and mission statements in chart form along with a list of political parties in power (as of January, 2008) in each province/territory.

I analyzed the contents of each of the 20 sites through a multi-layered constant comparison approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). First, I systematically compiled all formal initiatives, policies, mission statements, and budgetary details with any connection to social justice, diversity, equity, human rights, or anti-oppressive work. Next, I coded them thematically, compared my codes with the four conceptions of social justice articulated above, and organized the social justice initiatives by teacher union function: (a) political activism, (b) collec-

tive self advocacy (teacher welfare), (c) advocacy for others, (d) professional development, (e) organizational structure, and (f) organizational priorities. I then returned to each of the 20 Web sites with my list of initiatives and determined the percentage of organizations supporting each type of initiative. I listed these initiatives in descending order of prevalence and analyzed each group of initiatives using the four-pronged social justice framework that I described earlier in this article. Finally, I identified social justice trends – issues and initiatives that were prioritized, backgrounded, or omitted from the Web sites. I then merged theoretical conceptions of social justice with teacher union practice to generate an initial set of hypotheses about the nature of social justice teacher unionism in a Canadian context.

FINDINGS

My analysis of social justice initiatives articulated on the Web sites of 20 Canadian teachers' unions demonstrates that many of these organizations structured their social justice activism in a way that parallels Peterson and Charney's (1999) notion of social justice teacher unionism. Building on industrial and professional traditions, Peterson and Charney invite organized teachers to "defend public education and the rights of teachers," retain a "strong emphasis on professionalism," and demonstrate a "commitment to children and learning" (p. 5).

Overall, Canadian teachers' organizations accepted this invitation by building internal organizational capacity for social justice and advocating for public education, educators, and students in relation to the state apparatus. More specifically, their Web sites have articulated (a) involvement in coalition building with local community groups, (b) reframing government rhetoric, (c) supporting teacher welfare research, (d) developing international solidarity projects, (e) organizing equity-oriented divisions and committees, (f) providing justice-minded professional development, (g) structuring leadership opportunities for traditionally under-represented groups, (h) generating inducements for local social justice initiatives, (i) issuing equity audits of organizations, and (j) devising internal policies on controversial issues.

This list of initiatives provides evidence that Canadian teacher unions have embraced certain elements of social justice unionism. It is important to note, however, that very few of the organizations surveyed articulated a commitment to all projects. Also, the promotional nature of Web sites highlighting organizational achievements and omitting in-

stances of oppressive practice increases the likelihood of a favourable analysis. By supplementing a compilation of existing initiatives with a critical analysis of existing data, or more specifically by exchanging Peterson and Charney's (1999) conceptual framework with one focusing on anti-racist, feminist, or anti-homophobic activism, it becomes possible to ascertain that Canadian teachers' federations function as sites of social justice activism, but are not yet as a whole social justice organizations.

Political Activism: Advocacy for Self and Others

Collective Self Advocacy of an Occupationally Subordinated Group. The current educational context of large scale reform and accountability tied to high stakes testing has meant that teachers and their organizations have increasingly found themselves on the "sharp edge of change" (Bascia & Hargeaves, 2000). In jurisdictions where more than one political party is a viable option to voters, the cycle of educational policy generation and reform tends to follow the electoral rhythm. Without exception, all 20 Web sites included some discussion and reframing of government rhetoric from teachers' perspectives. This form of teacher self advocacy is a vital activist measure used by an occupationally subordinated group within the education system and as such is an important form of social justice activism. See Table 2 for the prevalence of political self advocacy on behalf of Canadian teachers' organizations.

Across the union Web sites, I found evidence of (a) advocacy for teachers' rights and working conditions, (b) advocacy for teachers' decision-making authority in relation to the state apparatus, and (c) advocacy for public education. All 20 organizations completed work in these areas. For example, when it came to advocacy for public education, the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union recast an issue that had been prominent in the media: P3 (public private partnership) schools. They produced an information sheet about the deleterious effects of private decision making in public education and encouraged activism among members, parents, and the public at large. Explicitly tied to educational equity, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation sought to influence educational decision making by sending links of its publicly available bimonthly information sheet, *Education Watch,* to provincial members of parliament. Several of these sheets addressed the impact of neo-liberal reform on Ontario schools and the effects of provincial funding decisions on students at risk, English language learners, and students in special educational programs. In both cases, the organizations were reframing

government rhetoric in ways that support public education, teachers' working conditions, and students' learning conditions, paying particular attention to the needs of students who tend to be most marginalized in schools.

Table 2: Percentage of Teachers' Organizations Involved in Political Self Advocacy/Teacher Welfare

Type of initiative	*% of TUs
Advocacy for public education within the broader social context	100
Advocacy for increased teacher decision making authority in relation to educational reform—reframing educational reform	100
Advocacy for teachers' rights and working conditions	100
Reframing professionalism	100
Campaigning for centrist or left-leaning political parties	15
Social justice issues are bargained into the contract	Insufficient data

* % include only those teachers' organizations with given initiatives articulated on the Web site as of January 1, 2008.

The union strategy of reframing government rhetoric becomes visible when one compares union and government characterizations of contested issues. Nowhere is this strategy more evident than in debates about the nature of teacher professionalism. Many teachers' organizations refer to themselves as "unions of professionals" and merge industrial and professional objectives in their mission statements thereby challenging the assertion that industrial and professional unionism are incompatible. The notion of a "union of professionals" is complicated by a number of factors: (a) accountability focussed governments that hold teachers to professional standards while at the same time deskilling their work and restricting their pedagogical autonomy (Sitch, 2005; Stevenson, 2007); (b) a trade union movement that does not always take teachers' unions seriously; and (c) teachers who believe they are not in need of collective representation or labour affiliation due to their professional status. Recently, the concept of professionalism has been contrasted not only with industrialism but also with deregulation (Cochran-Smith,

2004). Teachers' organizations have used this dichotomy to advocate for qualified teachers for every child. By doing so, they become even more reliant on the notion of teachers as professionals. Although the concept of professional standards and a specialized knowledge base may be helpful to challenge deregulation, a number of researchers have identified how governments have used it to hold teachers and teacher educators accountable for the quality of the education system (Bascia, 2005; Cochran-Smith, 2004; McInerney, 2007; Poplin & Rivera, 2005). This accountability measure often results in further external regulation of teachers' work and stands in contrast to the notion of self regulation and professional autonomy. Perhaps as a result of the shifting meaning of the term, one of the most intensive forms of teacher self-advocacy has been a reframing of professionalism and a demonstration of teacher quality. All 20 organizations were involved in this type of work.

In relation to the four conceptions of social justice, teacher self-advocacy through the reframing of government rhetoric is a form of occupational, identity-based activism with an implicit expectation that such advocacy will lead to increased economic justice through the reallocation of educational resources for teachers and indirectly students in all publicly funded schools. Given the systemic nature of the critique and the reliance on critique rather than agreement with existing government reform, this type of social justice work aligns more closely with critical than liberal ideology. Still, the fact that teachers' organizations are advocating to strengthen the public education system, which is itself inequitable along many dimensions, dampens the critique.

Advocating for Others. As organizations of educators, it makes sense that teachers' unions focus primarily on issues directly affecting teachers and students in kindergarten to grade-12 schools. As organizations dedicated to social justice, however, it is inconceivable that they would do this in a way that is removed from the larger socio-political context. In my survey of the Web sites of 20 teachers' organizations, I found that most advocate not only for teachers but also for marginalized members of their local and provincial communities and colleagues beyond their provincial, territorial, and federal borders. See Table 3 for a list of international advocacy initiatives supported by Canadian teachers' federations.

Ninety per cent of the organizations surveyed participated in some form of international development initiative. The most notable of these was the Canadian Teachers' Federation's "Project Overseas" program.

The CTF along with teacher representatives from each of its provincial affiliates sponsors teachers from each province and territory to provide professional development and financial assistance to teachers in countries with limited financial resources. They have funded a number of initiatives including a literacy project in Tanzania, a labour solidarity project in Columbia, gender-based projects in Malawi and Sierra Leone, and a women's network in India. Volunteer teachers, who spend the summer teaching and learning from colleagues overseas, return to Canada to share their experiences with their colleagues. Some larger organizations like the British Columbia Teachers' Federation have their own international solidarity initiatives. The BCTF's international solidarity program has allied itself with teachers' unions in Latin America and Southern Africa. Together they have (a) challenged free trade, (b) generated a network of educators to resist educational privatisation, (c) joined with teachers' unions worldwide to investigate the effects of neo-liberal reform on public schools, and (d) stood in solidarity with striking teachers in partner organizations.

Table 3: Percentage of Teachers' Organizations Involved in
Advocacy for Others

Type of initiative	*% of TUs
International development program (through provincial org or CTF Project Overseas)	90
International solidarity program	15
Takes an organizational position on global social justice issues	10

* % include only those teachers' organizations with given initiatives articulated on the Web site as of January 1, 2008.

International development programs tend to take a more liberal approach to resource allocation abroad while international solidarity programs tend toward the critical in their support of partner organizations fighting against global exploitation and economic marginalization. Complicating the liberal/critical distinction is the notion of organizational wealth. Within Canada, provinces and territories with smaller populations, fewer schools, fewer teachers (PEI, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories) and therefore more poorly financed teachers' organizations, whatever their

political or ideological leanings, would be hard pressed to maintain an independent connection with an organization in the global south. For organizations in these provinces, the CTF "Project Overseas" program has been more prominently displayed on their Web sites.

Moving beyond financial or labour support, 10 per cent of the organizations surveyed articulate official positions on national and global social justice issues such as minimum wage, the war in Afghanistan, and the conflict in the Middle East. Positions on minimum wage bring up issues of distributive justice while positions on international conflict focus more explicitly on challenging cultural domination. In both cases the wording is more critical than liberal undertones. In contrast to the 10 per cent of organizations with explicit positions on controversial issues, another 10 per cent posted policies urging teachers to remain neutral in response to controversial issues.

Overall, Web-site evidence of the political activism of 20 teachers' organizations, both self-advocacy and advocacy for others, suggests that this type of social justice work has taken a critical approach to educational issues within the current socio-political and organizational context even while it depends on the retention rather than dismantling of existing educational structures. Moving from ideology to focus, my analysis of the 20 Web sites indicates that political activism is both identity focussed – advocating for increased teacher voice within the larger decision-making apparatus, and economically focussed – standing in solidarity with striking teachers protesting exploitative working conditions. In both cases, however, these examples say more about teachers' collective work in relation to the larger socio-political context than they do about internal, union-based capacity building for social justice. The next section focuses more explicitly on union infrastructure.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVISM

Social Justice Professional Development

Despite the constantly shifting meaning of professionalism, professional development as a concept seems to be relatively stable and robust within the context of teachers' organizations. More often than not, it is also used as a vehicle for social justice activism. Most teachers' unions have distinct units or divisions for professional development and in 70 per cent of the 20 organizations surveyed, social justice programming is coordinated by or located in this division. In another 15 per cent, social justice is a stand alone organizational division and in the remaining 15 per

cent, social justice work is limited to periodic committee meetings or links to professional development opportunities at other organizations. All 20 of the surveyed organizations published articles related to social justice within their magazines, journals, or newsletters; 60 per cent listed social justice resources on their Web sites; half had prepared social justice workshops for their members; 35 per cent hosted a social justice, diversity, or human rights conference; and 30 per cent generated or developed their own social justice material. These numbers suggest that teacher unionists across the country have built their social justice activ-ism on the foundation of pre-existing professional development and communications infrastructure. See Table 4 for a list of social justice initiatives related to professional development along with the prevalence of these initiatives in Canadian teachers' organizations.

Table 4: Percentage of Teachers' Organizations Involved in Socially Just Professional Development

Type of initiative	*% of TUs
Articles related to social justice within a union publication	100
Social justice programming within a professional development unit	70
Social justice resources listed/linked on the Web site (research, curriculum, texts, lesson plans)	60
Social justice workshops for members	50
Hosting a social justice conference	35
Social justice publications generated by organization (research, curriculum, texts, lesson plans)	30

* % include only those teachers' organizations with given initiatives articulated on the Web site as of January 1, 2008.

Although articles in union magazines, journals, and newsletters occasionally focus on exploitation and economic marginalization, most social justice programming, initiatives, workshops, and resources located in the professional development division of teachers' unions focus on identity-based issues. As such, these efforts are more aligned with recognition than distribution. Also, implicit in this work is the liberal notion that the education of teachers can eliminate the inequities in the education system. The optional rather than mandatory nature of these profes-

sional development opportunities further supports a liberal approach. Most Canadian teachers' federations deliver workshops with titles that indicate a liberal exploration of diversity and a celebration of difference, but a few have structured professional development through a critical lens asking teachers to challenge their own privileges. The ideological basis for this work shifts with the broader socio-political context. Over the last two decades, much of the work that unions have done on gender and race in particular has been depoliticized by an increasingly conservative social climate This conservatizing force comes not only from the external political climate but also from the ideological leanings of some members, elected officials, and staff.

Organizational Structures Facilitating Social Justice Activism

Like any large organization made up of people who are differently located socially, economically, organizationally, and politically, teachers' unions are rife with micropolitical tensions (Bascia, 2000; Golin, 1998; Murphy, 1990). One way in which union leadership responds to these multiple divergent needs at the local, provincial, and federal levels, while simultaneously minimizing the risk of fragmentation, is to build a recognizable structure. With increasing bureaucratization, however, opportunities for social justice work tend to decrease (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Karumanchery & Portelli, 2005; Rottmann, 2007). In spite of this tendency, there are ways in which organizations can be structured to support social justice efforts. Table 5 lists a number of these strategies along with their prevalence among Canadian teachers' organizations.

One of the most feasible ways for provincial and territorial organizations to avoid excessive bureaucratization is to support context sensitive social justice work going on in their local associations. Forty per cent of the organizations surveyed provide grants for social justice programming at the local or school level. In most cases these grants require teachers to demonstrate an explicit link to classroom practice. This local granting practice, while more individually than systemically focussed, provides teachers' organizations with one way to connect provincial union involvement with social justice work in classrooms, schools, and communities. Another way to make the provincial-local activist connection is through well networked social justice committees or programs. Eighty per cent of the organizations surveyed had a social justice, human

rights, or diversity committee responsible for (a) directing internal policy making, (b) supporting the provision of social justice related professional development, and in some cases, (c) generating a conceptual framework to drive the organizations' social justice work. Forty per cent of the organizations had discrete committees in addition to an umbrella social justice committee.

Table 5: Percentage of Teachers' Organizations Involved in Building Organizational Capacity for Social Justice Activism

Type of initiative	*% of TUs
Support for members to participate in social justice PD at other organizations (including CTF)	90
Social justice, human rights, or diversity (umbrella) committee	80
Social justice policy statements directed at organizational practices	65
Awards/bursaries tied to social justice issues (individual)	40
Grants for social justice programming from the provincial body to the locals	40
Links to social justice programming at other (wealthier/umbrella) teachers' organizations	40
Social justice committees for multiple discrete issues	40
Bilingual documents on Web site (English/French)	35
Social justice listserv	30
Stand alone social justice division within organization	15
Trilingual documents on Web site (English/French/Inuktitut)	5

* % include only those teachers' organizations with given initiatives articulated on the Web site as of January 1, 2008.

With regular interaction, committee involvement can benefit teacher members by broadening their political analyses (Bascia & Young, 2001). It can simultaneously benefit the provincial body by helping staff understand how these issues are being taken up in multiple school contexts. More frequent connections among larger numbers of activist teachers were supported in 30 per cent of the organizations through voluntary social justice listservs. These electronic connections, when thoughtfully facilitated, allow politically active teachers to connect laterally and to share resources across geographic distance. More than any other teachers' organization, the Nunavut Teachers' Association seemed to be

woven into the fabric of the territory. The NTA's Web site is written in Inuktitut, English, and French. It includes among its objectives an encouragement of residents of Nunavut to pursue teaching and has local recruitment efforts embedded in the Territory's education act and the association's policy. A central component of the association's policy on learning and working conditions is a mandate that all Nunavut teachers complete a course in Inuit language and culture. This policy lowers one of the major cultural and linguistic barriers to local recruitment efforts.

In addition to union-community connections, most organizations participated in social justice work at the federal level. Ninety per cent of the organizations surveyed took advantage of their affiliation with the Canadian Teachers' Federation to support members interested in participating in social justice conferences, workshops, and other professional development generated by the CTF, while 40 per cent supported members seeking social justice professional development at other member organizations. This practice seemed particularly useful for the smaller organizations in the territories and Atlantic provinces. By taking advantage of the larger network of organizations within the federation, participating unions could consolidate their resources to focus more intensely on providing a diverse array of social justice programming.

PRIORITIZING SOCIAL JUSTICE: ISSUES AND PRACTICE

Prioritizing Discrete Social Justice Issues

Teachers' unions, like most organizations, focus most explicitly on social justice issues that directly affect the majority of their members. Of the 20 organizations surveyed, 85 per cent named gender as a social justice issue and supported at least one initiative to counter gender discrimination; 80 per cent did so with social justice or equity in general; 80 per cent with disability; 75 per cent with bullying; 75 per cent with linguistic diversity; 60 per cent with Aboriginal education; 60 per cent with class or poverty; 50 per cent with environmental issues; 40 per cent with sexuality; and 35 per cent with race. See Table 6 for the percentages of teachers' organizations addressing discrete dimensions of injustice.

Although naming an issue and providing at least one initiative to address the related injustice does not ensure equity along that dimension, neglecting to address the issue constitutes a serious omission. Racism and homophobia, for example, are programmatically addressed in fewer than half of the 20 Canadian teachers' organizations surveyed. This analysis of Web-site data provides only a preliminary glimpse at the

national trend. It does not indicate the depth to which discrete issues are addressed in each organization. Nor does it indicate the extent to which social justice initiatives as a whole are prioritized in relation to other union functions. In the next section, which explores the second of these omissions, I analyze teachers' unions' rhetorical and material support for social justice compared to other organizational priorities.

Table 6: Percentage of Teachers' Organizations Addressing Discrete Dimensions of Injustice

Social dimension named and injustice addressed through at least one initiative	*% of TUs
Gender	85
General social justice/diversity/human rights/equity	80
Disability/ special education	80
Bullying	75
Linguistic diversity	75
Global education	70
Aboriginal education	60
Class/poverty	60
Environment	50
Sexuality	40
Race/culture	35

* % include only those teachers' organizations with given initiatives articulated on the Web site as of January 1, 2008.

Prioritizing Socially Just Practice

Overall, this analysis of 20 Canadian teacher union Web sites indicates that social justice issues factor into teacher unionism in a significant way. At the same time, it is also clear that the majority of teachers' unions do not prioritize social justice over other organizational functions. Teachers' organizations exist primarily to represent their members, to advocate for improved working conditions in schools, and to support teachers' professional development needs. A large majority also functions as sites for social justice activism, but only a few could be characterized as social justice organizations with both rhetorical and material support for educational and intra-organizational equity. See Table 7 for a list of indicators marking nominal and material support for social justice.

Table 7: Percentage of Teachers' Organizations Prioritizing Social Justice
Activism

Indicator	*% of TUs
Equal opportunity policy for internal hiring	55
Has articulated a definition of "social justice" or "equity"	45
Program/material support for members of under-represented groups to enter union leadership	25
Social justice addressed in the mission statement	10
Externally commissioned equity audit of organization	5
Affirmative action policy for internal hiring (different than equal opportunity)	5
At least 5% of organizational budget earmarked for social justice initiatives	Insufficient data
Equity achieved (relative to student demographics in province/territory) for internal hiring	Insufficient data

* % include only those teachers' organizations with given initiatives articulated
on the Web site as of January 1, 2008.

Of the 20 organizations surveyed, 45 per cent articulated a definition
of social justice or equity; 25 per cent provided programmatic or material
support for members of under-represented groups to enter union leader-
ship; 10 per cent named social justice explicitly in their mission statement
(See Appendix A for a complete list of mission statements); 5 per cent
commissioned an external equity-based evaluation of the organization;
just over half the 20 organizations surveyed had equal opportunity hir-
ing policies on their Web sites, and one used employment equity lang-
uage.

Web site data provide insufficient evidence to determine the extent
to which Canadian teachers' federations have achieved employment
equity reflective of student demographics in their respective provinces,
but an initial glance at the photographs of elected officials suggests that
they are far from achieving employment equity with respect to race. The
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario's "Leaders for Tomorrow"
program responds to this situation by attempting to diversify the current
leadership. It stands out for its intensive equity-based leadership pre-
paration that aims to demystify the existing organizational structure and

provide focussed, organization-specific professional development to women in four under-represented groups within the organization.

Diversifying the leadership will not necessarily transform a union into a social justice organization, but the retention of a relatively homogenous leadership provides ample evidence that it has not yet achieved this goal.

DISCUSSION

The three-pronged approach to social justice unionism – that is, the intermingling of industrial, professional, and equity concerns proposed by Peterson and Charney (1999) and taken up by a number of Canadian teachers' unions – both facilitates and constrains teacher union activism. As a facilitator, Peterson and Charney's approach proposes a social justice structure familiar to teacher unionists and allows organizations of occupationally subordinated workers to connect their struggles with the broader labour movement. At the same time, this three-pronged approach functions as a constraint to the extent that it allows union leaders to conceal existing inequitable practices under a rhetorical social justice umbrella. By opening a social justice umbrella over the existing structure, teacher unionists who benefit from this structure can construct their dissenting colleagues as a fragmenting force. As a result, activist efforts that work against internal organizational hierarchies are weakened. The social justice umbrella structure allows organizations to work against injustices in the larger educational context, but does little to ensure internal organizational equity.

Because social justice efforts of teachers' organizations in relation to the broader socio-political context tend to be more critical than their intra-organizational efforts at achieving equity, any conceptualization of social justice teacher unionism must take distinctions between internal and external advocacy into account. Table 8 combines this distinction with two other important conceptual considerations: ideology and focus. It merges the conceptual framework developed earlier in this article with practical examples articulated on the Web sites of 20 Canadian teachers' organizations. The general trend presented in this table is not consistent across or even within organizations, but it provides teacher unionists and researchers of teachers' organizations with a theoretically based and practically grounded typology with which to work when exploring and enacting social justice unionism.

Canadian teachers' federations take on a number of external initiatives focussing on recognition or identity-based conceptions of social justice. They advocate for teacher professionalism by demonstrating existing teacher quality and reframing neo-liberal conceptions of justice.

Table 8: Merging Theoretical Conceptions of Social Justice with Teacher Union Practice

External		Liberal	Critical
	Distribution	Advocate for public education	Protest privatization of education and other social services
	Recognition	Advocate for government consultation with teachers, students and community members of under-represented groups	Build activist networks of teachers, students and community members of under-represented groups to advocate for an increasingly democratic educational decision making structure
Internal		**Liberal**	**Critical**
	Distribution	Develop provincial inducements for local social justice initiatives	Guarantee minimum funding for anti-oppression work and participate in employment equity hiring until union officials, staff and teacher activists reflect the student demographics in the province
	Recognition	Develop optional social justice workshops, conferences, and other professional development opportunities focusing on diversity	Ensure that discrete anti-oppression groups (dealing with gender, race, class, sexuality, ability) gain decision-making authority within the organization.

Related to this position, they support increasingly democratic educational governance by advocating for increased decision-making authority for teachers and teachers' federations. By doing so, they challenge existing occupational hierarchies within the education system. In some provinces they also advocate for anti-oppressive pedagogical and curricular reform. Liberal approaches involve positioning themselves as organizational stakeholders with whom the government must consult while critical approaches involve resisting or developing alternatives to existing decision-making structures in solidarity with educators, students, and community activists.

Like their recognition-based activism, teachers' unions' external, distributive, justice-based activism can be distinguished by ideological approach. Advocacy for the existing public education system comprises a liberal approach to social justice unionism while a critical approach is more likely to involve resisting incremental privatization of education and other social services along with a fine grained analysis of how this process reifies existing inequities. Standing along the continuum between these two ideological approaches, Canadian teachers' unions advocate for free and accessible schooling for all children and youth and draw attention to existing teacher quality. They hold employers to work intensity and remuneration clauses bargained in their respective collective agreements, protest exploitative working conditions, and advocate for professional standards to ensure that all students are taught by certified professionals. In some cases they also bargain social justice clauses into their provincial and local contracts, advocate for the abolition of inequitable educational practices, raise questions about the extent to which the existing structures and norms benefit all teachers and students, and stand in solidarity with their colleagues abroad. Both liberal and critical approaches to distributive justice activism aim to improve teachers' working conditions and students' learning conditions in the province, the nation, and abroad.

Teachers' organizations' external advocacy tends to be focussed most heavily on issues that directly affect the bulk of teachers. Campaigns dealing with the defence of public education, small class size, and challenges to standardized testing are more likely to be supported through external advocacy than are issues affecting smaller groups of teachers. Each of these larger campaign issues has social justice implications for teachers and students who are subordinated within the larger educational hierarchy and as such need to be considered in any con-

ception of social justice teacher unionism. Still, external advocacy alone on behalf of the entire teaching profession cannot support all teachers' industrial, professional, or social justice needs. As a result, any conception of social justice teacher unionism must investigate internal social justice initiatives and structures as well.

The internal capacity building work of Canadian teachers' organizations includes (a) professional development with a social justice focus, (b) a move to increasingly equitable hiring practices, and (c) a publicly articulated prioritizing of social justice. This work, to a greater extent than their external advocacy, has tended to be built on a liberal recognition foundation. Workshops, conferences, and other professional development opportunities focussing on teachers' responses to increasingly diverse public schools are considerably more extensive than discrete anti-oppression groups with organizational decision-making authority. Similarly, provincial inducements for local social justice initiatives with centralized accountability structures are more prevalent than guaranteed minimum funding structures for anti-oppression work. In contrast to the guaranteed annual support for advocacy related to teacher welfare and teacher professionalism, material support for social justice work depends on annual justifications of its worth. As such, it remains on the periphery of union activism, even within those organizations that self-identify as social justice unions.

SUMMARY

Most Canadian teachers' organizations do not characterize themselves as social justice unions, but many are beginning to articulate a definition of social justice on their Web sites and a few are beginning to make reference to social justice in their mission statements and objectives. The findings of this national examination of teacher union Web sites indicates that the social justice activism of teachers' organizations in relation to the state apparatus is qualitatively different from their internal social justice work. Overall, they tend to use a more critical, focussed, and distribution-based approach when advocating for members, students, or international colleagues in the context of the broader education system, and a more liberal, diffuse, and recognition based-approach when responding to the social justice needs of their members within the context of the organization. Although provincial labour legislation and socio-political contexts leave traces on social justice advocacy efforts of their respective organizations, size and resource base are a better predictor of social jus-

tice activism than are provincial socio-political context. Social justice programming is more diverse and active in large, well resourced organizations than in the smaller or geographically more disparate organizations. As a result of their relative scarcity of resources, federations, associations, and unions in the Atlantic provinces and the territories depend more on the Canadian Teachers' Federation for their social justice programming than do larger federations.

Since the early 1970s, Canadian teachers' organizations have been building internal organizational capacity for social justice and advocating for public education, educators, and students in relation to the state apparatus. They have been involved in coalition building with local community groups and international organizations. They have reframed conservative government rhetoric, embedded equity-oriented divisions and committees into their existing structure, provided professional development, and, in some cases, structured leadership opportunities for traditionally under-represented groups. They have generated inducements for local social justice initiatives and devised internal policies on controversial issues. Each initiative provides evidence that Canadian teachers' organizations act as sites for social justice activism. All 20 organizations surveyed included social justice as a component of their work and two or three went as far as embracing social justice as one of the three pillars upon which their organization stands. However, the relative paucity of anti-racist activism, the demographic homogeneity of teacher union activists relative to the student populations they serve, and the ongoing gaps between rhetorical and material commitments to social justice, all serve as reminders that, although teachers' unions may be sites for social justice activism, they are not yet social justice organizations.

Implications for Teacher Unionists

As representatives of teachers with access to the conditions they face at the classroom, school, local, provincial, and national levels, teachers' unions, federations, societies, and associations are uniquely positioned to do work that blends industrial, professional, and social justice concerns of teachers. Social justice unionism, however, requires more than organizational potential. It also requires ideological and material support. Social justice funding is rarely allocated in a lump sum so it is difficult to determine what percentage of an organization's operating budget goes to social justice activism. The few organizations that do indicate the

funding for this function, however, tend to list it at three to five per cent of the unions' operating budget, a great distance from the 33 per cent assumed if social justice is materially as well as rhetorically one of three foundational pillars.

Teacher unionists who believe this percentage to be naïve or unreasonably high are likely defining social justice advocacy as charity or as a category that does not involve teacher self-advocacy. Teachers' organizations are legislatively, functionally, and legitimately structured to advocate for their members as individuals and as a collective. If they identify social justice as one of three foundational pillars, this decision does not mean that they are responsible for alleviating educational and societal oppression with one third of their operating budget. No single organization is set up to accomplish this Herculean task. Rather it means that they examine their internal and external practices of teacher advocacy through a lens that not only supports industrial advocacy and professionalism but also challenges societal oppression.

This shift in organizational priorities could be set up in a variety of ways. Teachers who are demographically under-represented within the organization could be responsible for shaping organizational decision making. Employment equity could be advocated not only within the education system but also within teachers' organizations. Equity-seeking groups within the federation could be allotted a consistent percentage of the budget from year to year for social justice teacher advocacy work without having to rationalize this allotment at every annual general meeting. An electoral strategy other than majority rule could be used to pass motions related to social justice. Many more possibilities exist, all of which are legitimate functions of a teachers' organization even if not supported by the majority of the staff, leadership, or membership.

Individual organizations interested in measuring their progress in relation to social justice can start by (a) identifying omitted issues, (b) comparing the demographics of elected officials and staff to the demographics of public school students, and (c) analysing their budgets for funding allocations to social justice programming. Whatever else they do, Canadian teachers' federations with an articulated commitment to social justice need to ensure that their funding and staffing of social justice divisions, units, and programs allows them to follow through on their commitment. By asking specific questions about how organizations articulate their commitments to social justice in relation to the conceptual framework developed in this article, justice-minded teacher activists will

deepen their understanding of the work that is being done and the work that still needs to be done to diminish inequities embedded in their educational and organizational practice.

A preliminary list of these questions might include:

1. How does the organization articulate its aims and mission with respect to social justice?
2. How are these aims supported through funding, staffing, and organizational infrastructure?
3. How does the organization advocate for teachers' working conditions within the broader government apparatus?
4. How does the organization respond to internal social justice advocacy?
5. To what extent do organizational critiques of the government apply to internal practices?
6. Which organizational practices are based upon critical ideological foundations?
7. Which organizational practices are based upon liberal ideological foundations?
8. How does the ideological foundation underpinning social justice work compare with that underpinning other organizational priorities?
9. Which organizational practices are tightly governed? Which are automatically given a percentage of the organizational budget?
10. How does the governance of social justice programming compare with the governance of other organizational initiatives?
11. Which organizational practices counter economic exploitation?
12. Which organizational practices counter cultural domination?
13. How does the organizational approach to material or identity-based inequity differ across organizational priorities?

What is important is that discussions of social justice move beyond the self-congratulatory claim – "everything we do is social justice." By analyzing cases of teacher union activism with the conceptual framework developed in this article, which distinguishes between liberal and critical approaches to material and recognition-based activism at the societal and intra-organizational level, teacher unionists and researches of teachers' organizations can add explanatory grist to the otherwise amorphous concept of social justice teacher unionism.

Limitations and Significance

This analysis of social justice initiatives available in Canadian teacher union Web-site data should not be used as a comparison or evaluation of individual organizational efforts for a number of reasons. First, it is possible that some initiatives exist but were not described in detail on the Web sites. Second, the organizations have different membership numbers and thus different financial and human resource capacities for action. Third, each organization is responding to a slightly different political context and as such discursive trends and linguistic choices may represent context sensitivity rather than ideological position. And finally, rigorous program evaluation depends on more in-depth analysis than is possible by exploring Web-site trends.

Having listed the above methodological limitations of my approach, however, I must also say that the broad national survey conducted for this study provides a useful preliminary analysis of social justice unionism in a Canadian context. As such, it supports the work of teacher union researchers looking to generate a theoretical template for social justice unionism.

The framework generated in this article based on four theoretical conceptions of social justice, two levels of analysis, and multiple practical examples taken from the Web sites of 20 Canadian teachers' federations also offers teacher unionists with a useful analytic tool for investigating social justice unionism in their own organizations. With theoretically grounded, context-relevant data, they can build on the existing strengths in their organizations.

CONCLUSION

This broad-based examination of social justice unionism in a Canadian context suggests that external advocacy supporting teachers' working conditions in relation to the state apparatus is prioritized over other social justice initiatives. In particular, their external advocacy is more likely to counter economic exploitation and occupational domination in a critical and focussed manner than is their less well resourced, internal, anti-oppression work, which is more likely to counter identity-based discrimination in a liberal, diffuse and rhetorical manner. If social justice activism is understood, not only rhetorically but also practically, as a constitutive element of member advocacy, and if members are concept-

ualized as a diverse group of individuals whose needs must be addressed within the organization as well as protected in relation to the larger state apparatus, teachers' unions will come closer to their stated goal of merging the industrial, professional, and social justice concerns of their members. As a result of engaging in this challenging work, they will simultaneously strengthen their already substantial contribution to educational equity in Canada and abroad.

NOTES

[1] In May, 2006 the Oaxaca Teachers' Union went on strike for higher wages. Municipal police used violent means (the number of protesters killed by police varies from report to report) to put an end to protesters' occupation of government buildings, the streets, and major media outlets. Teachers and their supporters responded to these episodes of state violence through mass protest. People protested under the banner of the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO in Spanish), an organization formed by the Indigenous Peoples of Oaxaca. Teacher activists around the world have since supported APPO's anti-oppressive activism. (Ouvina, Hernan. [2006]. Interview with Flavio Sosa: APPO is questioning the traditional ways of doing politics.)

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Appendix A:
Political Context, Self Definition, and Conception of Social Justice in
Canadian Teachers' Organizations

Organization & Political context *	"Who we are" / mission statement—or objectives if no mission statement on the Web site **
CTF www.ctf-fce.ca Canada Progressive Conservative	Speaking for Teacher Nationally: Our Vision is that every child in Canada will have access to a strong, quality, publicly-funded education system equal to or better than any other education system in the world. Our Mission is to be the unified voice of teacher organizations in Canada to advance the cause of public education, the status of the teaching profession, and the freedom to learn. Our Values: Universality, Social Justice, Professionalism, Collectivity.
BCTF www.bctf.ca British Columbia Liberal	The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), established in 1917, is the union of professionals representing 41,000 public school teachers in the province of British Columbia. All public school teachers belong to the BCTF and their local teachers' association.
ATA www.teachers.ab.ca Alberta Progressive Conservative	The Alberta Teachers' Association, as the professional organization of teachers, promotes and advances public education, safeguards standards of professional practice, and serves as the advocate for its members.
STF www.stf.sk.ca Saskatchewan- Saskatchewan Party	"who we are" The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) is the professional organization representing over 12,000 teachers in publicly funded schools in Saskatchewan. The STF derives its mandate through The Teachers' Federation Act, 2006. Membership in the Federation comes with responsibilities, and grants professional status protected by law with rights and benefits that support members in their role as teachers. Working together, teachers and their professional organization assert a credible voice on behalf of the collective, while attending to individual professional aspira-

	tions and needs. The Federation has brought together, represented, and served teachers for nearly 75 years. It embraces and promotes a vision of the whole teacher by offering programs, services, and resources that address their economic welfare and professional growth, and the diverse issues affecting teachers' workplace environment.
MTS www.mbteach.org Manitoba- New Democratic Party	The Manitoba Teachers' Society is dedicated to safe-guarding the welfare of teachers, the status of the teaching profession, and the cause of public education in Manitoba.
OTF www.otffeo.on.ca Ontario- Liberal	THE ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION (OTF) was set up by the Teaching Profession Act of 1944 as the professional organization for teachers in the province. All teachers (as defined in the Teaching Profession Act) are required by law to belong to the Federation as a condition of teaching in the publicly funded schools of Ontario. L'Association desenseignantes et des enseig-nants franco-ontariens, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario*, the Ontario English Catholic Teach-ers' Association, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation are affiliated with OTF. Most of the Affiliates had formed voluntary teacher organiza-tions 20 years before the Teaching Profession Act was passed in 1944. Teachers recognized the need for a Fed-eration which would be acknowledged by provincial authorities as the professional association of all teachers in the province. At the teachers' request, the Teaching Profession Act was passed.
AEFO www.aefo.on.ca Ontario- Liberal	L'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants fran-co-ontariens (AEFO) est un syndicat francophone regroupant les travailleuses et les travailleurs au service des établissements publics et privés francophones en Ontario. Elle défend les intérêts individuels et collectifs de ses membres et fait la promotion de leur profession et du fait français.

ETFO www.etfo.ca Ontario- Liberal	ETFO is your professional and protective organization. Together we represent over 70,000 teachers, occasional teachers, and education workers employed in the public elementary schools of Ontario. You are an active member of ETFO provincially and you are also a member of one of the 67 ETFO locals across the province. ETFO strives to develop programs and services that both protect and enhance the working lives of members in these challenging times for education. We also work continuously to provide a welcoming environment that celebrates the diversity of our members and the students in our care. In addition to our internal work in support of members, ETFO reaches out to the broader community to foster a climate of social justice in this province and beyond.
OECTA www.oecta.on.ca Ontario- Liberal	WHO WE ARE-The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) represents 36,000 men and women who teach in all grades in the publicly funded English Roman Catholic schools in Ontario. OECTA is affiliated with the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and Education International. Mission Statement – Recognizing our uniqueness as teachers in Catholic schools, we are an association committed to the advancement of Catholic education. As teacher advocates we provide professional services, support, protection, and leadership.
OSSTF www.osstf.on.ca Ontario- Liberal	The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) is a trade union representing almost 60,000 members. The union works to protect its diverse membership which is represented in 140 bargaining units across the province. OSSTF/FEESO bargaining units represent both English and French members in elementary and secondary school workplaces, private schools, consortia offering support services to school boards and universities.
CSQ www.csq.qc.net	La mission principale de la Centrale consiste à promouvoir et à défendre les intérêts économiques, professionnels et sociaux des membres qu'elle représente et s'exerce dans le respect des valeurs fondamentales

Quebec- Liberal	d'égalité, de solidarité, de justice sociale, de liberté, de démocratie et de coopération.- En vue de l'établissement d'une société plus équitable et plus démocratique, la mission de la CSQ vise aussi à : oeuvrer à l'amélioration des conditions de vie des travailleuses et des travailleurs du Québec au point de vue social, culturel et économique ; œuvrer à la défense et à l'élargissement des droits démocratiques et agir particulièrement en faveur de la généralisation des droits à la syndicalisation, à la négociation et à la liberté d'action syndicale ; œuvrer à la promotion et à la défense des droits sociaux, en particulier le droit à l'éducation, à la santé, au travail et à des conditions de vie décentes ; œuvrer à la promotion et à la défense des droits des femmes ; œuvrer à la promotion et à la défense des droits des gais et lesbiennes.
QPAT www.qpat-apeq.qc.ca Quebec- Liberal	Not stated.
NBTA www.nbta.ca New Brunswick- Liberal	"The New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA) is the professional association of approx. 5,300 anglo-phone teachers in the Province of New Brunswick, first established in 1903, to promote the cause of public education in New Brunswick."
AEFNB www.aefnb.nb.ca New Brunswick- Liberal	L'AEFNB est une association professionnelle d'enseignantes et d'enseignants francophones de la maternelle à la 12e année oeuvrant au sein du système scolaire public au Nouveau-Brunswick. Mission--L'AEFNB a pour mission de représenter les intérêts collectifs et individuels des enseignantes et des enseignants francophones des écoles publiques du Nouveau-Brunswick; elle favorise, de concert avec ses partenaires, l'avancement de l'éducation en français et valorise la langue et la culture françaises. Valeurs--Les valeurs fondamentales de l'AEFNB sont axées sur la démocratie, le respect, l'équité, l'intégrité, la solidarité, la collégialité, l'engagement de ses mem-

	bres, l'expertise de son personnel et l'accessibilité aux services.
NSTU www.nstu.ca Nova Scotia- Progressive Conservative	Mission – As the unified voice for the advocacy and support of all its members, the NSTU promotes and advances the teaching profession and quality public education. The Nova Scotia Teachers Union maintains the original concepts of its founding members – to unify and elevate the teaching profession and to improve the quality of education offered our young people.
PEITF www.peitf.com Prince Edward Island- Liberal	The objectives of the PEI Teachers' Federation are to advance and promote the interests of education and to advance, promote, and safeguard the interests of the teaching profession and its membership.
NLTA www.nlta.nf.ca Newfoundland & Labrador- Progressive Con-servative	Founded in 1890, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is a professional organization serving approximately 6,400 teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador. The offices of the NLTA are located in St. John's, and the association provides numerous services to teachers through various professional divisions. The NLTA has an Executive Council consisting of 12 mem-bers, 51 Branches, and Special Interest Councils. The Association is affiliated with Education International (EI), representing teachers around the world, and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), representing the 220,000 teachers in this country.
NWTTA www.nwtta.nt.ca North West Terri-tories- No party (oper-ates under a con-sensus system)	Vision statement – "The Northwest Territories Teach-ers' Association is the professional voice of educators as they provide quality education to Northwest Territories students. With commitment to growth, respect and security for its membership, the Association represents all regions equally, advocates for public education and promotes the teaching profession."
NTA www.ntanu.ca	No specific vision statement or mission statement or « who are we? » section – the front page has the follow-

Nunavut- No party (operates under a consensus system)	ing statement in 3 languages – Making a difference. Ikayurniq Hulidjutiptigut; Faire la difference.
YTA www.yta.yk.ca Yukon- Yukon Party	1) no mission/vision/"who are we" statement on the Web site---the objectives are as follows: The objectives of the Association shall be 1. to advance and promote the cause of education in the Yukon Territory; 2. to raise the status of the teaching profession; 3. to promote and support recruitment and selection practices which ensure capable candidates for teacher education; 4. to promote and support adequate programs of pre-service preparation, internship and certification; 5. to promote the establishment of working conditions that will make possible the best level of professional service; 6. to organize and support groups to improve the knowledge and skill of teachers; 7. to maintain and improve the competence of teachers by meetings, publication, research and other activities; 8. to afford advice, assistance and legal protection to members in their professional duties and relationships; 9. to cooperate with other organizations and bodies in Canada and elsewhere having the same or like aims and objectives; 10. to evolve and maintain a code of ethics and provide for its enforcement; 11. to advise, assist, protect and discipline members in the discharge of their professional duties and relation-ships; 12. to bargain collectively for salaries and working con-ditions on behalf of members.

*Governing party in the province, territory, or nation in January 1, 2008.
**Taken directly from Web site