

**Transformative Leadership for Social Justice:
Perceptions and Experiences of South African Township
Secondary School Principals**

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KEYWORDS Democracy. Change. Injustice. Schools. Leadership. Soweto

ABSTRACT This paper reports selected findings of a bigger qualitative case study of five township secondary schools in Soweto, South Africa. The discussion is restricted to the research question: What are township secondary school principals' perceptions and experiences of transformative leadership for social justice? Data were collected from purposively sampled principals through in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Data analysis, which yielded themes and categories, was based on Tesch's steps for open coding. Findings suggest that respondents have a narrow conception of transformative leadership for social justice. While they exemplify some social justice practices, they also engage in practices that border on being unjust. Some challenges which principals face are outlined. The paper argues that the social justice climate in schools can improve if principals' leadership can be enhanced through continuous development and if they can be held accountable for social justice issues as they are held accountable for their routine administrative responsibilities.