

**In Memory of Kadir Beyciođlu:
Introduction to the Special Issue on Social Justice in
Educational Administration and Leadership**

Yasar Kondakçı 

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Türkiye

Deniz Örucü 

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK

We are honored to present this Special Issue for the memory of our Founding Editor, Prof. Dr. Kadir Beyciođlu, a humble scholar, a colleague, and a dear friend to us. Kadir, demonstrated the capacity to enact social justice leadership in his own context as well as add on to the international conceptualization from a local perspective.

We all know that growing social, economic, political, and climate-related challenges push more and more societal groups to the edge of marginalization. Equitable educational provisions have been suggested as the key service to ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups. However, the limited capabilities of these groups and the failure of liberal democracies to deliver high-quality education for all have created a disparity in education. The disparity in education has repercussions beyond education and endangers peaceful and just life in societies. Schools have been increasingly challenged by the variety



and size of marginalized groups, and teachers and school principals are obliged to create conditions for disadvantaged groups.

Getting an equal share of quality public goods depends on policies designed by educational policymakers; however, particularly after the 1980s the governments have failed to develop and implement policies ensuring access to quality educational provisions (Brathwaite, 2017; Easterbrook and Hadden, 2021). Social justice has emerged as a central concept and domain of practice and deployed social justice leadership in schools in dealing with social and economic disparities. However, the variety of disparities ranging from socio-economic ones to gender issues, from geographic ones to ethnic background, from migration and displaced ones to special needs makes it difficult to understand the concept of social justice and leadership practice to enact social justice. Hill-Berry et al. (2019, p. 461) rightfully asked "What is social justice?" and more importantly "What is leadership for social justice?" These are important questions, and each country context may have quite different answers to these questions. Hemphill (2015) defined social justice as the capacity to possess rights and access to the benefits of society, regardless of the backgrounds of the individuals. Social justice takes school leadership beyond performance and achievement concerns. According to Conrad et al. (2019) it is a moral mission built on equity, fairness, and democracy; hence, according to the authors, social justice is a tool to address the unequal distribution of resources including quality educational provisions. Social justice leadership demands a broad perspective on schools, schooling, and inclusion which embraces the differences, and develops a vision of inclusion in the schools (Causton-Theoharris, 2008). The key element of social justice leadership vision is developing the belief that regardless their background the students can excel and realize their full potential.

Despite this simplified definition and perspectives on social justice and social justice leadership, it is a challenge to enact social justice in the real world. Social, political, and educational systems often pose structural impediments to enacting social justice. Hill-Berry et al (2019) stated that social justice issues are various and enacting social justice demands deliberate and coordinated actions. Although educational leaders in formal positions are expected to be responsive to equity issues (Miller et.al, 2019) uncoordinated, discretionary, and voluntary practices may contribute to mitigating the injustices, however, according to this understanding, these practices cannot be considered as a form of social justice leadership. Due to several reasons such as lack of training, role definition, resource impediments, and structural problems principals and teachers fail to fulfill their SJ roles. In many country contexts, social justice is not a defined, formal role of teachers and principals. Conrad et al. (2019, p. 554) stated that “principals were generally unaware of a social justice leadership orientation, but values of fairness and equity, for instance, were common in their understandings. Social justice leadership roles were conceptualized as multifaceted, difficult and requiring strategy and caution, but emphasized a need for self-investment and collaboration...principals’ unclear conceptualizations translated into guesswork when practicing social justice leadership from which emerged unique ways of ‘doing’ social justice” and highlighted social justice an area of school improvement. The same understanding was indicated by Kondakci and Beycioğlu (2020) in Turkey that the principals do not do social justice leadership because of a defined role and responsibility.

In addition to structural impediments, the cognitive preparedness of the leaders to undertake a social justice role also plays an important role in realizing social justice leadership in schools. Arar, Ogden, and



Beycioglu (2019) argued the conceptually bounded nature of social justice understanding and leaders' conception and practice of social justice. Enactment of social justice leadership needs a recognition of social injustices in the first place (Bogotch, 2002). Socially just leaders are expected to develop a capacity to identify and respond to the needs and expectations of the groups who are exposed to the injustices (Wasonga, 2009). However, recognition of injustices require self-reflection and critical consciousness about the injustices in and out of the school context (Oplatka & Arar, 2015).

These questions and concerns on defining and enacting social justice leadership have driven the discussion into a culturally bounded context. The generic definition of social justice leadership may not work in every school context in addressing social justice issues. Several scholars indicated the importance of making social justice practices culturally appropriate and contextualizing it to a school system (Arar & Orucu, 2022; Capper & Young, 2014; Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman, 2012; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). That is SJL practices need to consider the students' characteristics (Berkovich, 2014; Capper & Young, 2014) and the contextual conditions of the school (McKenzie et al., 2008; Wang, 2018).

In the call for this special issue, we quoted Kadir's question that inspired us:

"Is there anyone who would like to go sailing on a non-linear ship to know, to explore, and to do educational administration and leadership?"

Sailing through the tumultuous waters with his activism for democracy, equality, and social justice; Kadir ceaselessly battled with the rights of the oppressed and inequalities/injustices in education and

in the broader society (Kondakci et al., 2022). His work prioritized the “the invisible, the excluded, the marginalized, the oppressed, the forgotten, the silenced” group in the society (Azoring & Murillo, 2022, p.285). His scholarship in educational leadership and policy rested upon the epistemology in educational leadership and social justice. In his quest for a better society, he was the pioneer in social justice scholarship for the Turkish educational leadership community. In his academic life he reflected on social justice and social justice leadership as a contextual issue that needs local conceptualizations and responses. Probably this is one of the main reasons why he advocated the constructivist paradigm in studying social justice. His legacy on social justice leadership reflects this constructivist paradigm. As we stated in a session of the European Conference on Educational Research, which was dedicated to his memory, Kadir’s social justice leadership understanding conveys several unique characteristics. These characteristics, we believe, result from an elegant harmony of international literature with contextual conditions of Türkiye on the one hand, and deep individualized dialog between his observations and experiences as an ordinary citizen with social justice policy and practices (Kondakci et al., 2022):

...First of all, in his approach to SJL, he was very attentive to building his arguments on the cultural heritage of Turkey. However, in his SJL discussion and analyses, the cultural heritage of Turkey is not limited to the currently dominant culture. Kadir embraces all civilizations that were survived in the geography of Turkey. He commonly referred to ancient Greek mythology when building the background of his analyses. In his chapter for the Oxford Encyclopedia of Educational Administration, Kadir demonstrated how social justice is a core concern of Turkey’s geography since ancient times by the use of

mythology. The second unique characteristic of Kadir's social justice leadership is related to democracy and school leadership. Kadir identifies democracy and democratic school structures as one of the pillars of his understanding of social justice leadership... Democratic practices such as participation and meaning inspired his social justice leadership understanding. As a result, dialogue, inclusive involvement, participative decision-making, and opportunities for initiative, combining intellectual, spiritual, ethical, emotional, aesthetic, and physical development (Wood, 2013, as cited in Kondakci et al., 2022) form an important premise of SJL understanding of Kadir. The third unique characteristic of Kadir's social justice leadership is its activist nature. In Turkey, there are several sources of social disparity. Although Kadir did not belong to the mainstream sources of disparity, he owned the problems of disadvantaged groups and advocated their rights in and outside of the academy. In other words, Kadir did not study social justice leadership as a topic of an academic career. Rather it is a lifetime concern for Kadir, who tries to understand the social, economic, and political bases of injustices, advocate the rights of disadvantaged/marginalized groups, and work to accomplish equity in all domains of life, primarily in education. In Miller's (2020, as cited in Kondakci et al., 2022) typology of educational leaders tackling racism, Kadir falls under "deliberate activist." He always acknowledged all sources of marginalization and committed himself to making the source of marginalization visible to authorities so that more resources can be gained to change the marginalized status of these groups. All in all, Kadir constructed a social justice leadership understanding, which is largely shaped by synthesizing international literature with local historical, economic, political, and educational realities. The resulting concepts and practices have contributed to building initial nuances of Turkish understanding of SJL. In that sense,

he inspired numerous young researchers to work on social justice both as a conceptual base and as a field of practice.

Drawing on Kadir's academic legacy, this special issue will be a tribute to him as we bring together the voices of educational administration, leadership, and policy scholars from international and national settings. In this special issue we present six pieces, reflecting local conceptualizations and practices about social justice and social justice leadership in the following order:

Ira Bogotch challenges us by raising a critical debate about social justice leadership through a rigorous problematization and conceptualization. So, like Beycioğlu, he says, he is extending an invitation as a challenge. Ira invites us to see how the pathways to leadership for social justice encompasses more than single-axis studies through proposing a model of educational leadership and social justice that is applicable in diverse – different - settings. "Social justice 4.0", as he describes, seeks to move the field of educational leadership from its currently and narrowly defined prescriptive research designs to thinking about social justice as a multi-dimensional construct and localized practice.

Next, Melis Cin and Ecem Karlidag-Dennis get engaged in a conversation through a dialectical and theoretical discourse with Kadir Beycioğlu's scholarship, expanding upon his arguments, critically assessing various aspects of his work, and providing responses to several of his assertions. Through this, Melis and Ecem create an intellectual space for critical, reflective, and productive dialogues among themselves and in relation to Beycioğlu's later work to enrich the ongoing discourse on social justice in education.

Ceyhun Kavrayıcı explores the social justice leadership practices in public schools in Türkiye. Ceyhun portrays the challenges of school leaders and how they employ socially just leadership practices. In doing so, Ceyhun emphasizes the significance of socially just school leaders who lead to challenge the biases about cultural norms that negatively influence the school's climate.

In a similar vein, Shankar Dhakal investigates into the leadership strategies of high school principals to promote equity and inclusivity amid multifaceted challenges in the diverse schooling contexts of Nepal, calling for a paradigm shift in Nepali education system.

Bayram Bozkurt and Mevlüt Kara examine the relationship between principals' social justice leadership behaviours and teachers' perceived administrative support and trust in principals in Gaziantep province through a quantitative methodology.

Last but not the least, Rosemary Papa honors the legacy of Professor Kadir Beycioğlu as the founding Editor of the REAL, Research in Educational Administration & Leadership and his scholarship through a content analysis of the REAL journal titles from inception in 2016 to 2023. Rosemary takes us to a journey together with Kadir and herself; reminding us once more that Kadir practiced through his research and influence on REAL “ways of knowing, thinking, and acting to achieve a more equitable, caring, and fair world in pursuit of achieving the ends of social justice” (Papa, 2020, p. vii)

We, as the editors of this Special Issue to honor our late friend and colleague Kadir, would like to take this opportunity to thank all the contributing authors for their dedication, rigor and insights; and to Serap Emil, Köksal Banoğlu and Öykü Beycioğlu and further to the whole team in REAL for providing us with the opportunity and



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Thank you for being with us in your lifetime Dear Kadir and We sail on!

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About the authors:

Yasar Kondakci is a Professor of Educational Administration and Planning at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

E-mail: kyasar@metu.edu.tr

Deniz Orucu is an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Management at the University of Nottingham, School of Education, CRELM, UK.

E-mail: Deniz.Orucu1@nottingham.ac.uk