Cultures of Social Justice Leadership

An Intercultural Context of Schools

Edited by
Pamela S. Angelle · Deirdre Torrance

Intercultural Studies in Education

The book series takes as its starting point the interrelationship between people in different places and the potential for overlap in the experiences and practices of peoples and the need for education to play a larger role in expanding and in these expanding discourses. This proposed book series is therefore concerned with assessing and arriving at an understanding of educational practices in multiple settings (countries), using the same methods of data collection and analysis for each country level analysis contained in each chapter, thereby leading to the production of "Cultures" [of understanding] on different topics. "Cultures" of understanding results from and leads to a deeper appreciation and recognition of educational practices, issues and challenges, (a) within a country (b) between & among countries and (c) between and among traditions and other specificities within and between countries.

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Pamela S. Angelle · Deirdre Torrance
Editors

Cultures of Social Justice Leadership

An Intercultural Context of Schools

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Editors
Pamela S. Angelle
Department of Educational Leadership
and Policy Studies
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, USA

Deirdre Torrance
Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh
Edinburgh, UK

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Finally, we would like to acknowledge the two men whose ideas initially sketched on a cocktail napkin became an international research project, contributed to by researchers from over 40 countries around the world. Thank you, Bruce Barnett and Howard Stevenson, for being the seed that germinated our work.

November 2018   Pamela S. Angelle
                                                 Deirdre Torrance

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Notes on Contributors

Pamela S. Angelle is a Professor and Graduate Program Coordinator in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, US. Dr. Angelle's research interests include teacher leadership and organisational conditions which contribute to a collegial school community. As a member of the UCEA–BELMAS International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN), she is also involved in research on international perspectives of social justice. Dr. Angelle has presented at numerous national and international conference meetings including AERA, BELMAS, UCEA, and NZEALS and her work can be found in *Journal of School Leadership, Journal of Educational Administration,* and *Research in Middle Level Education.*

Serafín Antúnez is a Professor at the Faculty of Education of the University of Barcelona (UB). He is Director of the Masters in Management and Management of Educational Centers. Dr. Antúnez has worked as a teacher, school director, professor and director of the University School of Teachers and Deputy Director of the Institute of Educational Sciences of the UB. He has written several books and

articles on organisation and management of educational institutions, management training and teaching staff. Dr. Antúnez participates in research into national and international training projects for teachers, school administrators, supervisors and people responsible for initial and ongoing teacher training in Europe and Latin America.

Khalid Arar is an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Higher Education at the College for Academic Studies and Seminar Hakibbutzim College. He is an associate editor of the *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. Dr. Arar's research focuses on issues of diversity, equity and ethnicity in educational leadership and higher education. His most recent books include, *Arab Women in Management and Leadership* (2013, Palgrave, with Tamar Shapira; Faisal Azaiza and Rachel Hertz Lazarowitz); and *Higher Education Among the Palestinian Minority in Israel* (2016, Palgrave, with Kussai Haj-Yehia).

Kadir Beycioglu is an Associate Professor of Educational Administration in the Department of Educational Sciences at the Buca Faculty of Education of Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir, Turkey. His research focuses mainly on educational change, school development and educational leadership, as well as the ethical use of ICT in education. Dr. Beycioglu is a member of the International Study of Principal Preparation (ISPP) project and a member of the social justice leadership strand of the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN). His work can be found in leading international journals.

Christine Forde is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Glasgow where she held a personal chair in Leadership and Professional Learning. Her research interests include leadership, professional learning and accomplished teaching. Current research includes social justice leadership, the nature of teacher expertise and governance in small systems. An important element of Professor Forde's work has been working with policy communities. She is currently working with the Scottish College for Educational Leadership and the Centre for School Leadership in Ireland. She is a Fellow of the International Professional Development Association and a lifetime member of the Scottish Educational Research Association.

Marina García-Carmona is Researcher and Assistant Professor in the Department of Didactics and School Organization, Faculty of Education and Humanities, University of Granada, Spain. She graduated in Infant Education and Pedagogy at the University of Granada and holds a Ph.D. in Education from the same university. She is a member of the "Analysis of the Educational Reality" research group (HUM-672). Dr. García-Carmona has been a visiting researcher at different universities such as Fordham University (New York), National University of Cuyo (Argentina), National University of Salta (Argentina), University of Oxford (UK), among others. Her research focuses on new and critical approaches to education, educational leadership, family involvement at school, intercultural education and ICT.

Stephen Jacobson is a Distinguished Professor at the University at Buffalo's Graduate School of Education. He is past President of the University Council for Educational Administration and the Association for Education Finance and Policy. Professor Jacobson is a senior editor of the journal *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, lead editor of the *Policy Implications of Research in Education* book series, and UCEA Associate Director for International Initiatives. His current research interests include successful leadership in high poverty schools and the reform of school leadership preparation and practice. Professor Jacobson is the author of six books and over 80 peer-refereed journal articles and book chapters.

Ken Jones taught in London schools before working in Higher Education as Senior Consultant for Professional Learning and Development at UWTSD in Swansea. He is now Professor Emeritus and is an independent education consultant. Professor Jones has been active in the training and continuing education of educational leaders, nationally as a consultant in the field of school leadership, and internationally through his position as Managing Editor of the journal *Professional Development in Education*. He has served on government advisory groups in Wales. Professor Jones' international work has included organising symposia on Professional Learning in many European countries, in the USA and in India.

Fiona King is an Assistant Professor in the School of Inclusive and Special Education, Institute of Education, Dublin City University (DCU) in Ireland. She began her career as a primary teacher and spent 25 years teaching in a variety of contexts including mainstream primary schools both in Ireland and the US, as well as a special school. Dr. King moved into teacher education in 2011 as an advisor with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (funded by the Department of Education and Science). She currently leads on the EdD programme in the area of inclusive and special education. Her current research interests include teacher leadership, teacher education, inclusive pedagogies, professional learning, and social justice leadership.

Caroline Lohmann-Hancock is a Senior Lecturer/Researcher and qualified teacher, who lecturers within the School of Social Justice and Inclusion in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. She has also worked in a variety of academic and voluntary settings which focus on equality. Dr. Lohmann-Hancock's research interests centre around social justice and exclusion, power and control in society, identity, learning and teaching and the social reproduction of inequality. She has worked on a range of funded research projects including: the Evaluation of Hafal's Let's Talk Project; Raising Awareness and Changing Attitudes with Young People about Violence against Women and Domestic Abuse (Hafan); and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child training across Wales (Welsh Government).

Gema López-Gorosave is a Professor at Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, México. She previously served as Professor at the State Normal School, training primary and secondary teachers. Dr. López-Gorosave has published articles on educational leadership, school direction and teaching evaluation in Mexico in journals such as: *Educational Administration Quarterly* and the *Journal of Educational Administration.* She has been a member of multiple academic or technical educational advice councils and accreditation committees of education programs in México and Costa Rica. Currently, she is a member of the Board of Government at the Autonomous University of Baja California.

Brian Michael Corrales Maytorena is a Professor at State Normal School and Director at the *Prof. Manuel Montes Carrillo* public elementary school in Ensenada, Mexico. He is a member of the research group *Learning Communities*. He serves as an advisor for the elementary school teacher degree. He has also served as a tutor for teachers who join the professional service in basic education.

Rachel McNae is Director of the Centre for Educational Leadership Research at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand and National President of the New Zealand Educational Administration and Leadership Society. She is also the Co-Founder of *The Good Human Project*—an organisation supporting young people to flourish in educational settings. Dr. McNae's research agenda is founded on a firm belief for social justice and her numerous research projects and publications span the fields of student voice and agency, strength-based inquiry, youth and women in leadership, leadership innovation, and developing culturally and contextually responsive leadership learning encounters.

Paul W. Miller is a Professor of educational leadership and management, in the School of Education and Professional Development at the University of Huddersfield, UK. He has researched and written extensively on race inequality in schools, school leaders' working lives and leadership in small rural/remote schools. Professor Miller is the President of the Institute for Educational Administration and Leadership-Jamaica (IEAL-J), and a member of the Boards of the British Educational Leadership Management Administration Society (BELMAS) and the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM).

Cristina Moral is a Lecturer in the Department of Didactics and School Organization at the University of Granada. Her research interests include teacher training and the improvement of teaching-learning processes, as well as the study of leadership and educational improvement. Dr. Moral is a member of the FORCE Research Group and the Network for Research on School Improvement and Leadership of Excellence (RILME). She is currently actively involved

in the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP). Dr. Moral is the author of different publications related to these issues, as well as coordinator of materials and projects aimed at teacher education and leadership for school improvement.

Michele Morrison is a Senior Lecturer in educational leadership at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. Informed by extensive practitioner experience, Michele's research and teaching focuses on the professional formation of educational leaders through dialogic praxis. Michele prioritises educative processes that privilege lived experience, a concern for the humanity of leadership, and the pursuit of social justice. This has led her to develop and teach postgraduate coaching and mentoring qualifications, to research tertiary pedagogies for leadership formation, and to examine notions of context in change leadership. Michele is currently editor of the *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice.*

Elizabeth T. Murakami is a Professor and Mike Moses Endowed Chair in Educational Leadership at the University of North Texas. She completed her Masters in curriculum and teaching and Doctorate degree in educational administration at Michigan State University. She worked in American international schools in Latin America for 14 years before becoming a professor. Dr. Murakami's research has been dedicated to the academic success of Latin@ populations from P-20 to advanced leadership professions in education. Her latest book is entitled: *Beyond Marginality: Understanding the Intersection of Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Difference in Educational Leadership Research.*

Stephanie Ogden is currently Director of Content, Instruction, and Assessment for AP Calculus and AP Statistics with the College Board. Dr. Ogden began her career teaching mathematics in various contexts, including higher education and secondary independent and public schools in Knoxville, Tennessee. She moved into school leadership in 2011 as a Dean of Research and Development at the newly formed L&N STEM Academy, where she was employed during data-gathering for this project. In October 2017, she joined the College Board. Stephanie's

research and practical interests include relational trust and accountability in schools and social justice leadership targeting equity and access to an empowering education for all students.

Jamila Razzaq has spent the last two and a half decades contributing to the field of education by working in diverse roles, systems and locations. She has worked as a Research Fellow at the School of Education, the University of Glasgow, has led the country education program in Aga Khan foundation Pakistan and is the chapter lead (Pakistan) for 'Girls' Education Champion Network'—a component of Obama Foundation's girls' education' initiative. Dr. Razzaq holds a Ph.D. from the University of Glasgow. She has also completed a fellowship with Brookings Institute Washington, DC on Echidna Global Scholars program. Currently, she is leading a vast programme on girls' education in Pakistan.

Carmel Roofe is a teacher educator and curriculum development specialist who holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum Development from the University of the West Indies, Mona. She is currently a lecturer in curriculum and instruction in the School of Education, UWI, Mona. Dr. Roofe's most recent book publication is titled *Intercultural Studies of Curriculum: Theory Policy and Practice*. She is a member of the Institute for Educational Administration and Leadership-Jamaica (IEAL-J), where she convenes the Curriculum and Innovation Research Interest Group (RIG). She is also a Research Fellow at the University of Huddersfield, UK.

Patricia Silva is a Lecturer in the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Social Work at the University of Lleida, Spain. She is a member of the consolidated research group EDO-UdL and an author of scientific papers related to school organisation and management and online teaching. Dr. Silva is a lecturer in subjects related to management and teacher training. She was honored with the *Jaume Vicens Vives 2012* award in recognition of Improvement in University Teacher Quality. She was the coordinator of the Masters in Management and Management of Educational Centers at University of Barcelona from 2008 to 2014.

Charles L. Slater is a Professor of Educational Leadership at California State University Long Beach, USA. He previously served as superintendent of schools in Texas and Massachusetts. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Slater teaches and conducts research in educational leadership and recently served as visiting professor at the University of Barcelona. He has collaborated with colleagues to publish studies about leadership in Costa Rica, Mexico, Korea, Spain, and the US.

Deirdre Torrance is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Edinburgh where, until recently, she was a Senior Lecturer and lead expert in the field of educational leadership. Dr. Torrance was also a Director of Teacher Education Partnerships; Director of the Masters in Educational Leadership and Management; and Co-Director of the Masters in Leadership and Learning. She has a substantial professional background across primary, secondary and special education, as well as local government, developing important perspectives in educational leadership and leadership development. Dr. Torrance continues to be engaged in a number of collaborative research and writing projects. Her primary research interests include leadership preparation, school leadership and management, teacher leadership, middle leadership, distributed leadership and social justice leadership.

Celina Torres-Arcadia holds a Ph.D. in Educational Innovation and a Masters degree in Information Technology Management. She has been a coordinator of the Research Network on Educational Management (RIGE in Spanish) and since 2009, the Mexico Coordinator of the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP). Dr. Torres-Arcadia is a member of both the Mexican Council for Educational Research (COMIE) and the National System of Researchers, Level I, conducting research on education management and leadership. She is currently a Research Professor of the Leadership and Management Department at Tecnologico de Monterrey, Mexico.

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The Influence of Global Contexts in the Enactment of Social Justice

Deirdre Torrance and Pamela S. Angelle

Introduction and Overview

Competition in the global marketplace has placed education under increasing pressure to deliver improved services to meet the needs of society. In response, over the past thirty years, the discourse surrounding educational administration, management and more recently leadership has significantly changed, responding to increased international concern with the school improvement agenda. Leadership is now believed to positively impact on school achievement and pupil attainment, with corresponding efforts to increase leadership capacity across a school's

D. Torrance (✉)
Moray House School of Education,
University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK
e-mail: deirdre.torrance@ed.ac.uk

P. S. Angelle
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies,
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, USA
e-mail: pangelle@utk.edu

staff and wider community. However, despite such attention placed on and belief in educational leadership it is under-developed, tending towards the prescriptive rather than empirically based (Dimmock 2012). Conceptualisations of educational leadership continue to evolve, both in theory and in practice. Leadership is often interpreted as involving a relationship of social influence, fluid in its practice across the school organisation, responsive to context and purpose, although whose influence and for what purpose is less often discussed (Torrance 2018).

In more recent years, the concept of social justice leadership has emerged within the literature and policy discourse to describe the work of school leaders seeking to enhance the educational experience of all learners (Torrance and Forde 2017a), in a bid to reduce inequalities in education systems (King and Travers 2017, p. 147). Despite the current international interest in social justice generally and social justice leadership more specifically, the concept of social justice is inherently problematic. Indeed, Gewirtz (1998) argues that the concept of social justice in studies of educational policy is under-theorised in research. Its usage reflects a 'broad range of philosophical and political traditions' (Barnett and Stevenson 2015, p. 520). As such, defining social justice is problematic since it is understood differently in different fields with definitions derived from a specific discipline (Robinson 2017) and understood differently in diverse societies (Taysum and Gunter 2008). Furthermore, conceptions of social justice need to be fluid and open to change, responsive to 'time, place and political context' (Hajisoteriou and Angelides 2014, p. 897). This volume, within the Palgrave MacMillan series *Intercultural Studies in Education*, takes as its focus social justice leadership in a variety of international settings. It explores social justice across difference contexts, cultures and school-based social groups. In so doing, it provides unique insights to enhance understandings of social justice leadership and to support ongoing discussion in this field.

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the volume as a whole, together with an outline of the volume's structure and a brief introduction to the focus of each chapter. It begins with an overview of social justice leadership, including an overview of the International

School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) from which this body of work emanates. The chapter then lays the foundations for the importance of context in the enactment of social justice. Indeed, context formed one of the key parameters set for the volume's chapters, which are identified for the reader in order to explain the guiding principles to which each chapter's authors adhered. Finally, a brief outline of each chapter is provided to aid the reader with navigating the volume.

Overview of the ISLDN Project

Through collaboration, the British Educational Leadership, Management, and Administration Society (BELMAS) and the University Council on Educational Administration (UCEA) formed the BELMAS-UCEA International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) (Angelle 2017a; Young 2017). The ISLDN grew out of discussions that first took place at the UCEA Conference of 2008, with a memorandum of understanding signed at the BELMAS conference of 2009. In 2010, BELMAS and UCEA launched the ISLDN comparative study, examining the preparation and development of school leaders. The Network has since developed to form two strands: (a) preparing and developing leaders who advocate for social justice and (b) preparing and developing leaders for high-need, low-performing schools.

As is discussed in more detail in the next section, the ISLDN research project has drawn from the work of Cribb and Gewirtz (2005) as a starting point for understanding social justice and also from the work of Lee (2010), particularly her micro-political toolkit which highlights the significance of organisational context. Members of Strand A of the ISLDN project have created a continually developing framework within which individual cases of school leadership can be situated, with factors identified to help illuminate the context within which school leaders work. That framework originally drew on previous work by Dimmock et al. (2005), locating schools in a local (micro) context within the national (macro) context. More recently, the ISLDN project has developed that framework further (Morrison 2017), to enable the

exploration of the school leader (micro) factors, school (meso) context factors and countrywide (macro) context factors.

The ISLDN research project seeks to better understand how conceptualisations of social justice are articulated by school leaders, and how such articulations inform the actions of school leaders. Moreover, it seeks to better understand what school leaders do when there exists a dislocation between their own sense of social justice and, for example, the notions of social justice articulated in policy discourses. The chapter authors of this volume are members of the ISLDN, appreciative of the opportunity to work collaboratively to enhance comparative understandings of social justice in different international contexts. Through such collaboration, the intention is to deepen our understanding of how school principals lead their schools in ways that reduce inequalities. The ISLDN project has been guided by two overarching issues: how school leaders 'make sense' and then 'do' social justice.

Overview of Social Justice Leadership

Robinson (2017) traces the development of the construct 'social justice' from the early 1900s in the United States and in Britain, expounded through the work of John Dewey in the 1930s, developed further in the 1970s by John Rawls. The term, 'social justice' is increasingly used within the international school leadership literature, across diverse contexts by those holding wide-ranging views (Blackmore 2009a; Bogotch 2008). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the term has become rather ambiguous, representing 'diverse, complex and dynamic meanings' (Davis et al. 2014, p. 7). While 'social justice' may well be problematic with the term being difficult to define, Shields and Mohan (2008, p. 291) provide a helpful frame for the exploration of social justice leadership across different international contexts:

> Our concept of social justice is one that identifies issues of power and inequity in schools and society and that challenges personal and systemic abuses of power as well as alienating and marginalizing beliefs, values, and practices.

As previously highlighted, the work of the ISLDN research project formatively drew from Cribb and Gewirtz (2005) as a basis for understanding social justice, as well as Lee's (2010) micro-political toolkit highlighting the significance of organisational context. Lee's framework underlines the issues arising from differences in goals, leading to compromise and accommodation within schools as complex organisations. Cribb and Gewirtz's perspective is helpful for an international research group in acknowledging that social justice can take multiple forms, recognising inconsistent and conflicting approaches, competing perspectives that can create problems and tensions. King and Travers (2017, p. 148) explain that the intention behind its use is often to capture a commitment, in some form, to tackling social injustice:

> Social justice is generally accepted as a set of moral values or beliefs centred around justice, respect, equity, and equal opportunities for all regardless of race, ethnicity, creed, (dis)ability, gender, class, economic status, and other marginalizing circumstances.

Headteachers/principals, regardless of how inclusive or exclusive their style of leadership practice, have a key role to play in the social justice leadership of schools (Angelle 2017b; Blackmore 2006; King and Travers 2017; Richardson and Sauers 2014). Working at the micro level, the headteacher plays a significant role in shaping the conditions for learning (Forde and Torrance 2017), exerting influence both across the school as an organisation, and at the individual classroom and teacher level (Torrance and Forde 2017b). Indeed, the 'desire to make a difference and contribute to the greater good is the genesis of the social justice leader' (Robinson 2017, p. 29). Subsequently, Bogotch and Shields (2014, p. 10) believe that 'educational leadership and social justice are, and must be, inextricably interconnected'. McNae (2017, p. 268) goes further to expound: 'How socially just leaders make sense of their leadership overall is an essential part of *being* a socially just leader'. However, research designed to explore that role is relatively recent (Ryan 2010).

Since the practice of social justice is both complex and challenging, Cribb and Gewirtz (2005) contend that it necessitates political action,

regardless of context. The ISLDN framework provides a means to track the power relationships between the macro, meso and micro levels that social justice leaders work within (Forde and Torrance 2017), recognising issues of power and relationships within wider socio-political contexts that are often overlooked (Bogotch and Reyes-Guerra 2014).

Laying the Foundations for the Importance of Context in the Enactment of Social Justice

Despite the considerable research focused on educational leadership, perspectives prevalent in the international literature are still largely Western-centric (Harber and Davies 2003; Leithwood 2003) and ethno-centric (Dimmock 2012) in nature, with a disproportionate influence emanating from England, Canada, and the United States (Young 2017). In response to globalisation and internationalisation (Dimmock 2012), research conducted over the past twenty years has become more internationally universal in nature (Walker 2014). More recently, with greater recognition given to leadership practice as culturally situated, there has been a rise in the number of studies that include a cross-cultural element, exploring both culturally specific aspects with comparative elements (Angelle et al. 2016; Miller 2017). However, we are still far from having a knowledge base from which to draw comparative understandings (Dimmock 2012; Walker 2014).

Similarly, understandings of social justice are still largely derived from Western nations with little attention given to the social [in]justice experiences and priorities of other nations (Robinson 2017). To date, context has attracted little attention in the study of social justice leadership. Indeed, school leadership more generally is often approached 'as a context-neutral endeavour … Context has been perceived, if at all, as an inert rather than powerful force, and of marginal rather than central significance' (Morrison 2017, p. 44). This is perhaps surprising, given that the contested nature of social justice and the variety of meanings ascribed to social justice are in part due to the deeply contextualised nature of the term and its practice (Bogotch 2015). Indeed,

in calling for greater conceptual clarification of social justice, Blackmore (2009a) recognises that its current use and associated terminology (such as equity, [in]equality, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and diversity) takes on different meanings dependent on national context. Further, Blackmore (2009b) highlights that research is needed which explores how context shapes leadership practice. Dimmock et al. (2005, p. 3) also highlight the need for 'a more sophisticated understanding of context'. Walker (2014) supports this stance, contending that societal culture and associated values have a significant influence on *how* school leaders think and act, also suggesting that such comparative research should extend to exploring how leaders influence context and shape culture.

This volume explores the importance of context for and on social justice leadership, recognising that constructions of social justice are 'highly dependent on the context in which it is used' (Gairín and Rodriguez-Gómez 2014, p. 820), with perspectives 'inextricably linked to social contexts within which models of justice make sense to the people involved' (Harris 2014, p. 98). Indeed, 'An understanding of what it means to be a social justice leader changes with context' (Potter 2017, p. 231). An appreciation of school context at the micro and meso levels, situated within the wider educational context at the exo and macro levels is therefore essential, to 'enable social justice leaders to utilize their agency for positive change' (King and Travers 2017, p. 161). As researchers, it is important to acknowledge that 'the lived experiences of school principals cannot be divorced from the social, cultural, political, and historical milieu in which they are situated and narrated' (Morrison 2017, p. 44).

Members of the ISLDN 'seek to explore the ideas, theories, and practices of social justice in a global context' (Robinson 2017, p. 23). As such, ISLDN colleagues have constructed a continually developing framework within which individual school leadership cases can be situated, identifying the contextual factors impacting on school leaders in diverse settings through engaging with them (see Morrison 2017). In so doing, the ISLDN utilises the potential of cross-cultural research to enhance understandings of social justice leadership (Angelle et al. 2015; Dimmock and Walker 2010). In so doing, the ISLDN supports

the view that further studies of social justice leadership practices located in diverse settings will help to inform school leaders who are 'committed to understanding and enacting social justice', since 'leadership for social justice in schools is a highly complex and contextualised endeavour' (Beycioglu and Ogden 2017, p. 124).

The Parameters Set for the Volume's Chapters

The parameters that were set for each chapter in the original call for manuscripts were very specific, in part due to this volume forming one of a Palgrave MacMillan proposed book series entitled *Intercultural Studies in Education,* with Professor Paul Miller as the series editor. The series takes as its focus the intersection of context and social justice enactment in schools. For this volume of the series, *Cultures of Social Justice Leadership—An Intercultural Context of Schools*, parameters were set to ensure that each chapter examined the enactment of social justice leadership as reflected by the school, community, or local/national context. Each chapter derives from original empirical research applying the same method of data collection/analysis, related to a minimum of three countries from at least two continents, including at least one developing country.

In setting out and adhering to such specific criteria, the editors of both the series and this volume, together with the authors of each chapter, have sought ways of practising the social justice principles of the ISLDN. This is exemplified through actively encouraging the involvement of colleagues from and empirical research conducted within developing countries. In so doing, we strive to give voice to those who can find themselves marginalised. We also seek to address the Western-centric nature of much of the educational leadership perspectives prevalent in the international literature (Harber and Davies 2003; Leithwood 2003) and thus, provide 'possibilities for more inclusive evaluation of issues to be undertaken' (Miller 2017, p. 5). The collaborative efforts presented throughout this volume are both cross-cultural in nature, comparing and contrasting cultural groups, and intercultural in nature, through equitable exchange, dignity and respect of all cultures

through identifying commonalities and differences between cultures (Miller 2017).

Such commitment is not without difficulty. Interpreting qualitative data for social justice leadership from a single site or specific country is challenging in itself. The challenge is multiplied when generating and analysing data from multiple sites and several countries (Morrison 2017). However, the authors maintain a commitment to developing and drawing from a cross-cultural comparative framework to provide coherence (Miller 2017), in search of both cultural specific themes and generic themes in the practice of social justice leadership. As a consequence, the chapters that comprise this volume provide rich insights into the work of social justice leaders in a variety of contexts throughout the world.

An Introduction to Each Chapter

Throughout the chapters comprising this volume, 15 countries are represented (some more than once, explored from different perspectives), providing culturally and contextually situated insights from 24 researchers. The volume is designed to be read either as a whole body of work, or, by focusing on individual chapters for a specific purpose. A brief overview of each chapter follows.

In Chapter 2, *Social Justice Leadership for Academic, Organisational and Community Sustainability in High Needs Schools: Evidence from New Zealand, Belize, and the USA*, Stephen Jacobson draws from studies conducted in three nations to identify key features of successful social justice leadership in high needs schools. The studies examined early childhood education centres in New Zealand, elementary schools in the United States and a secondary school in Belize. Across these contrasting educational contexts, a common set of core leadership practices was identified, with 'transformative social justice and communitarian orientation' at their core. This involved each leader in contextually nuanced engagement with their students, teachers, parents and wider community members as partners with a common purpose, to improve student academic performance and wider achievement, safeguarding the school

community's economic sustainability in the process. The author argues that despite the differences in country context, educational system and age of pupils, the school leaders exemplified a common set of values and child-centred practices, located within a commitment to address the needs of children, their families and wider community.

In Chapter 3, *Social Justice Leadership, Perceptions and Praxis: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Palestinian, Haitian and Turkish Principals,* Arar et al. present a narrative cross-cultural comparative case study. In so doing, the authors provide a unique comparison of social justice leadership in three diverse and distinct political, cultural and social contexts. Each school and each principal faces a significant challenge from limited educational resources, although the reasons behind this vary in each context. The authors explore the social justice perceptions and practices of three principals: the principal of a secondary school within the Arab education systems of Israel; the principal of a public primary school in Haiti, one of the poorest nations in the world; and the principal of a state secondary school in southeastern Turkey near the Syrian border, a region confronting issues relating to population migration. Despite the differences in context at both macro and micro levels, common social justice leadership themes are identified and discussed relating to vision and values, practical implementation, factors facilitating or obstructing school policy into practice, and the socialisation process of leaders for social justice. As such, the authors make a valuable contribution to the social justice literature that is widely 'Western centric', offering alternative perspectives to challenge prevailing assumptions.

In Chapter 4, *Systems of Education Governance and Cultures of Justice in Ireland, Scotland and Pakistan*, King et al. explore how conceptions of social justice and equality inform systems of governance as part of a global movement to improve the quality of education. Ireland, Scotland, and Pakistan provide case studies of three education systems to explore cultures of justice in education governance. This comparative study interrogates, through a framework of five questions, key policy texts related to the regulation and accountability of education in each of the three systems. In order to enable comparative analysis, issues of equality and social justice in each country are discussed, along with an exploration of how conceptions of equality and social justice are

contextualised within the education policy of each system. Structures of governance are then considered at macro, meso and micro levels to provide a backdrop for a discussion of the expectations, as well as the accountability placed on school leaders in each system. Three key issues are identified in the processes of educational governance for social justice across the three systems. The authors highlight the public policy intentions in the governance of education to support the professional practice of school leaders, to address issues of social justice in the education of the young people in their care. However, the authors argue that the preoccupation with international benchmarking tools and their associated narrow targets, constrain the efforts of social justice leaders to build strategies to address issues of inequality in schools.

In Chapter 5, *School Leadership, Curriculum Diversity, Social Justice and Critical Perspectives in Education*, Miller et al. identify challenges inherent with defining social justice before exploring four interrelated theoretical and practical approaches to understanding and doing social justice leadership. They then discuss the centrality of the curriculum both to the development of individual learners and for the development of a nation's society, as well as the implications for social justice leadership. The qualitative study, conducted with twelve school leaders in rural/remote primary schools in England, Jamaica and Spain explored how school leaders enact social justice leadership asking, 'How do school leaders use a curriculum to lead in ways that are socially just for the individual learner as well as for society?'. A narrative analysis approach was adopted and through this, a number of issues were identified and discussed, some of which relate to the practice of social justice leadership, whilst others relate to the complexities of researching and theorising around social justice leadership. The authors argue for a contextualised curriculum that attends to the diversity of each school, its students, families and community, through activist leadership, calling for quality research to enhance understandings of inherent issues and possible interventions.

In Chapter 6, *Leadership for Social Justice in Schools in Mexico, New Zealand, and Spain,* Slater et al. discuss the shift from transformational to transformative leadership, and from transformative to applied critical leadership, in order to situate their comparative study. They draw from

Shields' (2010, 2016) concept of transformative leadership to examine social justice leadership practice, situated within three distinct policy, school and classroom contexts. In this chapter, the authors utilise two research questions to explore the views of three school directors and three teachers in Mexico, New Zealand, and Spain. In so doing, they discuss the contextualised needs of the students and the efforts of the directors and teachers to meet those needs and national policy ambitions. Such efforts are situated in relation to insufficient resourcing to meet the complex educational, emotional, and social needs of growing immigrant and indigenous populations. The three country case studies help to explain issues surrounding educational leadership in diverse international contexts. In the discussion section, key issues are identified for a comparative discussion from three perspectives: policy, teacher, and school director. Banks' (2017) citizenship typology provides a means to interpret school actions and suggest future efforts in relation to global migration issues.

In Chapter 7, *Leadership for Social Justice: Intercultural Studies in Mexico, United States of America, and Spain,* Torres-Arcadia et al. provide an interesting comparison of social justice leadership in three very different contexts, Mexico, USA and Spain. Following a review of social justice and leadership for social justice, the authors critically reflect on those constructs situated within three contrasting nations and with a particular focus on high need schools. A pen portrait of key challenges to a socially just education in each nation is provided, its tabular format aiding comparative analysis. This background information contextualises comparative data provided for each of the high-need schools in which the three case studies were conducted to include interviews with school principals, teachers, parents, and students. The school leaders' actions and school improvement efforts are then analysed within each country and school context. Despite the differences in context, common themes are identified in the discussion section, with examples drawn from the three case studies to illuminate social justice leadership practices. In identifying key characteristics of social justice leadership, the authors hope to support local, national and international efforts towards more socially just education experiences and practices.

In Chapter 8, *Local Implementation of National Policy: Social Justice Perspectives from the USA, India, and Wales,* Jones et al. explore the interpretation of policy at the macro level through the meso and micro levels. The USA, India and Wales provide case studies of three contrasting education systems to explore the messy nature of social justice policy implementation in context. In this qualitative study, an analysis of key policy documents in each nation is provided, to identify nationally endorsed policy priorities and rhetoric. Data from interviews conducted with education leaders in six sites is drawn from, to illustrate how those leaders interpret and mediate policy expectations from the macro and meso levels, to better meet the needs of specific pupil populations at the micro level. The authors argue that despite public rhetoric, social justice policy intentions often dissipate before reaching sites of practice; that in reality, policy implementation becomes haphazard; and that policies designed to promote social justice can result in unintended unjust practices.

The concluding chapter pulls together the key themes emerging from the volume first, through a return to the discussion around the intersection of social justice and context in socially just leadership. A brief reflection follows of the chapters and the findings from the cases presented in the volume. Commonalities identified across the international contexts are then discussed. Recognition is given to the distinctive and overlapping nature of macro, meso and micro contexts in the enactment of social justice leadership. The opportunities and challenges of cross-country comparative case studies are discussed alongside the contribution that this volume of work makes, through enhancing understandings of the practice of social justice leaders in a myriad of contexts around the globe. In so doing, the volume offers better understandings of the motivations of those leaders and the contextual challenges they strive to overcome. The essential nature of social justice leadership, regardless of the international context in which it is practised, is the central concern of improving the life opportunities for pupils and the wider community. In order to realise such ambition, social justice leaders have a deep understanding of and appreciation for the context in which they work.

Conclusion

Within education, there have been some notable attempts to frame social justice in ways that can help to explain and understand the practices of those working in schools, especially school leaders. Expectations for the emphasis placed on social justice and how this agency is enacted in schools stems from the school leader. However, the school leader enacts social justice from within the micro/meso/macro context of the school. The research contained in this book seeks to enhance our understanding of school leaders' actions as they work to enact a socially just school culture, examining whether this work is enhanced or diminished by the context in which the school is placed. Culture is perceived as both product and process (Miller 2017); noun and verb. This volume contributes to the overall intentions of the Palgrave MacMillan series *Intercultural Studies in Education* (Miller 2017, p. 2) to:

> highlight the need for and relevance of intercultural and cross-cultural research in guiding our understanding of common issues in the practice of educational leadership in different educational contexts globally.

The unique contribution that this volume makes to the series is its focus on social justice leadership. The nature of this research stems from contextualised studies conducted in numerous countries across the globe, yet utilising the same research protocols. This has allowed the researchers to draw conclusions at an international level about social justice decision-making and the essential nature of context in the work of social justice leadership. Whilst it may be true that, 'social justice has diverse, complex and dynamic meanings' (Davis et al. 2014, p. 7) and represents 'an irreducibly complex concept' (Griffiths 2014, p. 234), the explorations of social justice in the various contexts discussed in each chapter of this volume have highlighted that despite the differences in contexts, the diverse 'critical externalities' and 'schooling internalities' at the micro level (English 2008), there are many similarities in the practice of social justice leadership. This reflects the view of Bogotch (2014, p. 62) that:

> Social justice as an educational practice is inclusive of all members of the world's population regardless of governmental structures, cultures, or ideologies, and it accounts for innumerable contingencies of life-influencing individual outcomes or unpredictable consequences of our actions.

This book is rich in stories of successes and challenges with the enactment of social justice contextualised. It thus holds significance for educational practitioners, scholars and policy makers at all levels. Through engaging with each unique chapter and with the volume as a whole, it is hoped that together, we begin to identify how cross-cultural and intercultural studies can further explore the influence of global contexts in the enactment of social justice, and how such efforts can be better supported.

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Social Justice Leadership for Academic, Organisational and Community Sustainability in High-Needs Schools: Evidence from New Zealand, Belize and the USA

Stephen Jacobson

Introduction and Overview

Since 2001 I have been engaged in a research agenda that has examined the practices of educational leaders who have successfully improved schools in high need, economically disadvantaged communities in different nations and educational contexts. The initial studies (Giles et al. 2005; Jacobson et al. 2005, 2007) examined the leadership practices of elementary principals in the United States (US), using the core practices for successful leadership identified by Leithwood and Riehl (2005) as its conceptual framework as well as the multi-perspective case study methodology and semi-structured interview protocol developed by the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP) (Jacobson and Day 2007). The US team was the only national team in the ISSPP to look exclusively at high-needs schools (HNS). This focus was due to the fact that while they are often the most in need of improvement,

S. Jacobson (✉)
University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: eoakiml@buffalo.edu

such schools are the most challenging in terms of school improvement initiatives in the US. (Details about the ISSPP can be found at: www. uv.uio.no/ils/english/research/projects/isspp/.)

High-needs schools in the US are typically located in communities with severe socio-economic disadvantage and therefore they must deal with the stress commonly associated with such problems as high percentages of families living in poverty, high rates of crime and substance abuse, non-native language speakers, historically/socially excluded or indigenous groups and/or students with learning differences. To compound matters, these schools often have high percentages of teachers teaching outside their formal content area and high levels of teacher/leader turnover (Jacobson et al. 2007). As a result, schools confronting these issues commonly report persistently low student performance, and their communities come to view them with mistrust and suspicion because parents feel that teachers and school leaders are less concerned with their children's success than maintaining their own paycheques (Jacobson et al. 2005). Therefore, while it is essential, building trust with parents and other members of the community can be especially difficult for leaders of HNS. These findings are drawn from the following studies: Jacobson et al. (2005, 2007, 2009), Jacobson and Szczesek (2013), and Minor-Ragan and Jacobson (2014).

The additional studies reported in this chapter maintain a focus on high need sites but differ in the level of education and national context examined. Specifically, my colleagues and I studied leadership in early childhood education (ECE) centres in New Zealand (NZ) (Jacobson and Notman 2018; Notman and Jacobson 2018) and a secondary school in Belize (Chisolm et al. 2018; Waight et al. 2018). These later studies used the International School Leadership Development Network's (ISLDN) modification of the ISSPP interview protocols for HNS, but maintained the same assumption as the earlier studies, i.e., leadership plays a significant role in developing, influencing and sustaining school improvement initiatives. (Details about the ISLDN can be found at: isldn.weebly.com/project-design.html.)

This claim about the centrality of leadership in driving school improvement initiatives is supported empirically by evidence indicating that the combined direct and indirect effects of leadership are second

only to teaching among in-school factors that have a positive influence on student success, particularly in schools with the greatest needs (Leithwood et al. 2004). HNS facing severe social and economic challenges, whether in developed or developing nations, also demand a transformative social justice approach to leadership, with their school's leader "actively engaging in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining, and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, and personal dimensions…" (Goldfarb and Grinberg 2002, p. 162). Marshall and Ward (2004) describe social justice as a means of "fixing" inequities, and in order to address such inequities, leaders in challenging settings must influence the members of their school community to create communitarian workplaces (Jacobson 2018) by partnering in collaborative and positive improvement (Leithwood 1994).

Leadership efforts to develop these partnerships must be undertaken in light of evolving educational policy concerns and, for at least the past two decades, three common issues have emerged in many developed and developing nations: (1) demands for greater public accountability, (2) tensions in determining the appropriate balance between centralisation/decentralisation governance, and (3) rapid changes in student and community demographic diversity (Leithwood et al. 2011). Even in light of these policy concerns, my colleagues and I found leaders who proved successful in motivating teachers, students, parents and other community members in the collective work needed to create positive in- and out-of-school environments that would increase the likelihood of improved student, school and community success. For example, in our study from the US, it was the press for public accountability that was driving the elementary school's improvement efforts, while in the ECE centres examined in NZ, changing student and family demographics were central concerns, and in Belize, it was the tension between centralisation/decentralisation of educational governance that led to the establishment of the island's first secondary school.

The chapter begins with a review of the conceptual framework and methodological approach common to all three studies. This is followed by a discussion of the findings from each of the cases including a brief overview of the national context and educational level studied. In all

cases, in order to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms are used for the schools studied, as well as for the name of the island off the coast of Belize. Rather than being presented chronologically, the cases are considered in ascending order by the educational level studied, i.e., ECE, elementary and then secondary. The chapter concludes by considering how these grade-specific approaches to social justice school leadership, school/family/community partnerships and communitarian workplaces might be layered one upon another for academic, organisational and community success and sustainability, regardless of national context.

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

The conceptual framework used for social justice leadership in these studies is based first upon a comprehensive review of empirical research conducted by Leithwood and Riehl (2005) that identified three core practices deemed necessary, but insufficient, for successful school leadership in any context: (1) setting direction—by developing a set of shared goals that encourage a sense of common purpose with high performance expectations; (2) developing people—to better enable the achievement of shared goals through intellectual stimulation, individual and collective support; and (3) redesigning the organisation—to facilitate the work of the school community and remove obstacles that might impede the achievement of shared goals. This same framework guided the work of both the ISSPP and the HNS subgroup of the ISLDN project, as well as the multi-perspective case study methodology and semi-structured interview protocol used by the ISSPP (Jacobson and Day 2007) and subsequently modified for HNS by the ISLDN. Case sites and site leaders were selected based upon evidence that the school had improved during the incumbent leader's tenure; had a reputation for providing quality programmes in a high need community; or, in the case of the school in Belize, had been the first secondary school to exist on the island.

In each case study, the leader was interviewed first and asked about their definition of success and how they felt they had contributed to the success of their school. This initial interview was followed by interviews

with teachers, staff, parents and other community members in order to triangulate the self-perceptions of the school's leader, i.e., to assess the accuracy of leader's contributions to student and school success. In addition, in each case, secondary data was obtained from government and school documents and ethnographic notes made during site visits.

At all three educational levels and national contexts, we found leaders who manifested the core practices for school success, with "setting direction" usually focused on cultivating a child-centred learning environment that refrained from deficit thinking based on stereotypes of ethnic and/or community disadvantage; "developing people" through the building of trusting relationships with teachers and the community to help support parents' needs and those of their children, and constantly "redesigning the organisation", most often through creative uses of time to enable constituent groups to meet and interact productively in order to help achieve their shared goals (Jacobson et al. 2007; Notman and Jacobson 2018; Chisolm et al. 2018). But as Leithwood and Riehl (2005) note, while the existence of these core practices is necessary, they are not in and of themselves sufficient for realising the success of school improvement goals. Therefore, in addition to identifying and describing the core practices exhibited by these leaders, the roles these leaders played were also considered from a social justice perspective (Rawls 1971). As leaders of schools serving students in high need communities, the key question considered was, what did these individuals do to disrupt inequities in the status quo and thus transform their programmes to create greater opportunities for their students and communities?

Leadership for social justice requires the ability to change a school's culture (Larson and Murtadha 2002), which is often a microcosm of larger societal injustices, both in developed and developing nations. Larson and Murtadha (2002) define social justice school leadership as a set of "theories and practices of leadership that are vital to creating greater freedom, opportunity, and justice for all citizens – citizens who, through public education, are better able to participate in and sustain a free, civil, multicultural, and democratic society" (p. 136). At its core, this definition of social justice leadership views quality education as the key to creating equitable personal and collective opportunity. Social justice leadership therefore requires a recognition of existing systemic

problems such as disparities in access to a quality education, inequities in the allocation of available resource, discriminatory practices in daily operations and institutional policies that marginalise segments of the population, most often based on race, gender, poverty/socio-economic status, disability and/or religion (Jost and Kay 2010; Larson and Murtadha 2002).

In many national contexts, schools used to be tightly engaged with their local communities, but increasingly they became more hierarchal, transactional organisations, modelled on efficiency approaches found in the business sector (Jacobson 2018). Cost-efficiency imperatives often changed the tightness of these relationships between schools and their communities and, over time, may have eroded public trust with community members feeling increasingly marginalised and distant from the larger, consolidated schools that were created (Jacobson 2018). The role of social justice leaders in HNS serving historically marginalised and economically disadvantaged groups does not vary greatly between the developed and developing world as in both contexts school leaders must confront discriminatory policies established by those with "power", most often men (Chisolm 2017). However, in developing nations social justice leaders must also grapple with the basic provision of *access* to schooling itself, because schools may be too remote (or non-existent) to benefit from governmental resources, as was the case of secondary education in Belize.

Early Childhood Education in New Zealand

ECE in NZ was selected for study for several reasons: (1) there is a growing body of empirical evidence from the US, particularly the Perry Preschool study, to suggest that "quality" ECE (not just any ECE) is a cost-efficient approach for improving the future school and career success of children (Schweinhart et al. 2005), especially for children living in poverty (Reardon 2011); (2) NZ has a highly decentralised educational context that allows leaders considerable decision-making autonomy (Notman 2011); and, most importantly for the purposes of this study (3) NZ has a long history of ECE provision (May 2007) that

includes both a national assessment of programme quality through the Education Review Office (ERO), and a unique curriculum, *Te Whariki*, intended to promote cultural pluralism among the country's Māori, immigrant Asian and European "Pakeha" populations (Smith and May 2006). At its foundation, this Māori-inspired approach to child development encourages ECE centres to become more communitarian-like organisations built on trusting school/family/community relationships. (Full details about this study can be found in Jacobson and Notman 2018, and in Notman and Jacobson 2018.)

This push to become more communitarian is best explained by understanding fundamental differences in how individuals interact in communities as opposed to traditional organisations (Sergiovanni 1994). Whereas traditional educational organisations may inadvertently (or intentionally) reify existing inequities through formal rules and transactions that dispense rewards and punishments that appeal to individual self-interest, communities emphasise informal relationships that emerge from "the binding of people to common goals, shared values, and shared conceptions of being and doing" (Sergiovanni 1994, p. 219). Communities develop a sense of collective self-interest by appealing to its members' belief that good deeds will be reciprocated, even though such behaviour is not required (Jacobson 2018). This sense of the common good, as opposed to just individual goods, helps to reduce inequities and it is what social justice leaders attempt to leverage in order to create partnerships that increase the probability of changing the educational culture of a child's home and thus increase student success (Leithwood and Patrician 2017), especially for children from economically disadvantaged families (Epstein 2011).

In order to have confidence that the ECE centres selected for study offered "quality" programmes, we identified three programmes rated by the ERO as "well-placed" in their ability to promote and sustain positive learning outcomes for the children, with "well-placed" being the third best out of four possible ratings an ECE in NZ can receive. We found the leaders at these sites exhibited the core practices of success in much the same ways as leaders in diverse, high-needs primary and secondary schools in the US (Garza et al. 2014; Giles et al. 2005; Jacobson et al. 2005, 2007). At all three ECE centres, we found that

the leader's child-centred direction setting aligned with the precepts of *Te Whariki*, and trusting relationships emerged as teachers and leaders went out of their way to meet the material and emotional needs of parents as well as their children (Notman and Jacobson 2018). For these ECE leaders, developing their teachers was important, but no more so than developing the child's primary teachers—their parents. The emergence of positive, nurturing parent/school relationships revealed the extent to which these leaders were enhancing their parents' parenting abilities, particularly for families dealing with social disruptions such as job loss or relocation, or more catastrophic upheavals like political unrest, war and natural disasters such as the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch. For an increasing number of young parents, events such as these have meant separation from their extended families and possible support with rearing their children. As a result, we found that many such parents now have to work and parent, but without the familial support they might otherwise have anticipated. Especially for first-time parents, it is their child's teachers who are teaching them how to deal with challenging childhood behaviours such as anxiety, tantrums and/or physical aggression. Since parents' newly-learned skills can complement the faculty's in-school efforts, the impact these efforts have on after-school hour parenting may "make or break" a child's future success. In fact, such interactions may be twice as predictive of student success as family socio-economic status (Bonci et al. 2011), and programmes that encourage family engagement can have effects as much as ten times greater than other relevant factors (Leithwood and Patrician 2017).

We did not track the youngsters from these centres longitudinally as was done in the Perry Preschool study in the US (Schweinhart et al. 2005), therefore we cannot confirm whether these improved parenting skills made a measurable difference in their child's future educational and career success. However, the study does provide insights into what social justice leadership looks like in high-need ECE settings, and how leaders can develop what Epstein (2011) calls a "family-like school" that works to "relax and de-standard their rules, vary the students' roles, and alter the reward system to be more responsive to the student and to be more like a family" (p. 36).

These findings also confirm recommendations by Leithwood et al. (2017) that, in order to develop productive family/school partnerships, leaders must create a welcoming environment in which teachers view parents as partners, providing them with strategies and resources to support their children's learning, as well as involving them in decisions affecting their children. Parents at the centres studied were confronting many of the socio-economic challenges common to high need communities, such as supporting a single parent headed household, having limited formal education, living below the poverty line, having unstable housing accommodations and limited time for their children (Leithwood and Patrician 2017). Furthermore, many of the parents we interviewed had been displaced and cut off from their traditional familial support networks. It was striking that almost all of the parents interviewed at these centres reported teachers and leaders to be both nurturing and engaging, which enabled them to feel comfortable entrusting their children in the centre's care. More importantly, parents began to trust and model the parenting skills of these experienced educational professionals (Jacobson and Notman 2018), who became surrogates for the support they would have otherwise received from extended family members such as grandparents. Parents began to emulate at home what teachers and leaders had done in school as they dealt with challenging behaviours exhibited by their youngsters. Since many of these parents were not well-educated, nor familiar with the range of services available to them, they also very much appreciated the support they received from the leaders in identifying the additional professional services their children needed. This overlap between school and family deliberately developed by the leaders helped young, displaced parents build confidence in their own parenting abilities. For these parents, the ECE centre had become more communitarian, family-like schools, and they were clear in their belief that the practices of the ECE leader and teachers had made them better parents.

With this type of transformative, social justice ECE leadership laying the groundwork for partnerships between parents and the school in service to their youngsters at the earliest stage of their formal educational experience, we next examine leadership at the next level, an elementary school in the US, where a strong partnership emerged between the school, parents and the community.

Elementary Education in the US

The public education system in the US, like that of NZ, is decentralised, although American principals typically do not have as much discretion in daily practice as their counterparts in NZ. School decentralisation in the US results from the fact that education is not one of the duties expressly granted by the Constitution to the federal government. Therefore, each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia maintains primary authority for education within its jurisdiction, with fiscal support most often determined by local property wealth. Funding in this fashion can lead to resource disparities that mirror disparities in community wealth, even in neighbouring districts. Moreover, even within the same district, leaders in schools with the greatest needs oftentimes struggle to get sufficient resources to address pressures of accountability based on student performance on standardised tests. In New York State, where this study was conducted, English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics scores are used as performance benchmarks. Schools that record persistently low scores on these tests can be sanctioned, and in the most extreme instances closed. Therefore, resource disparities can have deleterious effects on the educational opportunities of children in economically disadvantaged communities as leaders are asked to do more with less.

For this study, we purposively sampled schools in western New York deemed "high need" by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) based on the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, a traditional proxy for economic disadvantage in the US. In addition, we selected only those schools recognised by NYSED as being among the state's "most improved" during the principal's time in post. Ultimately, we studied and reported on three elementary schools (Jacobson et al. 2007), but for this chapter I focus on only one, Fraser Academy, because we were able to return to study the school five years after our original report to track performance sustainability and community impact (Jacobson et al. 2009; Jacobson and Szczesek 2013; Minor-Ragan and Jacobson 2014).

Over her 17 year tenure at Fraser Academy, which had over 90% of its children receiving free or reduced lunch, the principal helped

transform the school from being one of the worst performing schools in NY's second largest urban district to one of its best, earning recognition from NYSED for its improvement. During that time, the principal reported that she had to constantly recalibrate her responses to the contextual conditions and constraints the school confronted and then adapt her core practices to create the conditions necessary to enable continuous and sustained school improvement. For example, oftentimes poor scheduling did not allow for common planning time, so she redesigned the school's master schedule to allow for more teacher interaction and collaboration. In other cases it was poor instruction from teachers who needed help, so appropriate high-quality professional development was made available for them to update and upgrade their skills. In fact, when the district was going to lay-off or replace some of her best young teachers due to retrenchments caused by system-wide funding shortfalls, the school redesigned its governance structure by becoming a conversion charter school, thus giving her more autonomy over the hiring and firing of faculty (Jacobson et al. 2009).

During the years between our initial examination of the school and the work conducted five years later, it was apparent that the principal had maintained her clear sense of purpose and direction, making sure the school remained a safe and nurturing learning environment. She continued holding everyone—students, teachers and parents alike—to high expectations in the service of improved student achievement. Her social justice advocacy prevented a return to the deficit mindset that was pervasive before she arrived, wherein teachers and sometimes even some parents questioned the academic potential of the predominately poor, working-class African American children the school served. She simply would not tolerate that type of deficit perspective and with time, the students' improved test scores bore witness to her confidence and efforts (Minor-Ragan and Jacobson 2014). Moreover, she coordinated significant physical improvements to the school and its grounds including the annexation and renovation of an abandoned branch of the county library, the addition of an early childcare facility and community health centre, the renovation of the park adjacent to the school with a basketball court and a play space for students during school hours and neighbourhood youth after hours. Over the course of her tenure, the school

was transformed, becoming the centrepiece of the neighbourhood, with its students being the proud, positive faces of the community.

Beside better academic opportunities for students, improvements at the school had other positive effects on the community, most notably renewed interest in the neighbourhood's real estate property. The school drew new families to the community, supporting Tiebout's migration hypothesis of citizens "voting with their feet" by moving to areas offering public services more closely aligned with their values and tastes, in this case, a quality education for their children (Tiebout 1956). Financial as well as academic benefits accrued to families moving into the Fraser neighbourhood as homes in the community appreciating at a faster rate than comparable properties in areas nearby but without access to the school. These real estate investments enabled families to build home equity more rapidly than what market conditions in the area would otherwise have indicated and this increased home equity became a resource to be drawn on in the future, perhaps in financing their children's higher education (Jacobson and Szczesek 2013). In other words, social justice leadership was the linchpin to the school's transformation from being a failing school to a far more successful one. Consequently, Fraser served as the larger community's engine of renewal. And while the key partnership underlying the success of the New Zealand ECE sites was between the school and the family, probably because the children were so young and because there were so many displaced families, in this US case the most notable partnership was between the school and the larger community. Over time, improvements in student performance were obvious and parents and community members no longer viewed the school with mistrust and suspicion, because they felt that they had a leader and teachers who cared about their children and their community. Trust had been rebuilt in this school/community partnership. How deeply this was felt, and how much it influenced commitment was best expressed by parents and community members at Fraser, who told us they would do anything for the principal because, they "didn't want to disappoint her". Her actions had shown them the depth of her commitment to their children and in return they committed themselves to helping her in her efforts.

In the next case study, we will examine an even further expansion of the possibilities of a school/family/community partnership, as the social justice leaders of a newly created secondary school attempted to improve both the educational opportunities of the island's youngsters and the long term viability of the community's economy.

Secondary Education in Belize

Providing children with a quality education can be a daunting task in developing nations such as Belize, where access to secondary education is not compulsory and further constrained by limited human and fiscal resources. Entry to secondary schooling in Belize is based on passing a comprehensive exam, but even for those who pass the test, schooling at the secondary level is often beyond their family's means due to tuition charges, or simply due to a lack of secondary schools in certain parts of the country. Consequently, less than half the children who complete primary school in Belize actually continue their education. When the school studied, Social Justice Academy (SJA), was founded in 2008 it was the first, and remains the only, secondary school on the small island of Blue Cove Caye (Chisolm et al. 2018). In order to get SJA established, the two women leaders, one from the US and the other from Canada, had to engage parent and community support, while negotiating funding with the Ministry of Education for teacher salaries, instructional materials, classrooms and even clean water and toilets. Since neither of these women was a native Belizean, they had to learn how to navigate local educational and cultural traditions as "outsiders", which oftentimes meant their motives were viewed with suspicion. Nevertheless, they persevered in the furtherance of their social justice imperative, which was to provide all students on the island the opportunity to access a secondary education. They hoped to make SJA accessible to any child wishing to continue his or her education, regardless of whether they had passed the national exam or could afford tuition. They were especially concerned about those children who spent their days on the streets instead of attending school. They recognised that creating a dichotomy between social justice and an emphasis on academics would

be counterproductive because narrow conceptions of student achievement often privilege certain social and cultural groups while marginalising others (Johnson et al. 2011). Too often, definitions of intellectual development become tied exclusively to standardised test scores that fail to incorporate cultural knowledge (Furman and Shields 2005). Instead, both school leaders focused on the island's history and background as a way to promote more holistic student outcomes, not just achievement on tests. But finding an appropriate balance between honouring home cultures and emphasising student learning does not lend itself easily to normative models or quick fixes (Chisolm et al. 2018).

The school's inception originated with just 10 students receiving informal instruction on a front porch. The two founding school leaders then officially opened the doors to SJA in 2008 with 35 students. Since then, the school's enrolment has doubled to 70 with equal numbers of boys and girls. SJA has three school administrators, eight full-time and three part-time teachers and approximately 15–20 volunteer instructors. The school founders are also responsible for classroom instruction and serve as quasi-social workers, making home visits to students with high rates of absence and/or families who are struggling with alcoholism and/or drug abuse, which are not uncommon on the island. There are currently 19 courses offered including site-based learning opportunities that focus on supporting the community's emerging eco-tourism industry. This is another part of the leaders' mission, to have the school purposely sustain the community's economic viability through an informal science and environmental curricula that provide "windows of opportunities" for students and future career opportunities both on and off the island. The goal of the curriculum is to ensure that students understand the ecological value of their community, in order to help inform a sustainable approach to eco-tourism that they can participate in. Classes involve both formal science content and applied, informal learning with students engaging in "site-based" physical education (PE) and internships in kayaking, fly-fishing, scuba diving, tour-guiding and/or biking. As part of the school's entrepreneurial focus, these PE internships connect to recreational activities on the island and serve as pathways for students to some of the community's highest paying jobs. Financial compensation for these internship services goes back to the students to

help offset costs associated with their schooling and in the hope that someday these students will create their own small businesses and thus make contributions to the local economy, as well as to the school's continued funding.

As in the US, school success is most often measured by standardised student achievement tests. In Belize, student achievement on the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) Examination is a key benchmark (Cayetano 2011). However, at SJA, the leaders view student success as encompassing more than just academic achievement, as they try to provide formerly marginalised groups of youngsters with access to a broad secondary education and hopefully the opportunity for more productive lives. To do so, the school leaders were continually self-reflective in terms of striking a balance between honouring their students' culture while simultaneously emphasising the importance of academic success in the mainstream culture. Student achievement became just one of several key measures of success that include self-esteem, social skills and civic engagement. The school's leaders essentially redefined the "metrics" of school success by placing as much, if not more, emphasis on the school's informal curriculum as they did on its more traditional coursework. By doing so, they believed they could equip students with skills that would contribute to their students', as well as the island's, long term economic success. This was understood as being particularly important in terms of the educational context of the island, because many of SJA's students are the first in their family to receive a secondary education. As a result, these families often lack the educational capital to help their youngsters achieve academically. In fact, we learned that many of the students who do eventually go on to a tertiary education often do not persist due to this lack of academic support, in addition to financial issues. Students at SJA were now perceived to have access to an alternative curriculum and career experiences that many would never have been afforded in the past. As such, over the long term, these students may actually have greater earning potential than if they had simply completed high school, since "the high payoffs associated with vocational education (relative to secondary) is consistent with findings that the labour market in Belize needs skilled labour in the areas in which the country is doing well, such as tourism" (Naslund-Hadley

et al. 2013, p. 17). It is through these concerted social justice efforts that SJA's leaders hope to use education and work readiness skills to break cycles of poverty that have long plagued generations of families on the island.

Implications of the Study Findings

While this study was conducted in three different national contexts and at three different educational levels, there are some common thematic implications from the findings that have value for understanding the roles and objectives of social justice leaders everywhere, especially in HNS. Specifically, in each of the case studies, the school leader's practices modelled their ideals and commitment to the social justice imperative of trying to eradicate institutional inequities in their schools and communities. They purposefully worked to create more communitarian-like organisations built on trusting school/family/community relationships that could produce positive outcomes both in the short- and long-terms. Moreover, the social justice leaders we observed persisted at the very serious tasks they had undertaken, with the exemplar being the elementary principal who remained at her position as principal for 17 years. Each of these leaders made themselves readily available to hear the concerns of students, teachers, parents and community members and did whatever they could to address their needs. In return, they expected everyone (students, teachers, parents, community members and especially themselves) to perform at high levels, even though they confronted what oftentimes seemed like overwhelming obstacles.

At each of the study sites, leaders set a direction that was clear and actively helped to develop all those willing to work in partnership in achieving their shared goals. They understood that people needed to be nurtured and developed to have both the capacity to produce at high levels and the willingness to do so. The leaders we studied were particularly adept at building a sense of caring into their practice, which led to relational trust and reciprocal caring relationships with and between

their students, teachers, parents and the larger community. Once these partnerships began to emerge, the leaders then set about redesigning their workplaces by removing identified obstacles to improvement. Often this simply meant exerting a positive influence on people's willingness to follow through on collective action, even in the face of challenging conditions. In every case, these leaders first made sure their schools became safe, nurturing environments for both children and adults alike, which enabled the school/parent/community partnerships to flourish. Although different in their approaches, these leaders managed to focus their objectives on the needs most pertinent to their children and their families. For example, at the ECE level in NZ this involved responding to the pressures experienced by families dealing with economic disruptions and displacement.

At the elementary level in the US, this involved a highly experienced, social justice leader who, over the course of her 17 year tenure, skilfully leveraged the external pressure of public accountability to galvanise her community to help avoid potential sanctions if the school's persistently low performance did not improve. She knew full well that if her students did not become more proficient in literacy and numeracy, their chances of achieving more productive life outcomes would never improve. The resulting school/community partnership helped enable increased student academic achievement. It also had other unexpected, but very positive outcomes, as with increased property values and additional community amenities such as a library, early childcare facility, community health centre and a renovated schoolyard, all of which correspondingly raised the community's self-image.

Finally, at the secondary level in Belize, the leaders' social justice mission was to provide access to an education beyond the primary level to as many of the island's youngsters as possible, in hopes of improving not only the future opportunities for those children, but potentially improving the economic well-being of the entire island community in a sustainable way over the long term.

Regardless of grade level, all the schools studied were primarily "child-centred", but for their social justice leaders, adult learning mattered as well. They were committed to advocating for the worth of

everyone who was part of their school community. In each case, attending to the needs of parents, as well as children, aided in the process of building communitarian partnerships. Since resources were almost always in short supply, these leaders had to be adept at using most effectively whatever resources were available and, as the cases show, it was their human resources—faculty, parents and community—that leaders turned to and nurtured. The relational trust needed to create productive change developed between leaders and teachers and between schools and their students' parents and communities (Gurr et al. 2011). These leaders, each in her own way, acted on their core values to address issues of social injustice and the inequities they observed in the communities they served. They understood the role schools can play in marginalising groups of students and families, therefore, in their daily practice as advocates for equity, they worked to disrupt such structures by modelling acceptance of all students and families in the community (Jacobson and Cypres 2012). By fostering trust, collaboration and collective action, these leaders re-cultured their schools and turned them into communitarian institutions (Jacobson 2018). At the ECE level, the fundamental relationships were first and foremost between teachers and parents, at the elementary level it expanded to teachers, parents and the neighbourhood community, and at the unique secondary school we studied, between the school and the larger economic community where the school was located. Driven by social justice leadership, this return to more communitarian models of schooling proved to be a productive response by the HNS studied to address the pressing challenges they confronted.

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3

Social Justice Leadership, Perceptions and Praxis: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Palestinian, Haitian and Turkish Principals

Khalid Arar, Stephanie Ogden and Kadir Beycioglu

Introduction

Exploring understandings of social justice (SJ) and describing how individuals act to promote social justice have permeated social-educational discourse (Arar et al. 2017; Arar and Oplatka 2016; Beycioglu and Kondakçı 2017; Brooks et al. 2015; Wang 2016). In the field of education, much has been written about the definition and practice of SJ (Arar et al. 2017; Berkovich 2014; Bogotch and Sheilds 2014). However, both the meaning of SJ in education and its application in leadership

K. Arar (✉)
Al-Qasemi Academic College of Education, Baqa Elgarbiya, Israel
e-mail: khalidarr@qsm.ac.il

S. Ogden
The College Board, New York, USA
e-mail: stephanie.ogden@knoxschools.org

K. Beycioglu
Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir, Turkey

practice require deeper understanding, especially when discussing the relevance of these approaches in the school's cultural-social context (Oplatka and Arar 2016). The concept of SJ is still open to various interpretations and often politically loaded (Brooks et al. 2015). Too often, aspirations to improve SJ in schools and to rectify discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation remain in the realm of rhetoric and are not expressed in school policies and praxis (Arar 2018; Wang 2016).

To contribute to understandings of SJ leadership in education, the International School Leadership Development Network's (ISLDN) SJ strand has conducted numerous studies comparing SJ practices of leaders from different nations (Arar et al. 2017; Beycioglu 2013; Beycioglu and Ogden 2017; Oplatka and Arar 2016). Building on the work of the ISLDN, this chapter aims to examine the meanings and practices of SJ leadership among school principals in three distinctive contexts: the education system of the Arab minority in Israel, a system plagued by scant resources and poor achievements, compared to the Jewish education system; a public primary school in Haiti, one of the poorest nations in the world; and a state school in southeastern Turkey near the Syrian border, a region confronting issues relating to population migration.

This chapter attempts to answer two questions:

1. What significance do each of these principals attach to the concept of Social Justice?
2. How does each principal apply this perception of Social Justice to the school context?

The chapter will present a comparative macro picture of Arab Israel, Haiti and Turkey and their education systems. Within this macro framework, we will then present the principals' narratives to investigate how each applies perceptions of SJ leadership to the school's organisational routines and pedagogic practices. This chapter makes a unique contribution to understanding how perceptions of SJ are formed in non-Western societies, and the application of these views in three diverse and distinct political, cultural and social contexts. The findings of this comparative study indicate that leadership for SJ is a highly complex and contextualised endeavour. Additional studies of social justice

leadership practices in diverse settings would inform school leaders committed to understanding and enacting social justice.

Macro Contexts and Systems of Education

Palestinian Society in Israel

The Arab population in Israel numbers 1.7146 million, 20.2% of the total population, and includes Muslims (1.4203 million), Christians (160.9 thousand) and Druze (133.4 thousand) (Central Bureau of Statistics 2016). The Arab population mostly resides in separate communities, in rural regions that are afflicted by the economic shortage, though some Arabs live in a few mixed Jewish-Arab cities. The incomes of 53% of the Arab population are below the poverty line and their standard of living is 60% of that of the Jewish population. Arab society is a heterogeneous society containing a variety of cultures, religions, ideologies and living in different geographic areas. In addition, the Arab population is influenced by the norms and values of neighbouring countries, rather than those of the Jewish population (Arar et al. 2017).

Although there is no autonomous educational administration organisation for Arab schools, Jewish and Arab education systems are separate, and receive unequal resources (Balas 2015). The literature has dealt extensively with the discrimination of Arab education by the Israeli education system. This includes allocation of fewer teaching hours for Arab schools and poor infrastructures. The Taub Institute Statistical Yearbook (2017) stated that in 2016, the percentage of students eligible for matriculation in the Hebrew education system was 73.6% vs. 50.7% in the Arab education system. Therefore, there have been consistent calls for the Ministry of Education to adopt policy that ensures essential equality in relation to low starting points for Arab schools, as is done for other populations in the country (Arar 2015). In general, Arab students demonstrate lower levels of achievement, especially in university entrance exams, which restricts their access to higher education and affects their choice of prestigious fields of study (Arar and Oplaka 2016). Inequality in education between Jews and Arabs extends to computer/

internet access and digital literacy. Moreover, in addition to the unequal budgets for Arab schooling, over the years the Education Ministry has strictly controlled the content of learning programmes in Arab schools, hindering the teaching of Arab cultural heritage, avoiding mention of Arab culture and identity in textbooks (Arar and Oplatka 2016).

This description of enduring inequalities between Jewish and Arab education in Israel identifies the need to clarify the perceptions and actions of Arab education leaders regarding the advancement of SJ. Leaders of Arab schools can play an important role in introducing social change (Arar 2015, 2018). Very few studies have traced such leaders' attempts to introduce the principles of SJ in Israeli schools in general, or explored the way in which ethnicity and cultural values influence the implementation of SJ principles.

The school of interest is situated in a residential area of a multi-religion Arab town. It serves students from low socio-economic strata, mostly from Muslim families. The school competes with two neighbouring schools with selective intake of students, mostly from middle to high socio-economic strata, whose parents contribute to education expenses. The school serves 875 students in grades 7 through 12. Each grade includes 8 classes and the school is divided into junior and senior high schools. Senior high school streams include technology, business management, geography, communications and also agricultural courses. The school provides rich informal activities inside and outside the school curriculum. Students participate in university supervised projects with the Weizman Sciences Institute and the University of Tel Aviv. Character building activities after school are provided by the school and attendance at one course is obligatory for all students. The interview with the principal focused on grades 9–12.

Haiti

Haiti is a Caribbean nation blessed with tropical weather, spectacular mountain and sea views, natural resources, but is nonetheless one of the poorest nations in the western hemisphere. According to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA February 22, 2018),

Haiti's population of about 10.5 million people is 95% black and 5% mulatto or white. The historical context behind this seemingly homogeneous data, however, reveals rich cultural diversity. In the years after Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492, the indigenous Taino population was decimated both by epidemics and by forced labour in Spanish plantations and mines. Elements of the language of the Taino people survive, however, in the Haitian Creole language. When the French took control in 1625, they brought vast numbers of African slaves. Both the French and African languages contributed to the ongoing evolution of Haitian Creole. Reflecting their cultural diversity, the population is 54.7% Roman Catholic, 28.5% Protestant and 2.1% Voodoo, with the intermingling of these faiths evident in local practice. Both the Spanish and the French left a legacy of mixed race children, many of whom were freed, educated and given responsible positions in society. However, to this day, the 5% of the population that is mulatto or white is disproportionately over represented in governmental and other leadership roles.

Haiti is among the poorest nations of the world. According to the United Nations Statistics Division (July 2016), in 2014, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was $813.40, or about $2.22 per day. In 2014, the level of employment was only 61.3% for women and 71.2% for men. In 2014, agriculture made up about 17.6% of the economy, industry about 37.7% and services and other activities about 44.8%. About 66.4% of Haiti's land is agricultural. Dominated by sugar plantations in the French colonial era, the land was subdivided by the generations after independence in 1804. Most agriculture in present-day Haiti still comprises small parcel subsistence farming. According to the CIA (February 22, 2018), 15% of rural Haitians, and 38% of the overall population have electricity, while about 47.6% of the rural population and 64.9% of the overall population have access to a source of improved drinking water. Only 27.6% of the population has access to improved sanitation facilities. Similar conditions exist in many schools. Although essentially no fixed line telephones are available to the population, there are about 62 mobile telephone subscriptions per 100 Haitians. The nation relies upon international aid for governmental operations and for the survival of its people, with international aid comprising nearly a quarter of the GDP, double the money coming in from exports and foreign investments.

Although the people of Haiti are very poor, Haiti's constitution guarantees free public education for all. However, overall, some 61% of the financial burden for educating Haiti's children falls on parents, with just under a third of costs borne by outside religious institutions and non-governmental agencies (NGO's) or by local communities, and only 7% of funding coming from the national budget (Metz 2001). Only about 10% of students attend publicly funded schools, most of these in urban areas. The family's obligation to provide uniforms, school supplies and subscription expenses contributes to regionally low enrolment rates affecting 88% of primary age children and 20% of secondary age children (UNDP June 25, 2014). There is no significant difference in schooling rates for boys and girls (United Nations Statistics Division July, 2016). Some 21% of Haiti's children aged 5–14 contribute to the nation's workforce (CIA February 22, 2018).

Only about half of public school teachers have basic educational qualifications, and only about 20% have received any pre-service training. In the vast majority of schools operated by NGOs, churches and communities, students are required to pass national exams to progress, but there is little to no oversight of teacher qualifications. As a result of a shortage of qualified teachers, most of Haiti's students receive instruction from under-prepared teachers (U.S. Agency for International Development 2016). Although the majority of the population speaks Haitian Creole, school textbooks have historically been in French, the language of the elite. It was not until the early 1980s that the government approved instruction in Creole (Metz 2001). The challenging economic situation, disruptions caused by natural disasters, the persistent social divide between the largely mulatto, French-speaking ruling class and the primarily black, Creole-speaking underclass and the lack of effective infrastructure for teacher preparation contribute to relatively low literacy rates at age 15 of only about 61% of the population (CIA February 22, 2018).

Turkey

Turkey is located in Western Asia and in Southeastern Europe and has hosted many diverse civilisations, cultures and ethnic groups, including

Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Jews and Kurds. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following the First World War, the modern Republic of Turkey was established in 1923. Turkey is a democratic, secular, constitutional republic with a diverse population of 80 million people, 70-80% of whom are ethnic Turks. Other ethnic groups include legally recognised Armenian, Greek and Jewish minorities, along with Kurds, Albanians and Bosnians.

According to the United Nations Statistics Division (2014), the GDP of Turkey is the 18th largest in the world and is steadily growing. In 2013, 2.3% of household incomes fell below the nation's poverty line of $4.3 per day. Extreme poverty of below one dollar per day was essentially eliminated in 2006 and food poverty rates are relatively low (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] 2015). Although no longer designated an underdeveloped country, Turkey still faces significant challenges. Inequalities based on wealth, ethnicity and language create ongoing issues in society and in schools.

As framed in the Constitution, the Turkish Republic is a socially just one. The Basic Law of National Education underlines the principles of 'democracy', 'generality and equality' and 'equal opportunity' (Tomul 2009). The Turkish Education System has relatively democratic, modern and secular characteristics. The aims of the system are to increase the prosperity and welfare of Turkish citizens and society, to support and accelerate economic, social and cultural development in accordance with national unity and integrity and to make the Turkish nation constructive and creative. Public spending on education is 2.9% of GDP (2005–2012).

The educational system of Turkey is centralised. It has a hierarchical organisational structure with the minister at the apex supported by several undersecretaries. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has provincial organisations in 81 cities and 850 districts, with a directorate of national education in each province and district. Those groups act as the representatives of MoNE and do not have particular roles in education policies on equalities. The national education directorates in districts are responsible to the provincial national education directorates. Provincial and district education directorates consist of branches, bureaus, permanent boards and commissions according to

the characteristics of the service (Beycioglu et al. 2014). Principals manage schools in collaboration with school-level commissions, teams and councils to ensure efficient use of resources and to comply with education laws, regulations and policies (Beycioglu et al. 2014). As Grossman et al. (2007) stated, 'Turkey is seeking to improve its schools to better respond to higher social and economic expectations' (p. 140).

Methodology

This cross-cultural comparative research study utilised narrative analysis to develop 'a more robust conceptual, methodological and analytical approach to comparative and international educational management' (Dimmock and Walker 2010, p. 144). Narrative case study research (Marshall and Rossman 2012) was employed to study the perceptions of SJ of three school principals and how this shaped their practice. The principals were chosen based on recommendations from teachers/supervisors indicating that they were committed to issues of SJ.

The research tool consisted of two semi-structured in-depth interviews that offered a unique opportunity to examine the principals' perceptions towards SJ and how they guide their daily education practices. The interviews, held at the interviewee's chosen location and time, lasted from 90 to 120 minutes. The objective of the study was explained, and anonymity was assured. Participation was consensual; the principals were able to terminate the interview at will. Initially, the principals were asked to tell their professional life stories without prompting from the researcher. They were then asked more specific questions aimed at surfacing their perceptions of SJ leadership. These questions comprised a set of four provisional areas of inquiry formulated by the ISLDN exploring: How SJ leaders *make sense* of 'SJ'; the *practice* of leadership for SJ; factors that *facilitate or hinder* the work of the SJ leader; and how one *learns* to become an SJ leader.

The narratives of principals were transcribed in Hebrew, English as translated from French and Creole by an interpreter and Turkish, and then analysed using a holistic approach, searching for recurrent experiences, feelings and attitudes. This method enabled data to be coded,

consolidated and connected to form central themes. The coding was guided by the principles of 'comparative analysis' (Strauss and Corbin 1998) which includes the comparison of any coded element in terms of emergent categories and sub-categories. In order to increase trustworthiness and reliability in the research, the analysis was strengthened by structured analysis and by peer review of the two interviews by each of the authors (Marshall and Rossman 2012).

The systematic data collection procedure employed in this study was designed to enhance the credibility and authenticity of the data (Rajendran 2001). However, since this is a very small sample and the interviewees could not be considered as constituting a representative sample across all contexts in each country, the implications of this study are very reasonably limited. In the next section, the findings are presented thematically, drawing on the principal's narratives.

Findings

Four key themes were identified, relating to leadership for SJ—vision and values, the practical implementation of SJ, factors facilitating or obstructing the practice of an SJ school policy and the socialisation process of leaders for SJ.

'Ahmed': The Arab Principal's Narrative

Analysis of the interviews with Ahmed, the Arab principal, revealed his perceptions as influenced by socio-cultural and ethical perspectives. Ahmed's vision and values for SJ are intertwined throughout his day-to-day reality. He perceives SJ as follows:

> As one who grew up in a poor community, the education system simply duplicated our social reality and pushed our national narrative away from any constructive discourse, it pushed me away to try to educate others for a true rather than a false awareness, to provide a liberating experience for the student, to free them from the chains of social and national suppression and to bring them to an encounter with the 'other', an encounter

of friendship on the basis of dialogical equality and not compulsive or impulsive

Ahmed's experience growing up in a poor, peasant family from a marginalised minority group meant that his path to academic studies was marked by difficulty:

> I have encountered the situation of oppression by myself. I came from small excluded family in a village with big clans, and it was important for me to transform my exclusion to capabilities. We are 6 brothers and 2 sisters, used to work in our farm as a team. Each one had a role, one for all and all for one, with a difficult life living in double margins.

SJ is constructed by Ahmed in terms of 'opportunity, openness, equality, and the establishment of equal educational arenas for every religious group', probably because he lives in the minority group, which suffers from low resources and various sorts of financial and educational discrimination. For Ahmed, though, SJ means 'recognition, access, and successful experiences' for the Arab population in Israel. He defines his vision as follows:

> It is important for me to do as much as possible in order not to duplicate our distressful reality, where only 35% succeed and the rest do not receive any response … I head an organisation for the creation of a new social, national and cultural reality: "social" because it aims to attain distributive equality by destroying paradigms, "national" because it promotes education for a true and not false awareness, and "cultural" since it promotes gender equality in our traditional society that oppresses girls.

Ahmed sees social justice as part of 'values and collective commitment for the poor students', as his school is the only opportunity for them:

> I see the school as a place that is destined to prepare for life based on the personal strength of the student, in education, in personal development. I am motivated by values of equality, equal opportunities, respect. All of these constitute the basis of every educational interaction, a respect to the different…I see my job as a change agent of a factory that produces a new reality, an enabling reality.

The application of a pedagogy of SJ was considered to be part of the open dialogue with students. In this sense, Ahmed aims to strengthen the national identity of the Arab pupils through dialogues about the Arab village, civic identity, empowerment and workshops for self-expression. He declares emphatically that:

> The children should know about their national history. I presented both sides of the Israeli-Palestine conflict in the school. On one wall I displayed pictures of children killed in Gaza and on the other wall pictures of children killed in a Jewish town during the Cast Lead Operation. The Ministry of Education made a lot of noise about it and summoned me to a clarification.

Ahmed incorporates the pedagogy of Paulo Freire in his school and mentioned it throughout the interview indicating that 'a liberating pedagogy should be applied at all levels in the school'. He, therefore, devised: 'a program in which teachers mentor new teachers in light of Freire's pedagogy and established a peer mentoring program for under-privileged students'.

Despite the many institutional and bureaucratic barriers Ahmed faces (e.g., lack of resources, resistance of officials from the Ministry of Education, parents), he strives to continue his commitment to SJ:

> It was difficult to obtain resources but we managed to overcome those difficulties. The school inspector and the Jewish mayor came against me, because I always used to critique their policy towards the school.

It seems that Ahmed draws his powers from his personal resources:

> What helps me most of all is my belief in the correctness of this path, I come from this place and I have encountered the situation of oppression by myself, I think that a bourgeois person cannot do what I have done. I come from a small, excluded family, and it was important for me to transform my exclusion into capabilities.

He chooses to remain in control and expressed the difficulty of one who is controlled:

What can be an obstacle is the lack of belief in a person who wants to engender justice, a strict institutional policy that does not facilitate [the creation of] intellectual capital, a shallow pedagogy and lack of leadership and the suppression of talents and abilities in Arab society.

The principal's strong belief in SJ helps him to cope successfully with institutional hindrances as he explained:

I can speak of many obstacles, some of them political, I mean to see us [the Arab citizens of Israel] as inferior citizens in Israel, looking at us as enemies, especially in times of political conflict with Arab countries…The policies of the Ministry of Education are driven by accountability regime, a lack of trust in principals' intentions and the strong inspections especially in the Arab education system.

He went on to describe the local community:

We are disadvantaged in several levels: first, I serve in a community located in the lowest place in socio-economic clusters, violence is very high. We face murders, varied physical attacks and interventions and the municipality doesn't care for these children as Jewish municipalities; you can see that clearly in the physical appearance of the school compared to Jewish schools not far away only 300 meters from us. Second, parents are poor and therefore their education and socio-economic background hinders them from supporting the schools' extra-curricular activities.

Finally, he highlighted the internal forces that drive his leadership for SJ:

I have done all that I dreamt about and I'm satisfied. We are guided by internal control, not dependent on others, not focusing on the mantra of oppression…We have small circles of supporters that increase over time. We introduce the results to them. This gives them faith and hope and they continue to support [us]. We have also the school graduates who come and volunteer for different activities and are involved in the school and…through this we are building circles of trust, especially as we are transparent to all our partners, both internal partners such as pupils and teachers, and external partners in the community and outside.

'Felix': The Haitian Principal's Narrative

Analysis of the responses of Felix, a primary school principal in Western Haiti, revealed an SJ perspective strongly influenced by a historical feedback loop in which desperate poverty, low educational outcomes, poor employment prospects and dependency upon outside agency reinforce one another. Felix is responsible for the education of about 1000 children, grades 1–6, who attend school in two shifts of 500 students each. Located in the same general area as Felix's school are a diocese school operated by the Catholic Church and a school operated by an American foundation, each serving another 1000 children, along with smaller schools supported by outside agencies. Some of the children walk for miles to attend school. In spite of economic deprivation, the little girls' hair is neatly braided and decorated with ribbons to match their school uniforms and the little boys are crisp and clean as they walk proudly to school.

The interview, which slipped back and forth between Creole and French, was conducted in Felix's office just off the street, with the help of an interpreter. A single shelf of well-used government-provided textbooks and national exam guidebooks for the school occupied the wall behind his desk. Referring to the noisy children at play in the small courtyard, enclosed by classrooms on three sides, Felix laughed, as he described his students: 'This is a mixed school—we have boys and girls. They act loud because they are happy to be here, but when they are in class, they are very quiet and they study a lot'.

Felix's vision of his role as a SJ leader is, 'to do what you think is best'. On the level of the school, he sees it as, 'very important to have justice and equality in education'. Warming to the topic, Felix went on to discuss the role of justice in interpersonal relationships within his school: 'It is the function of justice so that the people on your team— the people you walk with—will be able to feel comfortable'.

At the time of the interview, Felix was still in his first year as Director. His predecessor had been promoted the previous summer and Felix had himself been promoted from his role as a teacher of mathematics at the same school. Thus, Felix was well aware of the challenging situations of many of his teachers:

> The teachers are very happy to work for the community—for the school, but sometimes they need some things like—it is not because they are not happy to be there, but some of them, they have families and have to travel to be here, and I think this is a problem.

Felix explained that many teachers travel from other cities to work, often leaving families behind during the week and returning home for the weekends, when possible.

The employment situation in this rural province was such that young men and women who had completed secondary school, often began looking for a mentor or foreign sponsor to help them to gain the minimal education they needed to earn a coveted teaching position. A teacher might work at several schools, contracted to teach English or Mathematics, for example, on a class by class basis. Although there is a shortage of qualified teachers, there is a deeper shortage of available jobs. While Felix's teachers are paid by the government, some teachers at other schools worked for long periods of time without receiving a salary. Felix defined SJ leadership in his school in very practical terms: finding ways to help his faculty to survive the economic challenges of their situation.

When asked how broader education policies either facilitated or obstructed the practice of SJ leadership in education, neither the translator nor Felix understood the question. 'Governmental policies' were a foreign concept. The translator tried to reframe the question, 'What I don't understand is, does the government help?' Felix's response revealed the level of involvement of the government in his school:

> It is a national school. The government is in charge of the school. The community, they support. Sometimes when some teachers come here from [Port-au-Prince or Jacmel], they are like families. Sometimes people take care of them and give them someplace to stay and give them food sometimes, but the government pays them to be there to work.

There was evidence that the government allocated resources for teacher salaries, but no evidence of policies or strategies for change.

Turning to the practical issues of the relationship between the school and the local community, Felix described overwhelmingly supportive parents. In fact, although he had described his school as one of the few national schools in a rural context, Felix credited the community with the school's existence: 'The community—they come together to create—so that the school will be here'. By way of clarification, he said that the community supports the school through gifts of money and gifts in kind to supplement the funds provided by the government.

Like many of his teachers, Felix had minimal formal preparation for his role in education, relative to others in similar roles in the Western hemisphere. Felix completed training at an Enasco School, but his primary preparation was in the classroom. Felix's ascent to school leadership seems to have been the result of his social class and/or personal qualities as much as advanced education. Perhaps because of the sheer magnitude of the social and economic challenges faced by Felix's students, teachers and school, Felix never discussed his role in addressing those problems on a national scale. Instead, he defined himself as a leader for SJ within his school—working to mitigate the challenges of those who, 'share his walk'.

'Baki': The Turkish Principal's Narrative

Baki, is a 48-year-old male principal having worked for 18 years as an educator in Turkey. After he had worked as a teacher for two years, he was appointed as a principal. His school was founded six years ago. The school is situated in a region where low income, ethnically diverse families live. It is a Vocational and Technical High School. There are currently 1285 students at the school, which is located in the eastern part of Gaziantep.

The principal conceptualised the term 'SJ' as an issue of equality and of creating a school that has SJ as a key defining feature. Equality means treating all school stakeholders equally and the ways to advance SJ are based on a deep understanding of SJ. His sense of SJ was focused on issues of injustice stemming from differences in race, ethnicity, culture, social class, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability, which create

disadvantages for students and for school staff. Baki, also indicates that SJ is not only an individual issue, but also an issue for the school as an institution:

> In my view, SJ is to ensure that every individual living in the society benefits from the same rights without regard to race, religion, language, gender, etc. and through positive discrimination for groups that may be considered disadvantaged. In my opinion, the aim of education is not only to make an individual happy, but also to increase the general welfare and happiness of the society. This is the sole purpose for me…

Baki perceives social injustice in circumstances when differences result in disadvantage to some people:

> If there are differences and disadvantages among people and their rights, there may be social injustice. I think it is necessary to question SJ if some people are privileged because of their language, religion, race, gender, sect, union, political opinion they support, or if they are deprived of some rights for the same reason.

He then explained how SJ issues in broader society interact with his work as a vocational school leader:

> I can approach SJ from two perspectives by linking with my own institution and educational understanding. Due to the fact that our school is a vocational high school, the success level of our student profile is generally low. Of course, there are many reasons for this. Among these reasons, the most common causes are the scattered families, socio economic status (SES) of parents, the problematic parents, dysfunctional families, etc. Although it is a vocational high school mostly preferred by male students, the number of female students is not low.

Baki gives some recommendations, perhaps to himself, to cope with issues of injustice:

> We have to provide SJ to students in all of these features. Our education must focus on keeping all these different [groups] in the same school and

in the community, and around the same goals and objectives. We are faced with problems that we do not want [to] have…However, in the solution of these problems, I attach great importance to the concept of SJ and I diligently try to approach people and events keeping the realities of living in an unjust society.

When it comes to his perceptions and daily practices to meet the needs of a socially just school, Baki says that he wants to make everybody in the school aware of SJ and to treat SJ as an inherent right. Baki values diversity and equity in schools. He describes how he collaborates with all stakeholders and school community:

I try to establish the concept of justice first to make people internalize it. In this context, I believe that I have the same rights as my vice principals, my teachers, my students, my parents, and my other employees. All the stakeholders of my school are aware of my philosophy of SJ. What does that mean? This means that; I am dealing with unjust issues, I do not care who the person is, the authority that she/he has, or any demographic characteristics the person has. Whosoever is right she/he is really right and whosoever is unjust she/he will make up for his mistake, across the board and that goes for me as well.

For the hindering and supporting factors, Baki highlights community and institutions (or the laws):

I mean if you want to create a socially just school, you have to believe and internalize it. Then you do what you can. Charities, community supports, finding funds from NGOs, philanthropists, etc. for the disadvantaged make your job easy or hard… Every individual and institution that supports the concepts of rights, law and justice contributes to my SJ leadership practices. Every individual and institution that has not been able to respect to these facts hinders.

Baki also thinks that an SJ leader should know the demographic characteristics of the school she/he manages: 'SJ leaders should be good listeners'. Baki continues:

Leaders who talk more in many other types of leadership are more effective, but I think that one of the most important features of the SJ leader is that they are good listeners. When you listen, you can justify in a true manner and find a right solution to the injustice.

Baki adds:

People [at] this school can come to my room and express themselves comfortably. I think this is important for the listening phase I just mentioned. When you listen to people, you give them value, too, which allows people to feel more connected to the institution.

Discussion

The three principals' conceptions of SJ influence their actions within their schools and beyond—from Ahmed's strategic training for resistance, to Felix's shared journey for survival to Baki's egalitarian example for empowerment. The principals' perceptions and praxis of SJ in their schools also reflect the macro level of their school contexts: the control and repression described in the Palestinian case, the largely absent capacity of the government evident in the Haitian case and the policy of economic growth motivating public action in the Turkish case. Finally, the leaders' preparations for leadership offer insight into mechanisms for social replication and change.

The impacts of dominance by one group on educational provision for other groups are highlighted in the Palestinian case. Consistent with past research (e.g., Brooks et al. 2015; Slater et al. 2014; Wang 2016), the Arab principal allowed that both the national and local government levels espouse SJ, while asserting that corrective programmes to reduce gaps in social and educational attainment are, nonetheless, lacking. In response, Ahmad tries to 'swim against the stream' and to establish an empowering discourse of concern, raising collective consciousness concerning the existence of gaps and the need to work to achieve equity (Arar 2015, 2018; Berkovich 2014). He acts independently outside government policy enactment and tries to build a consciousness that will

alter the existing reality and expands student's equitable access to educational and social resources, while trying to empower them along the way (Arar 2015, 2018).

The impacts of a nation whose political, economic and social structures have failed to build significant capacity for generations are evident in the Haitian case. Perhaps the most interesting finding of the Haitian case was the inability of either the principal or the translator, also an educator, to understand what it might mean for the education system to hinder or facilitate their work for SJ at the school level. The tactical decisions in the struggle for survival occupy the time and attention of people and leaders in fragile contexts like Haiti (Mundy and Dryden-Peterson 2011), at the risk of deferring strategic thinking indefinitely.

The presence of the national school in this rural area might have represented an attempt to address the dramatic gap between educational opportunities for ruling class children in the cities and underclass children in the rural areas (Lundahl 2011). Conversely, the fact that a member of a higher status group led the school of poor black children and faculty might have offered evidence that schools often sustain the status quo. Felix's SJ practice was not to reduce gender gaps, which were not evident. Neither did Felix define his work as reducing socio-economic inequalities at the school, since everyone was poor. Working to solve the problem of the untenable numbers of children unable to attend school had been largely relegated by the education system to the churches and NGOs. Rather, Felix saw his role as an SJ leader as doing the best he could with limited resources to take care of the people in his school so that they could sustain their walk forward together.

Findings from the Turkish case are consistent with previous research conducted in the Turkish context (Arar et al. 2017; Beycioglu and Ogden 2017). SJ is mostly viewed in relation to socio-economic inequalities among students, concerned with the creation of equal educational opportunities for all students (Slater et al. 2014). However, the principal, in this case, placed an emphasis on understanding the meaning of SJ and internalising this meaning. For him, having the sense of SJ is an important factor while knowing [*defining*] the concept. As there are many barriers to leadership in SJ (Arar et al. 2017; Garratt and Forrester 2012; Smith 2012), the principal's strong belief in this kind

of leadership is necessary to resist pressures which seek to avoid confronting controversial issues. Instead, he looked to incorporate SJ into his school.

There are practical implications of these small-scale studies for the school principals concerned, for other principals who may learn from these stories, and for wider society.

Conclusion

The principals in this study approached social justice from differing cultural and national identities and, to some degree, different value systems. However, for each, SJ derives from a personal vision rather than from a formal policy. For one, the pedagogy of SJ begins with the development of an enabling dialogue between the principal and the pupils. For another, the pedagogy of SJ was a 'shared walk'. A third elevated the importance of intentional listening.

Social justice is embedded in the historical and cultural contexts principals bring with them to school. That is, leadership for SJ is influenced to a large extent by the leaders' conceptions of the ideal society, the equal state, or the right school (Arar and Oplatka 2016). School leaders, committed to SJ in terms of social equality and equity in their daily practice, as indicated by many scholars (e.g., Furman 2012; Jean-Marie et al. 2009; Smith 2012), may also go on to integrate these concepts within their national context (Arar 2018). There is no explicit, direct vision regarding this discourse of SJ on the policy level uncovered in these cases.

Despite its limitations, this cross-cultural comparative study provides an interesting comparison of social justice leadership in three contrasting contexts divided by religion, social status and ethnicity: Palestine, Haiti and Turkey. As such, it makes a valuable contribution to the social justice literature that is widely 'Western centric'. This study offers alternative perspectives for an international readership about the challenges posed by cultural diversity and a lack of institutional capacity in a fragile society. This exploration of the efforts of educational leaders to introduce and practice an agenda of inclusive and empowering education,

contributes to our understandings of how an educator working in a society dominated by inequitable practices can overcome political, economic and cultural barriers and increase the potential for equity and SJ.

While many leadership theories give an impression of universal organisational phenomenon, our findings emphasise the highly contextualised nature of educational leadership. Any analysis of leadership behaviour should consider national and ethnic cultures, organisational arrangements, intercultural interactions and local educational ideologies. Without this analysis, any change initiative will be impeded by cultural, organisational and ethnic barriers that are specific to the educational system in which the change is intended to be implemented. Our cross-cultural insights should be considered in social justice leadership development programmes and in policy making.

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4

Systems of Education Governance and Cultures of Justice in Ireland, Scotland and Pakistan

Fiona King, Christine Forde, Jamila Razzaq and Deirdre Torrance

Introduction: Education Governance and Cultures of Justice

A common policy theme across education jurisdictions is the need to improve student achievement and outcomes to bring greater equality, despite evidence showing the opposite to be true (OECD 2012). The quest to bring about systemic improvement to both raise achievement and increase equality has led to a significant tension in many education systems. According to Hudson (2007, p. 269):

F. King (✉)
Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland
e-mail: fiona.king@dcu.ie

C. Forde · J. Razzaq
University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

D. Torrance
Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh,
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK
e-mail: deirdre.torrance@ed.ac.uk

the state is faced with a conundrum; it needs to control education, but its means of regulation must not constrain the potential for finding new ways of meeting or adapting to increasingly diverse and changeable societies and problems.

In these efforts to realise policy ambitions to improve learner outcomes, increasing attention is being paid to systems of education governance. Governance refers to the ways in which an education system is regulated: the processes and structures which set direction through policy and hold to account those charged with enacting policy (Bache 2003). The state oversees the provision of education through a range of networks and providers including local government, commercial or charitable bodies, and monitoring performance through data (Grek 2008). Governance moves through the different levels of a system—the macro (central government), meso (local councils, agencies, trusts, boards of management) and micro (school and school leaders). In contexts where education policy is dynamic and at times even volatile there is an ever-evolving set of relationships between these various levels, what Bache (2003) terms multilevel governance. The recent OECD's (2015a, p. 16) study of governance in complex systems notes that 'ministries of education remain responsible for ensuring high-quality, efficient, equitable and innovative education'. This raises the question about how ideas of social justice and equality inform the systems of governance within education in different nations. The increased attention placed on governance might suggest that governments are relinquishing control of education: particularly where the corporate sector has an expanding role, or where there is growing devolved local decision-making. However, Hudson (2007) disputes that this trend represents a retreat on the part of the nation-state from its role in education but rather that governance represents new forms of state regulation. Ball (2008) writing specifically about English education argues similarly that governance is not a reduction of the role of the state since the complex networks of policy actors it consists of, exert centralised influence. This move to governance is marked by 'soft governance' (Hudson 2007), a focus on outputs and the processes of self-monitoring against external criteria, with benchmarks measuring performance at every level of decision-making.

International benchmarks, monitoring and comparing national performance, are a major tool of governance systems.

International benchmarks, 'knowledge-based regulation tools' (Rinne and Ozga 2013), are increasingly used by governments to judge systems-level performance. The *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) (OECD 2015b) is a key policy tool for member states including Scotland and Ireland. However, other supranational organisations such as UNESCO gather and publish information about national systems, including statistics on enrolment, completion of education and literacy rates—significant issues in many developing education systems (UNESCO 2015). At one level, such tools potentially bring to the fore issues of social justice and (in)equality. For example, patterns in non-enrolment, levels of literacy or attainment, can distinguish significant inequities. Pupil performance on standardised tests can reveal inequities between the achievement of different groups of learners. Conversely, in the drive to identify 'successful' systems and 'improving' systems, the focus on comparative statistical data can lead to a narrowing of education policy and its regulation. Instead of attention being paid to the conditions of learning and the barriers to learning experienced by diverse groups of learners, policy strategies are shaped to meet less complex measures of system improvement. How such tensions are reconciled in contrasting international contexts provides thought-provoking insights.

The Case Studies

This chapter compares the cultures of justice in education governance within three systems: Ireland, Scotland and Pakistan. These systems provide interesting points of similarity and contrast. Though Ireland and Scotland are developed economies, the economic downturn of 2008 has led to financial constraints, while Pakistan is viewed as an emerging economy. Both Ireland and Pakistan have developed from the colonial occupation in the twentieth century to being independent states. Scotland has an element of devolved government with the establishment of the Scottish Parliament. There is a significant contrast between Pakistan as a large country with a population of approximately 200

million, while both Scotland and Ireland are small states with populations of approximately 5.5 million and 4.5 million respectively. Nevertheless, education is central to economic policy in each state. Side by side with the imperative for economic growth, exists the place of education socially and culturally. In Ireland historically, Roman Catholicism has been the dominant religion, in Scotland historically Protestantism occupied this position and in Pakistan, Islam is the dominant religion. Consequently, there are some interesting parallels about the relationship between religion, culture and education particularly addressing increasing pupil diversity.

Given the increasing focus on governance to set direction and monitor performance, this comparative study is based on three case studies of key policy texts related to regulation and accountability. A diverse range of documents was used, selected on the basis of their current significance within the particular system:

- For Ireland, the main policy documents were the Action Plans for Education 2017 and 2018 (DES 2017, 2018) which emanated from *Education Action Plan* 2016–2019 (DES 2016a).
- For Scotland, it was policy documents for reforms to education governance and improvement (SG 2016a, b, 2017a, b, c).
- For Pakistan, the government owned policy documents such as the *National Education Policy* (GoP 2009, 2010, 2016, 2017), the Constitution of Pakistan, and the National Education Management Information Service-Academy of Education Planning and Management (NEMIS-AEPAM) 2017 report, were used as sources. In addition, some research papers, two UN reports: the UN Development Programme (UN 2016) and the UN Women Annual Report (Zaidi et al. 2016) were used to substantiate the analysis.

A set of research questions was developed at the outset:

- What are the main wider societal issues around equality and social justice?
- How, if at all, are the concepts of 'equality' and 'social justice' constructed in policies?
- How are decisions made for education—the structures of governance?

- Within the systems of governance, for what are school leaders held accountable and how do these relate to issues of equality and social justice?
- How are these accountabilities articulated and to whom do school leaders need to account?

The set of documents for each system was analysed identifying key themes (Miles and Huberman 1994). From this examination the data was reduced through the generation of short summaries presented below. A further stage of analysis was undertaken where the summaries from each case study were reviewed to identify some overarching themes.

Issues of Equality and Social Justice

The increasing significance of knowledge-based regulation tools (Rinne and Ozga 2013) reflects the globalisation of education policies and reform strategies. However, the issues to be addressed in terms of equality and social justice within an education system are deeply contextualised. To consider the relationship between systems of education governance and cultures of justice, we need to consider the sociopolitical backdrop.

Ireland

Ireland has experienced significant immigration in recent years, especially from the UK, Brazil and Poland (CSO 2016). Fears around increasing immigration continue in light of the ongoing uncertainty about Brexit with many individuals and companies relocating to Dublin, thus adding to the existing crisis around housing and homelessness. This increased diversity has resulted in the Department of Education and Skills (DES) looking at the issue of meeting 'parental demand for patronage diversity' (DES 2017, p. 46) in a system where over 96% of primary schools are under Catholic patronage. However,

despite evidence of parental desire for choice from the school patronage survey in 2012 and 2013 and parents' constitutional rights for choice (Article 42.3), little progress has been made (O'Leary 2018). Minister Bruton recently stated that the government was not in a financial position to build additional schools. However, *Action Plan 2018* (DES 2018) aims to 'agree detailed arrangements for the transfer of patronage of schools, following consultation' (DES 2018, p. 52). O'Leary (2018) has suggested that given the issues related to historic abuse, on moral grounds the Roman Catholic Church should hand over vacant school buildings to non-denominational/multi-denominational schools.

Action Plan 2017's goal is 'to improve the educational outcomes of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs' (DES 2017, p. 29). It introduced a new Special Education Needs allocation model, and a new Inclusion Support Service for schools that will be reviewed in 2018. *Action Plan 2018* acknowledges increased school retention and attendance figures, 'a narrowing of the gap between DEIS [Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools] and non-DEIS schools in areas including standards of literacy', along with some evincing improvement in the progression to higher education of students who come to education at a disadvantage and/or have special education needs. *Action Plan 2018*, reflecting the Programme for Government, argues that 'education is the key to giving each child an equal opportunity in life' (DES 2018, p. 8) and looks to 'tackling disadvantages and strengthening inclusion'. However, it still falls short in recognising an intersectionality perspective (Lumby and Coleman 2016) which would consider issues of poverty and homelessness and their impact on outcomes for learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs.

Scotland

There are several issues in relation to social justice and equality in Scotland. Like many developed economies, Scotland has experienced multiple waves of immigration; since the early 1960s from areas of the Commonwealth, more recently from Eastern Europe and the

Middle East. The historical sectarianism between immigrant Catholic communities and the Protestant Scottish communities remains a significant socio-political concern, side by side with the integration of diverse newly arrived communities. However, the focus of the current Scottish Government (SG) policy is on poverty: 'Our vision for education is to close the unacceptable gap in attainment between our least and most disadvantaged children and to raise attainment for all' (SG 2017a). UK wide legislation (PoUK 2010) identifies protected characteristics including gender, ethnicity, faith, disability and sexuality. However, the intersection of such factors with poverty is not included. Advantage and disadvantage is situated largely in economic and material terms and so complex issues raised by the increasing diversity of pupil populations can be overlooked in target setting to reduce a 'poverty-related attainment gap' (SG 2017a, p. 9). Moreover, there is limited discussion around the lived experiences of minority and marginalised communities, including barriers to effective learning and achievement.

Pakistan

The issues of social justice and equality in Pakistan are linked with a widespread incidence of poverty, insufficient basic infrastructure and inadequate access to social services for the low-income groups more generally, and people living in remote geographic locations particularly. Where access to quality social services is determined by positioning in socio-economic strata and urban–rural divide, the dynamics of gender-based inequity add another lens to framing social justice in the country. Pakistan ranks at 147 on the Human Development Index and 130 on the gender inequality index (UNDP 2016). Women participation in the labour force is just 26% (Zaidi et al. 2016), which puts them at the lowest rungs of both human development and poverty indicators. Among all denominators of poverty, gender disparity in education is most pervasive. This is reflected in the mean years of schooling for women, 3.7 years in comparison with 6.5 years for men alongside only 26.5% of women accessing some secondary education

in comparison with 46.1% of men in this category (UNDP 2016). Geographic disparity on a multidimensional poverty index ranges from between 86.6% for rural Baluchistan to 6.3% in Urban Punjab, which has serious implications for social justice issues in the country. Access to and the quality of social services, especially education, is linked to these rural-urban differentials (GoP 2016; ASER 2015).

Policy Constructions of Equality and Social Justice

Within the wider socio-political context of each education system, the interplay of history, cultures and communities gives rise to particular issues of equality and social justice. Therefore, we need to consider how the concepts of equality and social justice are contextualised within the education policy.

Ireland

In Irish society in recent years there has been a growing emphasis on social justice in terms of equality, anti-discrimination, poverty and homelessness. Within education the words 'social justice' fail to appear in many policies including the *Action Plan 2018* (DES 2018). In spirit it is evidenced in *Towards 2016: Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006–2015*, in terms of an investment in 'human capital' with a focus on higher retention rates and enhanced academic outcomes for learners from socio-economic disadvantaged areas (Department of the Taoiseach 2006, p. 23). *Action Plan 2018* proposes the introduction of specific literacy and numeracy targets for disadvantaged schools. At a surface level, individual academic mobilisation within schools and social mobility may be seen as markers for social inclusion but are arguably merely reflective of neoliberalism and perpetuating existing power structures (Berkovich 2013). This is once again evident in *Action Plan 2018* (DES 2018, p. 28): 'education and training are the key to breaking the cycle of disadvantage'. Social justice issues need to be considered as

socio-ecological issues (Berkovich 2013) with an emphasis on listening to the voices of those being marginalised (Skrtic 2012). Commendably the *Action Plan 2018* aims to increase diversity of learning opportunities, diversity of school types, have more collaboration with parents, communities and other government departments and talks about harnessing 'education and training to break down barriers for groups at risk of exclusion and set the benchmark for social inclusion' (p. 8). It also focuses on initiatives in DEIS schools to promote student well-being and resilience. However, it arguably still falls short in terms of understanding how social justice, in the context of a broader definition of disadvantage and social inclusion, is understood within an educational context and how this understanding informs policy development at the macro level and in turn policy enactment at the meso and micro levels.

Scotland

The concepts of equity and excellence are central to current Scottish educational policy. Arnott and Ozga (2016, p. 253) argue that the Scottish Nationalist Party's education policy 'works to mobilise a narrative of a "journey to independence" drawing on historically embedded themes and myths about fairness' particularly the democratic traditions of Scottish education. Torrance and Forde (2017) depict the way in which a discourse related to 'all learners' runs through the levels of decision-making, accountability frameworks and policy guidelines. In these documents there is the constant use of positive language with the constructs of discrimination, marginalisation and prejudice not forming part of a policy discourse. Successive reports and performance data on attainment instead underline the continued underachievement of pupils from poor and marginalised communities. Notwithstanding a strong policy discourse around 'excellence' and 'equity', the underpinning concepts relate to the need to drive economic development and to address a 'poverty-related attainment gap' (SG 2017c, p. 3). The measure used for determining disadvantage is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) where localities are rated (SG 2016b) using indicators including parental income, rate and type of employment, pupil

performance, availability of services including sports, shops and leisure facilities. Although empowerment is a keynote of the current reforms to support local decisions to meet local circumstances, improvement is judged predominantly on the government-mandated target of closing the attainment gap.

Pakistan

The national education policy of Pakistan sets out to achieve 20 goals, including universal access to all children in the age range of 5–16 years by 2020, and the 'provision of standardised facilities and services by removing all kinds of disparities, inequities and imbalances including gender disparities and geographical imbalances' (GoP 2017, p. 11). This statement affirms the existence of gender and geography related disparities, but falls short of acknowledging huge disparities due to the four-tier parallel education systems: Madrassas (Religious Schools), Private Schools (English and Urdu), Public Schools and Army Public schools (Andrabi et al. 2005; Lall 2009; Rahman 2005). The quality of teaching and learning process and its evaluation; qualifications, skills and work conditions of teachers; the curriculum; and concepts of citizenship promoted among all learners vary significantly across these four systems. The system has generally failed to unleash the potential of millions of learners where only about 49% of grade 5 students can read a sentence in English; about half of them being able to compute a 2-digit division (ASER Pakistan 2015). Another facet of structural inequity is the language of instruction in different systems and its implications for employment opportunities. English is the standard language of communication in a prestigious job market including the civil services of Pakistan, multinational companies, international organisations and the corporate sector of Pakistan. English is not the language of instruction in public system schools, low fee private schools or madrassah, while high-end private schools focus on developing English language skills. This structural issue results in differentials in career aspirations, confidence and success in acquiring prestigious jobs among young people coming from these various systems.

Structures of Governance and Decision-Making in Education

The structures of governance are crucial in shaping decision-making at the different levels of an education system. The International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) framework of macro, meso and micro levels is used to identify the decision-making processes and the relationships between the different sites of decision-making in a system.

Ireland

Ireland continues to emerge from a severe economic crisis which began in 2007, with the knowledge economy promulgated as the panacea and so the 'perfect storm' (Conway and Murphy 2013) resulted in an education system with 'new vocabularies of practice' arguably reflective of neoliberalism (Ball 2016, p. 1050). *Action Plan 2018* includes numerous targets related to performance in PISA. The strive for equity and excellence (Chapman et al. 2011) or 'a stronger economy and a fairer society' (DES 2017, p. 6) is a challenge at all levels of the system with a somewhat oversimplified perspective of narrowing the attainment gap seen as the way forward (DES 2011). This is further compounded by a complex educational system with centralised policy making by the DES at the macro level and notable decentralisation of provision at the meso level by a number of support agencies, the Teaching Council and Inspectorate who operate in different ways, thus resulting in tensions (Forde et al. 2017). Despite this, at the primary level decision-making is largely the responsibility of individual school Boards of Management (BOMs) or trusts. At the secondary level, there are a number of Educational Training Boards (ETBs) which act as a meso layer for some schools. All publically funded schools annually report achievement scores in literacy and numeracy to the DES who are setting new targets up to 2020 in this area (DES 2017).

Scotland

In the political context of a devolved Parliament and a nationalist government (Arnott and Ozga 2016) education is used to assert the distinctiveness of Scotland and build an economy for independence: 'The central purpose of this Government is to create a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth' (SG 2016a, p. 3). However, an enduring attainment gap between pupils from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds has led to a sharp focus on the systems of education governance. The regulation of education currently occurs through the settled relationships connecting the three levels of macro, meso and micro. Central government initiates national policies and monitors national performance across the system; local authorities (LAs) are responsible for the provision of education within their locality, including school improvement and for ensuring that schools address national policy. School leaders work to develop policy and practice to take forward national policy and are then judged on the school's performance in terms of pupil attainment and achievement, and wider school improvement. However, an OECD (2015c) review of Scottish education questioned the relationships between and across these levels. The stated intention of the Scottish Government was to bring forward legislation in mid-2018 (SG 2017b), which would strengthen central government's direction of collaboration for improvement and alter relationships between schools and between LAs as well as between a school and their LA. The proposed legislation included the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) and the Headteacher Charter. However, following ongoing discussions with the LAs, the Minister for Education announced in June 2018 that at that point they would not progress to legislation. He indicated nevertheless that the proposals set out in the consultative paper (SG 2017b) must be implemented or legislation would be introduced to address the provisions. The LAs now work in RICs reporting to the newly formed Scottish Education Council on progress made with addressing the poverty-related attainment gap. Under the proposals, headteachers will have a duty to collaborate with other schools to foster higher achievement and address the attainment gap.

Pakistan

Since its formation in 1947, Pakistan followed a centralised education system until April 2010 when the 18th amendment in the constitution decentralised the system of education, limited the role of the federal government, and expanded the purview of the provincial governments in the education sector. This amendment includes Article 25A, stating a 'Right to education: The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children between the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law' (GoP 2010) which obligates provincial governments to ensure universal secondary education. This two-pronged responsibility for the provision of compulsory education as well as the determining and development of policy, planning, curriculum, standards and services has highlighted gaps in provincial capacity (Imran 2016). The sheer size of the educational system (44,435,753 diverse learners, 1,652,141 teachers and 267,955 existing educational institutions) is overwhelming. Though Pakistan's National Education Policy is the reference document, added challenges emanate from low funding allocations, politically motivated interference to limit socio-economic mobility, a capacity deficit and pervasive corruption in the system (GoP 2009), all make the task more daunting for ill-prepared provincial systems. Over the last seven years, provincial governments with technical and financial assistance of bilateral (UK, US, European, German, Australian Governments' aid programmes) and multilateral donors (UN, Global Partnership for Education and World Bank) have made progress on the road maps for improved teacher and school management and monitoring structures. The curriculum, textbooks and examination systems still need urgent attention at the level of provincial government. This devolution of education function from federal to provincial level is still in the process of settling down and the governance system is now working at both macro and meso levels, with federal government providing broader policy guidelines and provincial governments building governance mechanisms for their education systems respectively. Though part of the vision of provincial governments, the district level governance system and ultimately school-based management system will take some time to evolve. Thus, there is a gradual

move from dominance of the macro level to building decision-making and regulation processes at both the meso and micro level.

Social Justice and the Accountability of School Leaders

Within each system the macro level planning process includes targets used in education regulation related to equality and social justice and these issues are variously constructed: 'poverty-related attainment gap', 'anti-discrimination, diversity, poverty and homelessness' or 'inequities and imbalances'. Therefore, we need to consider how such issues are reflected in the structures of governance and expectations placed on school leaders.

Ireland

Within the *Action Plan 2018* there is little explicit evidence of what school leaders are accountable for. There is an emphasis on strengthening leadership through access to professional learning opportunities such as coaching as well as a proposal 'for the better involvement of Principals with inspection teams' (DES 2017, p. 37). Inspection is centred on 'identifying and implementing improvements…assuring quality, and providing information for parents' (p. 44) in line with the standards set out in *Looking At Our Schools* (LAOS) (DES 2016b). In relation to social justice and equality principals are accountable for fostering 'a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each pupil' as well as managing 'challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and justice' (DES 2016b, p. 12). Noteworthy also is an accountability towards 'pupil voice, pupil participation, and pupil leadership' (p. 12) which, if executed in a meaningful way, could provide insights from marginalised voices (Skrtic 2012) towards a better and broader understanding of disadvantage, special educational needs and any other marginalising characteristics.

Scotland

The driving political force is tackling the poverty-related attainment gap which is significantly changing the responsibilities of the headteacher exemplified in a proposed legislated Headteachers' Charter (SG 2017b). While the keynote of this suite of policies is the 'empowerment' of head-teachers, schools and school communities, the extension of headteacher responsibilities bears a strong resemblance to the processes identified by Keddie (2017). A headteacher is given sufficient scope to generate strategies and make decisions to address local circumstances and is then held to account for the outcomes achieved. Specifically, in terms of social justice and equality, headteachers are being directed to close the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils without recognising complex and interrelating societal factors beyond their control. Further, head-teachers will be held to account for the strategies and the outcomes they deliver in relation to central government's targets for closing the attainment gap (SG 2017c). Education and more specifically headteachers are to be held accountable for the entrenched failings of society at large.

Pakistan

Due to the centralised governance structure of Pakistan's public education system, initially at national and now at the provincial levels, the professional freedom at the headteacher level is quite limited. With no expectations or space for independent decisions for school-based management from the headteacher, there is no separate service cadre for this tier in the education system. Teachers achieve promotion to become heads of the institutions based on their length of service. The headteacher has no role in the selection and deployment of teachers, curriculum, textbooks to be used for each subject, school timings, enrolment targets, assessment type and frequency, student uniform and school facilities. Therefore, both in the public perception and across the education system, the head teacher is not held accountable for the quality of the teaching and learning process, or for student learning outcomes. In private schools, the headteacher is primarily accountable for responding to the expectations

of parents and school owners. If the clientele of the school comprises educated parents who are aware and interested in the quality of learning, then a headteacher is held to account for ensuring this. However, in the case of low fee private schools the expectations of parents can be limited to the regularity of lessons, the teaching of English language and discipline in the school. Here the headteacher is responsible for maintaining these basic standards. There are no state-managed regulations or standards for the private sector schools, hence the accountability of school managers is confined to the parents who pay for the services.

Accountability and the Exercise of Social Justice Leadership

The relationship between policy intentions related to equality and social justice and the systems of governance in each nation is crucial: these accountabilities can hinder or facilitate the exercise of headteachers' social justice leadership.

Ireland

In Ireland, educational provision at primary level is largely publicly funded (97%) despite being privately owned by patrons. However, there is greater diversity in funding and governance arrangements at secondary level (King and Travers 2017). Nevertheless, principals are held accountable for the performance and improvement of their school through BOMs, Trusts and/or ETBs, along with the DES, which includes the Inspectorate, and the Teaching Council. School principals are held to account for the performance of their school in the following ways:

- whole school self-evaluation based on a quality assurance framework, *Looking At Our School* (DES 2016b) which includes a standard related to inclusion, equality and social justice;
- annual short self-evaluation report and school improvement plan to implement national initiatives and address curriculum areas or aspects of teaching and learning (DES 2016c); and

- annual reporting of pupil performance on standardised school assessments for literacy and numeracy for certain class levels to parents, boards of management and the DES (DES 2012).

Scotland

Nationally, educational provision is largely located within the public sector (95%) and so headteachers are held accountable for the performance and improvement of their school through both the local authority (the employer) and central government, including national agencies such as Education Scotland (which includes the Inspectorate) and the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Headteachers are currently (as of 2017) accountable for the performance of their school through:

- annual school improvement plan to address national aims and priorities, notably the 'poverty-related attainment gap';
- whole school self-evaluation based on a quality assurance framework, *How Good is Our School* (Education Scotland 2015, p. 16); and
- pupil performance on school assessments and examination results, where pupil performance is analysed using the SIMD measurement of social and economic advantage and disadvantage (SG 2016b).

The proposed Headteachers' Charter outlined above would bring significant changes to the accountabilities and the bodies to whom headteachers will have to account.

Pakistan

In Pakistan, approximately 43% of all Pakistani students are enrolled in private schools (NEMIS-AEPAM 2017) and attract learners from mid to high-income groups (DeStefano and Moore 2010; Razzaq 2015). There is an increasing trend for private schooling in urban areas with more affluent populations. This trend has implications for social justice and equity as some private institutions charge high fees for their quality services (Andrabi et al. 2005) and the subsidised public system fails

to provide similar levels of quality education. With the recent reforms, mainly through donor-funded technical and financial assistance programmes, provincial governments are establishing monitoring systems for public schools and have devised school enrolment targets to meet their mandate in relation to the Right to Education Act. At the initial stages of this accountability mechanism, the Punjab (Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit [PMIU]) and KPK (Independent Monitoring Unit [IMU]) have started collecting data on mainly absenteeism among teachers. In this system, the headteacher is accountable for ensuring the presence of teachers though the implications of absenteeism are restricted to teachers only. One aspect for which headteachers are solely accountable is the enrolment into schools and ensuring the maintenance of these numbers, not necessarily through retention. These targets are linked with equity and are mainly focused upon ensuring school-aged children attend school. However, these concerns need to be connected with deeper issues of equity particularly by linking the issues of retention of students with the quality of student learning outcomes.

Discussion: Comparing Systems of Education Governance and Cultures of Justice

Across the three education systems there are some important similarities but also significant differences and these help illuminate further issues related to social justice in education and the processes of education governance. Three key issues are: firstly, the improvement of a state education system; secondly, decentralisation and centralisation in governance structures and thirdly, the expectations placed on school leaders.

The Improvement of State Education

The improvement of state education is set within a wider socio-political and economic context. The most marked contrast is the unquestioned assumption about access to education in Scotland and Ireland, while in Pakistan remote locations, poverty and traditional cultures are among

the barriers to access. This comparison highlights disparities in economic disadvantage between developing and developed economies and education remains an important tool to ameliorate such conditions. Common across all three systems is a policy concern to address the impact of poverty and social disadvantage on educational participation and achievement. However, while for Scotland and Ireland the issue of poverty predominates, in Pakistan a more nuanced focus helps point out the intersection of poverty with other factors, in this case gender and geographical location. This comparison also highlights existing structural inequalities related to the impact of private education on state provision. The impact of private education in Pakistan is noted but this issue does not figure in the policy imagination in Scotland and Ireland. Even in Scotland, with a very high proportion of state provision (over 95%), the private sector can have a significant impact on urban localities (Torrance and Forde 2017). The case study of Pakistan illuminates this question of social mobility and the balance of private and public education—a balance becoming increasingly more complex with the growing presence of the corporate sector and philanthropic organisations. These developments will alter the structures of education governance and the role of school leaders.

Centralisation and Decentralisation in Governance

An aspect pertinent to the question of cultures of justice in systems of governance is the degree of centralisation and decentralisation in decision-making and regulation. From the case studies, the impact of the wider socio-political context on education is compounded by the scale of the system. Potentially smaller systems might attain greater coherence between policy intentions and the structures of governance, yet, in Pakistani education coherence is more clearly evident in a centralised system. Scale intersects with the degree of centralisation in decision-making in a system. The meso level in Irish education has no local council intermediation between the national government policy direction and the schools and BOMs and Trusts that provide governance oversight of individual schools. Both Pakistan and Scotland are

reforming their systems of governance but whereas Pakistan is looking to strengthening local decision-making, the Scottish reforms are increasing central direction. In Pakistan, the move from federal to provincial oversight is underway but requires substantial development across a large system to build a provincial system and then district and school level management. Much smaller in scale but equally complex, are reforms in Scotland. The relationships between the levels of macro (central government), meso (local authorities) and micro (schools) are being reconstructed in the current reform programme. Of particular focus is collaboration between LAs at the meso level and changing the relationship between LAs and schools where schools may have greater autonomy. These developments are principally about gaining greater policy traction in educational provision. Here the case studies highlight that the place and construction of equality and social justice in these systems of governance are important in fostering social justice leadership in schools but there are questions about the scope of local decision-making.

Empowerment and Compliance

The accountabilities of the school leader reflect systemic issues across the three nations, with increasing use of similar accountability tools. Currently in Pakistani education, the development of the teaching profession is designed to support the drive to increase engagement in education (Razzaq and Forde 2014). While there is a question of the standing of the teaching profession and the scope of their decision-making in Pakistani education, the issue of professional standing is also a question in Irish and Scottish education. Here increasingly accountability, designed to track performance against central statistical targets, is reducing the ability of headteachers and their staff to make decisions based on local circumstances and the needs of their learners.

Though the structures of governance are increasingly focused on performance against targets (which relate to external systems of measurement through supranational organisations) a common theme in Scottish and Irish education is the importance of school leaders

engaging with pupils, parents and local communities to build inclusive practice. However, in both systems there is a tendency to present parents and communities as homogenous constituencies without any consideration of engaging with 'hard-to-reach' parents and communities to tackle educational disadvantage. The case study from Pakistan helps to illuminate the tensions where specific parent and community groups can seek to shape practice and policy in schools. Policy can provide a tool to support professional decision-making but one of the critical tasks for school leaders is then balancing the aspirations of different groups with their professional values in seeking to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners.

Conclusion

One of the questions around structures of governance and cultures of justice is the balance between centralised direction and meaningful local autonomy. Contextualised issues of social justice and equality are evident in the education policies of the three case study nations, the role of school leader in enacting policy is the focus for regulation. However, a critical issue is the way in which the professional practice of the school leader to address areas of inequalities and marginalisation is constrained or supported by education governance within a specific education system. The OECD (2015a) study identified several key elements of effective governance including the need to focus on processes and build sufficient flexibility to adapt to change; the use of constructive accountability for feedback and opportunities to trial approaches; a whole system approach where aspects align; use of research and evidence to inform practice; the need to build capacity and work through stakeholder involvement and open dialogue. This calls for a participative approach with strong connections between the different levels of macro, meso and micro and their different stakeholders, and with some form of local decision-making to address local circumstances. However, the degree to which school leaders can genuinely generate alternative approaches to bring greater equality across diverse groups of learners is curtailed by the drive to improve education against narrow measures.

There is no doubt that issues such as poverty, of minority status, of social turbulence, of non-engagement in school education have a significant impact on the well-being and life chances of young people. However, holding school leaders accountable to address what are wider societal concerns will not resolve these issues. There is a danger therefore that systems of governance are not designed to promote the genuine participative empowerment required to enable schools and leaders to build quality relationships and work with communities to address local circumstances. Instead, school leaders are held to account in a top-down model of regulation (Shamir 2008) within an increasingly narrow focus on statistical targets including international benchmarking tools, designed to engender greater policy compliance and standardisation of practice on the part of school leaders, who in turn demand this of teachers. This is unlikely to bring about significant and lasting change for the benefit of all pupils, regardless of their background or personal circumstances. For this to become a reality, a radical rethink of cultures of justice within systems of education governance is needed. We need to move beyond policy rhetoric to greater coherence in policy, so that systems of governance are indeed imbued with a culture of social justice, where some of the complex issues are grappled with to bring about genuine improvement in the conditions of learning rather than simply meeting targets whether for attainment or for enrolment.

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5

School Leadership, Curriculum Diversity, Social Justice and Critical Perspectives in Education

Paul W. Miller, Carmel Roofe and Marina García-Carmona

Introduction

School leaders in England, Jamaica and Spain encounter and navigate a range of challenges in their everyday practice as teachers, leaders and educationalists. Some struggle to meet the basic needs of students due to limited resources buoyed by ongoing cuts to budgets. Others struggle to create environments where each student, regardless of race/ethnicity,

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P. W. Miller (✉)
School of Education and Professional Development,
University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, UK
e-mail: P.Miller@hud.ac.uk

C. Roofe
School of Education, University of the West Indies, Mona,
Kingston, Jamaica

M. García-Carmona
Faculty of Educational Sciences and Sport,
University of Granada, Melilla, Spain
e-mail: marinagc@ugr.es

class, religion, creed, feels equally welcomed. The diverse needs of students, as well as diverse populations of students, do not make the task of education professionals any easier, and as a result, it is not difficult to imagine how the needs of some students may be ignored.

Arrangements for education and schooling in England, Jamaica and Spain are changing, not only in policy terms, but also as a response to migration, globalisation and events of the global and national economic environments. The main educational policy agenda in England is, 'Every child matters' which focuses on outcomes for children in areas such as health, well-being and their contribution to society. In Jamaica, the main educational policy agenda is, 'Every child can learn, every child must learn' which aims to ensure that quality education is provided for every learner in Jamaican schools to help him/her learn. Furthermore, in Spain, 'The student body is the centre and raison d'être of education' is the main education policy, which seeks to guarantee that learning at school is aimed at forming autonomous, critical people. These ideological positions, however, are mere statements of intent if funding is not available to support policy ambitions and agendas, and if the practice of school leaders and teachers are not matched by an appropriate curriculum and adequate resources, to support expected outcomes for students. As Miller (2016) notes, 'For education to produce these outcomes…. effective leadership from governments, from school principals and from all other sectors of an educational system must be in place, and in sync' (p. 1).

School leaders play a crucial role in institutional efforts to support and meet the needs of students. And although school leaders can shape and reproduce social justice value stances through their work, the educational policy environment, and arrangements for selecting, training and licencing of school leaders 'often provide only token, isolated stabs at inequities or see them as management challenges' (Turhan 2010, p. 1358). These challenges are exacerbated by the fact that schools operate in different contextual circumstances, and students enter schools in very unequal situations. Nevertheless, it is now perceived as the responsibility of schools to compensate for these differences since a fundamental duty of education is to promote democratic equality (Skrtic 2012), equity (Brown 2006) and excellence for all (Chapman et al. 2012). However, in the era of league tables, performativity and standardised

tests, 'curricula trip lightly on the ways in which education policies are framed without a critical, contextual or historical understanding of social inequities, equity concerns or desires for social justice' (ibid.), the result of which is that many school leaders may not possess the knowledge, capacity, strategies, rationales or understanding of how to integrate and embed curriculum content in ways that promote understandings of multiple social justice concerns.

The guiding question for this study was, 'How do school leaders use a curriculum to lead in ways that are socially just for the individual learner as well as for society?' Based on the findings from this three-country study of school leaders located in rural/remote school communities, we argue that social justice leadership is an activist form of leadership that seeks to transform educational environments into spaces where all who study and work in them can thrive, even when, on the surface, the odds do not always appear to support this.

What Is Social Justice?

Social justice is a contested term and concept. Brooks (2008) notes that, 'Justice is both an abstract "big" idea and also a concrete "little" idea' (p. 8). Furthermore, as Turhan (2010), points out, '[I]t is not a thing or specific structure to be reified, defined, reduced, observed and replicated. Rather, it may be understood more usefully as a process, or a way of "ethical living" in a diverse society' (Furman and Shields 2003, p. 1358). Social justice however may be viewed as a principle and a guide underlining how humans should live and treat each other as members of a society (Rebore 2001), or as a negotiation about process and relationships and not only about outcomes (Speight and Vera 2004).

Social Justice Leadership

There is no single definition of social justice leadership. Bogotch (2015) argues this is partly due to the fact that social justice is a deeply

contextualised practice. Nevertheless, from our perspective, social justice leadership is about leaders or those in positions of authority using their power to create equity and/or beneficial change. As Shields (2014) notes, social justice leadership is a critically transformative process. Furthermore, Theoharis (2007) defines school social justice leaders as individuals who:

> …. advocate, lead, and keep at the center of their practice and vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions…. Addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools is a critical component of this definition. Thus inclusive schooling practices for students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), and other students traditionally separated in schools are also necessitated by this definition. (p. 223)

Thus, social justice leadership is activist both in its intent and its approach, and social justice leaders understand the material, economic, cultural, social and other differences between different groups and try to do something to ameliorate the impact of these differences. Social justice leaders move beyond equality debates to equity debates, and set out to change systems, processes and structures to better respond to the needs of students (Dantley and Tillman 2006).

According to Gewirtz (1998), the primary concerns of social justice leadership are: redistribution and representation. Originally proposed by Rawls (1972), redistribution relates to the allocation of resources, facilities, expertise and other systems to remove barriers faced by marginalised and minoritised groups. Representation, first proposed by Fraser (1997), relates to how pedagogic practices and curriculum positively recognise differences within society and thus find ways to ensure teaching material and practice are broadly inclusive (Torrance and Forde 2017). School leaders with this orientation are activist leaders who, in our view, work to create justice in schools for all students. Thus, a social justice leader sees his or her job not only in terms of being a teacher or leader, but also an activist, advocating for and working towards student empowerment, the increased educational opportunity for all students.

Critical Perspectives on Social Justice and Leadership

Nowadays, school leaders understand that prior ways of knowing are no longer justified under the present circumstances they face in their schools, and that they are called upon to understand the influence of the larger social, economic, cultural and political systems in order to advance social justice issues for *all* students (Boske 2014). Consequently, school leaders and schools are having to reimagine their work and how this meets or can meet the needs of all students and families. School leaders who lead for social justice need to better understand and demonstrate how to challenge practices that perpetuate hierarchy and exclusion and beliefs about and attitudes towards staff and students, in particular those from minoritised groups and communities, that seek to oppress rather than liberate them (Shields 2014). As noted by Bogotch (2002), 'Social justice, like education, is the deliberate intervention that requires the moral use of power' (p. 2). We consider four interrelated theoretical and practical approaches to understanding and doing social justice leadership.

Transformative Leadership

Transformative leadership is concerned with social change and is deeply rooted in moral and ethical values system where education is viewed as a primary tool to transmit values, beliefs and forms of knowledge of the state hegemony, as well as to bring about change (Shields 2004).

Inclusive Schools

Inclusive schools are concerned with human rights and positive social change within the context of socially just societies. They welcome and value the contribution of all staff and students, provide students with a diverse and broad curriculum, treat staff and students and their experiences and backgrounds as essential resources and use data to diagnose, analyse, solve problems and develop intervention plans (DeMatthews 2014).

Culturally Relevant Education, Also Known as Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

According to Gay (2002), culturally relevant pedagogy entails 'using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively' (p. 106). When using a culturally relevant approach, the teacher understands the student outside of the school environment and incorporates the students' interests into curriculum activities to motivate them more effectively (White et al. 2014).

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is concerned with providing students with the academic tools to help them question and challenge hegemonic views that have become dominant discourses. Used effectively, this is a powerful tool capable of helping students or members of minoritised groups to interrogate systems of oppression and domination in education and society. To push back against social exclusion, marginalisation and oppression in education (Hare 2009), 'educational institutions must become more sensitive to minority group needs, including protection from hegemonic domination of dominant cultures that exert power over a specific culture' (White et al. 2014, p. 132).

Curriculum Diversity and Social Justice

A curriculum is a core element of quality learning and worthwhile education. It encapsulates the what, who, why and how of educating students under the guidance of schools (Doll 1996). It is through a curriculum that the desired beliefs, skills and values of a society are articulated and transmitted. Thus, a curriculum is crucial to the development of individual learners as well as the development of a national society. UNESCO (2015) notes that a curriculum, to a large extent, determines whether education can be or is inclusive, underlining Connell's (1992) view that curricula justice can only be achieved when all students

receive a common and inclusive curriculum that allows them to participate fully in society.

Since society is diverse, the curriculum must be developed and led to cater to the multiplicity of differences that exist. Curriculum catering to such diversity is concerned with interrogating and reconceptualising the way educators and students think about knowledge, ensuring that inequality is not reproduced. Social justice curriculum is a dispersed and foundational force that sees curriculum as a social project that is enacted at a variety of levels from personal to social, with all levels in continuous interaction (Gaudelli and Urban 2011). The curriculum then must be flexible to allow for an analysis of the learner's personal development needs, motivation, interests, culture and prior histories to ensure each individual is catered to and empowered to achieve his or her highest potential without discrimination (McInerney et al. 1999).

Considerations in a socially just curriculum must be sensitive to class, gender, race, sexuality and disabilities and seek to establish policies that protect the rights of all students. This requires a whole school approach where distributive leadership is practiced and where parents, students, teachers and other members of the community that the school serves are involved in the decision-making (McInerney et al. 1999).

Furthermore, because schools differ in their socio-economic composition, geographical location, and cultural backgrounds of their students, achieving a socially just curriculum must include embedding social justice principles in all areas of the curriculum and enacting culturally and context responsive pedagogic practices to meet the needs of the situated context (Gay 2002; Roofe 2015).

Leading the curriculum in socially just ways therefore means ensuring that issues of fairness and equity are practiced so that the appropriate values, attitudes, beliefs and skills are developed by members of the school. Such leadership emphasises what the curriculum does in relation to inequality rather than what the curriculum is. The leader in this context must view the curriculum as a vehicle to social justice (Roofe and Bezzina 2017).

As articulated by Gaudelli and Urban (2011) normative traditional ideals about knowledge, that lack depth in conceptualisation of social justice, are barriers to attaining depth in the implementation

of social justice ethic in curriculum. To prevent such barriers to social justice in curriculum it is important that in both designing, enacting and leading curriculum all actors recognise and understand that there are other ways of knowing and that attaining knowledge has a plurality that must be advocated for, guarded and maintained. A common and deep understanding of social justice principles among all stakeholders engaged in designing, enacting and leading curricula is needed to prevent stereotyping and essentialising when catering to diversity in the curriculum (Gaudelli 2001).

The Study

This qualitative study of social justice school leadership among English, Jamaican and Spanish primary school leaders was undertaken during the period April 2017–February 2018. The guiding question for the study was, 'How do school leaders use a curriculum to lead in ways that are socially just for the individual learner as well as for society?' Our intention in asking this question was to understand how school leaders enact social justice leadership. This, against the background that performativity agendas and educational policy making are sometimes at odds with the daily realities of schooling (Miller 2016), and in recognition of the fact, that a school's curriculum can be a formidable tool for creating and promoting change (Roofe 2015).

Participants

There were 12 participants in this study: four each located in England, Jamaica and Spain. All 12 participants were principals or headteachers of primary schools located in rural/remote communities. Our choice of sample and focus relied upon UNESCO's (2001) definition that 'Rural areas comprise human settlements of less than 10,000 people and the rural space is dominated by farms, forests, water, mountains

Table 5.1 Demographic data of participants

Items/countries	England				Jamaica				Spain			
Participants	P1	P2	P3	P4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P1	P2	P3	P4
Teaching experience	25	23	14	15	17	25	23	20	11	25	31	30
Leadership experience	14	4	8	4	3	2	3	7	2	6	16	15
Leadership experience in how many schools	5	1	4	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	2	2
Student enrolled at current school	202	25	62	120	147	104	40	119	114	120	101	370
Number of teachers in current school	9	2	4	10	6	8	4	6	19	19	16	34
Gender	F	F	F	F	M	F	F	M	F	M	F	M

and/or desert' (p. 6), and the OECD's (1994) note that, the most widely used variable for defining 'rural' is population density: an area is rural if population density is below 150 inhabitants per square kilometre (OECD 1994). Schools in our study met the UNESCO and OECD benchmarks, and student enrolment ranged from a low of 25 students to a high of 370. As Miller (2015) noted, research on the work of school leaders in rural/remote school contexts is scarce. Eight females and four males participated in the study. Between them there was a combined teaching experience in years of 259 years; and a combined leadership experience in years of 84 years. English principals had 77 teaching years between them and 30 leadership years. Jamaican principals had 85 teaching years between them and 15 leadership years. Spanish principals had 97 teaching years between them and 39 leadership years. Participants were assigned pseudonyms (for example; P1 representing principal one) along with acronyms as follows: England, EN; Jamaica, JA; and SP representing Spain. See Table 5.1 for further details.

Analytical Approach

Qualitative interview data was collected which was analysed using narrative post-structuralism. In choosing this approach, we opted to focus

on the discourse and narratives of school leaders related to their work and school context. Foucault (1981) argues that, 'Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it' (p. 101). We therefore see discourse as a useful tool in understanding practice, since narratives constructed by participants are often subsumed into the actions that comprise their practice. Harvey (1990) notes that critical social research is 'not bounded by a single (grand) theoretical perspective' (p. 8), and Ball (1994) cautions against 'analytical closure', arguing instead for risk-taking and imagination since a primary concern for researchers 'is with the task rather than with theoretical prism or conceptual niceties' (p. 4).

Furthermore, we have incorporated the methods and procedures of ethnography in our analytical frame, in order to generate critical insights from school leaders regarding their practice in their specific context, and which enables access to events, discourses, and tactics used in school settings and/or cultural spaces, which may not be [adequately] captured by quantitative methods. Within this study of schools located in three countries on two continents, ethnography is used as an analytical frame to critically engage with and develop interpretations of the real (Ball 1994), and to highlight, in the participants' own words, how they interpret and enact social justice leadership. Interview quotations are presented, therefore, to illustrate and enable our analysis of discourses and 'events' in the different national, community and school settings in which school leaders work.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand how school leaders across different contexts understood and enacted social justice utilising a school curriculum. Similar themes emerged across the three countries with a few contextual differences. Four main themes: understanding social justice, doing social justice leadership, using the curriculum as a

social justice tool and responsibility for a curriculum were identified. These are discussed in turn below.

Understanding Social Justice

School leaders in the study had a shared understanding of social justice. Social justice was understood as equity, fair treatment and a 'right' for everyone.

> Social justice in its simplest terms is equality for all regardless of gender, culture, race, faith, class or background. [I]n legal terms it is the fair administration of law ensuring all persons, regardless of ethnic origin, gender, race, faith, religion, disability, etc., are treated equally and without prejudice. It should be a fair relationship between an individual and society. [P1 EN]

> The right of individuals to attain all that society has to offer. The right to education and property for children and community. Parents have a right to be heard and access to the facilities of the school. [P1 JA]

> For social justice is equitable distribution in terms of equal opportunities and that we all have the same rights. [P1 SP]

Given their conceptualisation of social justice, school leaders also proposed that social justice was an intrinsic part of their roles and a priority in how they lead, enabling all children to access quality education regardless of their circumstances. They felt it was their duty to use their positions of power to effect change to the lives of the stakeholders they serve.

> An understanding of social justice is relevant as a school leader because it is essential to offer an educational experience that all children can access, regardless of their socio-economic background. For example, they may never visit a library with their parents, or have any books in their home. As a school leader, it is vital to make this a core part of the curriculum, so that children can begin to understand their entitlement to such resources and how these can affect their lives positively. [P2 EN]

Social justice is very relevant and very important to my job as the stakeholders you serve look to you and want to know that you appreciate them or rather first of all accept them for who they are and then you try to uplift them from where they are. So they must see you as a tool or as a vehicle for social mobility. They expect you now to be able to assist them in solving even domestic problems not related specifically to the school. You have to be that mediator… within the community…you serve almost like a justice of the peace. [P4 JA]

Social justice is a priority. In fact, many times I have disagreements with colleagues because of it. It is important to treat our students with respect and help them develop their skills. [W]e also need to work with families. If we can get this, social justice can be achieved with little effort. [P4 SP]

Doing Social Justice Leadership at School

Across the different countries, leading remote/rural schools also meant being heavily involved in several aspects of community life. This presented opportunities as well as challenges for doing social justice work within the school and the community, associated with issues such as: the location and size of schools, government funding, and government policies.

Location and Size of School

Remote/rural schools in this study are small schools serving a small unique population. Across the three countries, school leaders felt school location and size were enablers to doing social justice work. This included better articulation of shared values, more efficient use of resources and greater opportunities for community involvement.

As far as possible, and in particular as we are a very small school, we try to offer an inclusive education to all children. All staff subscribe to the same ethos, which means that there is a shared approach to enabling children to access the curriculum if there are barriers related to life experiences (e.g. early childhood trauma/physical disability, etc.). [P2 EN]

> The teachers and parents are very supportive, and the fact that we are a small school, everyone works for the benefit of everyone. We build on the strong point of each person to ensure justice for all. [P2 JA]

> The small community where we work allows us to easily identify the main problems of our students. [W]e know families well, and we have direct accessibility to parents. In this school I think there is equality between families. [P3 SP]

Notwithstanding, school leaders expressed that there were instances when the size of their school presented a barrier to doing social justice work. For example, in England, the location of the school restricted access to racial diversity—since at least two communities were described by school leaders as 'quite White'. In Jamaica, the size of the school was a barrier to doing certain activities—as according to guidelines from the education ministry, schools need a minimum number of students on roll before additional and/or specialist teachers could be employed.

> The school is located in a predominantly white, British middle-class area with very few pupils from any other culture, race or ethnic origin. This puts us at a disadvantage in teaching social justice or injustice. We do not have pupils, parents or staff with first-hand experience to share, we find it very difficult to access primary resources to help teach social justice. Most pupils do not have an understanding of the needs, prejudice and hardships that are faced by others in their own country or around the world unless we actively teach it. For schools like ours it is much easier to teach about social injustice around the world than at home. [P1 EN]

> Because we are a small school we do not have the numbers according to the Ministry of Education to attract specialist teachers. The Ministry of Education has a policy that dictates the number of students that a school should have in order to get specialist teachers. Now this negatively affects us as sometimes students have emotional needs that we are unable to cater to adequately. We would benefit from having a nurse and guidance counsellor. You find that the teachers have to take on these responsibilities and while the teachers are very caring sometimes we do not have the skills to help the children. Most times these needs I speak of are really

emotional. However, we try to find our own way to see how best we can help the children. [P3 JA]

Government Funding and Policies

School leaders shared that government policies regarding funding enabled them to promote inclusion and respond more adequately to the needs of their stakeholders. In the three countries school leaders were able to exercise flexibility in catering to the needs of those who were disadvantaged because of poverty.

The Pupil premium funding provides schools with extra funds for pupils who are disadvantaged in terms of wealth—schools are free (within reason) to use these funds to ensure pupils can access all elements of the curriculum. I have very few pupils classified as pupil premium as the school is located in a rural area which is relatively affluent. I use the funds to ensure the pupils have funded educational visits and residential trips meaning they have the same access to opportunities their peers have. They also have funded after-school clubs and breakfast club, milk, snacks and instrumental lessons. We also use some of the funds to pay the salaries of teaching assistants to narrow the gap in educational attainment and progress between pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and their peers. [P1 EN]

The Programme for Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) programme enables us to provide for the students because we are very small. So even though some parents do not qualify for the programme (PATH) for one reason or another because we are a small school we are able to use what we get for the ones that qualify to serve the others who do not to ensure everyone benefits. [P3 JA]

In Spain… well you need to focus first on Andalusia. It is true that a programme for equity of all students is the PGL (Programa de Gratiudad de Libros de texto), the free textbook programme. Another programme for the success of all the students is the Plan of Opening Schools (Plan de Apertura de Centros), that provides bonus from 100% to different percentages according to the household income, for morning day-care,

school canteen and extracurricular activities. The SYGA (Solidaridad y Garantías Alimentarias), the Solidarity and Food Guarantees plan, which is also in our school and that consists of a food supplement for children of families with a very low household income (4500 euros for families with two members and 9000 euros for families of seven approximately). I think we are on our way to improving equity and social justice. [P4 SP]

School leaders also felt that some educational policies had gaps and did not sufficiently address the needs of all members of a school/society. Thus, some policies were regarded as both enablers and barriers to doing social justice work.

Ministers are always talking about social justice in education and put money into pupil premium funding for those who are disadvantaged, however, this is clearly not enough. They do not talk about the gaps associated with race or gender nor do they discuss pupils who start school with little or no English or those who do not have access to public funds as they have fled atrocious situations elsewhere. Pupil premium funding is only available for pupils whose parents are classed as low-income families but what about our pupils who are in ethnic minority groups? I have an increasing number of pupils starting in the reception class with little or no English and/or English not as their first language. With no staff who speak these languages and being in a remote location little access to help from the local authority we are not providing these pupils with a good education and one they need and deserve. These pupils are therefore not having equal access to the education system and we are provided with no funds to help with this. Extra funding would provide us with the means to employ staff with the same mother tongue as the pupils and ensure they could learn on an equal footing to their peers in the same class / school. [P1 EN]

The same policy which does not allow school personnel to dispense medication serves as a barrier because in instances when you need to act quickly because of an emergency or to ensure the safety and security of the children, the parents are not around so our hands are tied. And sometimes some parents feel we use the policy as an excuse not to help. So, it affects our interaction and relationship building. [P4 JA]

The nature of the barriers to doing social justice work in Spain was somewhat different:

> [A] barrier can be if families are not involved much in the education of their children. […] Some teachers are willing to collaborate with the entire educational community, not only with students, but they also are reluctant to have families in the school. [P1 SP]

> We work in multilevel classrooms and textbooks are not adapted to these settings. It is also difficult to do after school activities because of the geographical situation of the school. Sometimes the families are more interested in after school activities than in the school itself. Overprotection of some families is sometimes a problem. Also, with economic cuts, we do not have adequate personnel or external support (orientation, speech therapist, etc.). Teachers are employed on temporary contracts as the 2017 regulation allows them to be appointed for one year which has created instability for the school (around the 50% of teachers work only one year in the school). There is also shortage of staff and we sometimes have to cover teachers and do not have the time to do leadership team tasks. So government regulation is a barrier. [P3 SP]

The Curriculum as a Social Justice Tool

In most of the cases, school leaders identified their national curriculum with the promotion of social justice principles. They (as leaders) and their schools work with a curriculum that promotes inclusion, intergenerational and internationally focused content, and values and citizenship ideals (such as cooperation, collaboration, fairness, respect, diversity, critical thinking):

> We teach global citizenship and the rights of humans/children in our holistic education. We are values driven. [P4 EN]

Additionally:

> It promotes co-operation, collaboration and group work which provided the skills to work together for the good of everyone and not me, me. It

facilitates tapping into the strength of each one and ensuring that everyone understands that each person matters and each person´s talent and skill is important. [P2 JA]

However, two school leaders described that it was sometimes difficult to implement social justice in the school due to the large amount of content to teach and the lack of time. Nevertheless, they propose to work on social justice from a transversal and multidisciplinary approach:

The curriculum is very extensive and we have many subjects. The hours of 'free use' help us to reinforce instrumental subjects such as maths and language. It is difficult to achieve social justice. Educational values should be transversal, non-specific linked to the subject of civic attitudes in citizenship. [P4 SP]

Some school leaders also proposed 'adapting the curriculum for the rural school', and for students to participate in programmes and projects that can integrate with their community experience.

Connecting Curriculum to Society

School leaders try to lead the delivery of a national curriculum in a manner that promotes social justice for individual learners as well as for society in several ways. For example, they tend to work on values, promoting and teaching democracy, encouraging parent and community involvement at school, and adapting and contextualising the curriculum:

I try to establish values, attitudes and norms that encourage inclusion in school. I also encourage teacher training. I establish channels of communication with families and with teachers. The collaboration with the families is not high and I try to participate a lot. Work with projects, for example with the garden. Families are almost always there. I establish open meetings with families. Leadership is distributed, we share responsibilities and decisions. I also collaborate with the entities that exist at the 'state' level. [P1 SP]

My mandate is to ensure that every child benefits from the curriculum and the learning that is provided. I encourage student-centredness amongst my teachers. For example at staff meetings I encourage teachers to be practical to use the things in the community and I have compulsory staff development once per term. [P1 JA]

As a school we actively promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The school has a school council where representatives are elected, and pupils are taught about democracy; pupils are taught about the importance of rules and the rule of law; we teach, learn about and discuss the freedom to choose our faith and beliefs and accept others may not have the same beliefs as our own but this should not mean they are discriminated against. [P1 EN]

Some school leaders also emphasised the importance of teacher training, workplace learning, and learning from/about others as ways of learning how to integrate social justice principles in the curriculum.

Making Social Justice Explicit in the Curriculum

School leaders argued that a weakness in existing curricula was that they merely attempt to establish equal opportunity, but do not make the topic Social Justice explicit:

Where social justice is concerned the related topics are not brought out explicitly so this can be enhanced in the curriculum. It is implicit but not explicit. The curriculum planners have provided the broad base and I believe it is the role of the principal and teachers in all subject areas for it to be more explicit. This needs to be more focused. Social justice is tied up in school leadership but we have to make the actions more explicit and so for it to be explicit we have to emphasise the actions. [P1 JA]

The curriculum is fair, but in some ways is not too flexible. We have to look for the possibilities that the curriculum give us. We can see the glass half empty or half full. We need students wanting to come to the

school because they are happy with us. We have to teach not only with books. From this way we can work against the inequality. As well we need resources to do it. The curriculum is quite abstract, but we have to enrich it with activities. We need coherence in all the activities…. If our goal is social justice we have to demonstrate with facts in the class every day. We cannot be vegetarians and dress with a cow belt. [P2 SP]

While another principal stated:

[M]ore can be done to ensure we are learning from past mistakes and that previous miscarriages of justice – or occasions where the system has failed individuals / groups – are learnt from (e.g.: gay rights). The problem comes from an increasing fragmentation of our curriculum with the introduction of academies, selection and free schools. Nationally we need to hold our schools to account for their curriculum choices. [P3 EN]

School leaders also acknowledged the beneficial role that context specific learning, local and international school partnerships and appropriate experiential learning can play in deepening social justice learning.

Responsibility for a Social Justice Curriculum

Regarding responsibilities, school leaders from all three countries suggested they alone are not responsible for developing and embedding social justice content in a school curriculum. Nearly all felt the education ministry, which has responsibility for a country's agreed curriculum, needed to take the lead on this, supported by the entire educational community (teachers, students, school boards and families):

The entire educational community is responsible for this. The leadership is not just me, we are all the teachers together, the executive team. We need more input from everyone to make the changes… [P2 SP]

The headteacher and the governing body are responsible for these changes. [P2 EN]

Any changes to be made to the curriculum will need to be done by the ministry of education and principals will then drive the implementation of those decisions at school level. [P4 JA]

Discussion

The findings from our research in England, Jamaica and Spain have brought to light several issues that are worth debating and examining further. These include: connecting social justice to society; making social justice content more explicit in curriculum; contextualising curriculum for rural/remote schools; situating social justice in teacher training/education; recognising rural/remote schools, by their nature and make up as sites of social justice practice; treating social justice research as multidisciplinary/multidimensional framework. Together, we consider these issues to be practical (related to the curriculum content, teacher training/education); methodological (related to designing and researching social justice research) and perspectival (related to conceptual and theoretical issues). We discuss them in turn below.

Practical Issues

A curriculum cannot accommodate the range of issues relevant to equip students in becoming well rounded, well informed and confident citizens of a society—who can contribute to its ambitions and future development. Yet, the curriculum is the most likely tool for achieving this—starting with the curriculum taught to trainee-teachers. Like school leaders, teachers are crucial for implementing and embedding social justice practices at school. However, to provide the best possible chance for making deep and meaningful change, social justice content needs to be explicitly included in teacher training/education programmes. In this way, teachers will have a common understanding of social justice, and by being able to internalise its values, they will be in a better position to transform classrooms and potentially the lives

of students (Miller and Roofe 2013). This training could be formally implemented—continuous professional development courses—or informally promoted—communities of practice among principals (García-Carmona et al. 2017). In addition to the explicit inclusion of social justice in teacher-training curriculum, this also needs to be the case for the school curriculum. Students are living in an increasingly globalised village and they need exposure to and understanding of diversity and difference, equity, tolerance, respect, human rights, etc. Two school leaders described their students as 'living in a bubble' in White communities, and having to rely upon international examples to teach concepts of social justice to students. By embedding and integrating explicit social justice content in school curriculum, students both outside and within a 'bubble' can be guaranteed a comparable understanding of various social justice issues. Furthermore, schools should be encouraged and be provided with support making their curriculum contraghegemonic (Connell 1993), thus being able to adapt aspects of an agreed curriculum to more appropriately reflect contextual everyday realities of a school and its local community (Connell 1993).

Methodological Issues

Social justice is a hugely subjective concept, and designing and conducting research that acknowledges this limitation is common sense. Yet, an acknowledgement of this limitation is no excuse to not design robust and thought-provoking research that can assist policy makers, school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders in education. Instead, we argue, this limitation makes it even more important that research on social justice be innovative, drawing on schools and school communities rather than only school leaders. Miller (2015) highlights the importance of the community context and involvement in assessing the work of schools/leaders in rural/remote schools. We argue that our understanding of social justice leadership could be enhanced by case studies of different institutions, and their local communities, where the focus of the research is on how schools and communities

understand and do social justice, instead of primarily on school leaders. Additionally, we feel there is both the need and opportunity for social justice research to be multidimensional and multidisciplinary, thus providing more and better opportunities to understand social justice from a holistic perspective. Examining social justice school leadership from social sciences disciplines such as Economics, Political Science and Sociology has great potential to enhance our understanding of the curriculum and its hidden aspects, as well as the actions (and hesitations) of school leaders. Furthermore, from our research, the logic of small rural/remote schools with multigrades, small numbers, spacious playgrounds, variable facilities and resources, strong community involvement, varying degrees of diversity (ethic, gender, class, etc.), and flatter organisational structures can themselves be understood as social justice issues which lend themselves to multidimensional case study research.

Theoretical/Perspectival Issues

We argued earlier that for social justice work to be successful and effective, this requires critical pedagogy, inclusiveness, cultural responsiveness and transformative leadership. We argue that for social justice to be connected to society, it requires all these four elements. Education is a public good, and a merit good. As a public good, it should be available to all in equal measure, and as a merit good, its potential benefits should impact all in the same way. The reality of education received by students is often very different from its official status in international law. Notwithstanding these tensions, we argue that a curriculum is a tool for social good which has significant potential to narrow socio-economic, cultural, religious and other gaps in society. Thus, school leaders connect education/schools with social justice and social justice with both schools and society (see Fig. 5.1). This important relationship highlights the essential role of school leaders in influencing and/or shaping societal (public) values as well as ensuring schools do not reproduce the hegemonic voices within society.
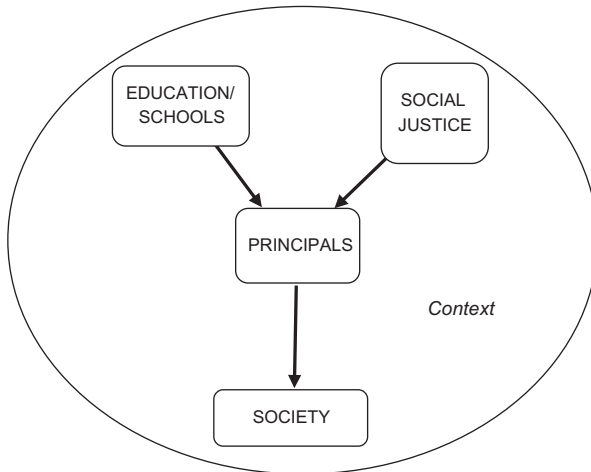
Fig. 5.1   Principal's role in connecting education, social justice and society

Conclusions

Education is a public good, to be connected to society from a fair, reflective and critical perspective. This implies that social justice is explicit in both curriculum and teacher training. To ensure this, we need a contextualised curriculum that attends to diversity of schools, students, families and community, fighting against a hegemonic curriculum. We argue that a possible example of this model is the very structure and functioning of rural schools. That is, and quite paradoxically, by the presence and/or absence of certain characteristics, these schools bespeak crucial aspects of 'social justice' itself (i.e. close relationship with families, learning activities adapted to each student, individualised attention due to the size of the classroom, activities that include all the educational community, addressing lack of diversity, etc.).

Based on the evidence, this approach suggests: including social justice in teacher professional development from a multidisciplinary/multidimensional framework, applying the curriculum as a social justice tool to address the needs of all members of the school, and using their

positions of power to effect change to the lives of the stakeholders they serve. Additionally, leading the curriculum in socially just ways means ensuring that equity and fairness are accessible by every student and family, promoting citizenship ideals among them. But this change is not possible if we lack activist leadership and quality research that draws on multiple actors and multidisciplinary approaches that have potential to advance our understanding of the range of issues and provide insights into probable interventions.

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6

Leadership for Social Justice in Schools in Mexico, New Zealand, and Spain

Charles L. Slater, Patricia Silva, Gema López-Gorosave, Michele Morrison, Serafín Antúnez, Brian Michael Corrales Maytorena and Rachel McNae

Introduction

Schools are struggling to accommodate diverse pupil populations. In some cases, diversity comes from indigenous and marginalised peoples living near the school. In other cases, new students form part of mass migrations of people fleeing from war, famine, and poverty. Their families face extraordinary struggles to leave their home country and transport themselves to a new culture. The presence of multiple cultures and languages creates a complex environment with many challenges. This chapter looks at the leadership of school directors for children who

C. L. Slater (✉)
California State University Long Beach,
Long Beach, CA, USA
e-mail: Charles.Slater@csulb.edu

P. Silva
Department of Pedagogy and Psychology,
University of Lleida, Lleida, Spain
e-mail: patriciasilva@ub.edu

may not speak the dominant language of the country, and/or have little experience in the dominant culture. Their leadership actions can be understood as transformational and occasionally transformative. These concepts are explained along with applied critical leadership (ACL) as they guide the research questions from the perspectives of the directors and the teachers.

From Transformational Leadership to Transformative Leadership

Teachers and principals interested in social justice have adopted practices widely described in leadership literature as transformational, such as building trust (Bryk and Schneider 2002) and challenging the established process for conducting business (Kouzes and Posner 2012). The principals and teachers in this study exhibited these practices and occasionally moved beyond transformational practices to transformative practices described by Shields (2010), Taylor et al. (2009), and Santamaria (2014).

G. López-Gorosave
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California,
Ensenada, Mexico

M. Morrison · R. McNae
University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand
e-mail: michele.morrison@waikato.ac.nz

R. McNae
e-mail: rachel.mcnae@waikato.ac.nz

S. Antúnez
University of Barcelona (UB), Barcelona, Spain
e-mail: santunez@ub.edu

B. M. C. Maytorena
State Normal School, Westfield, MA, USA
e-mail: bcorrales@benejpl.edu.mx

Kouzes and Posner (2012) helped to popularise Burns' (1978) concept of transformational leadership in the world of business. They defined a transformational leader as one who inspires a shared vision; encourages collaboration and the creation of effective teams; promotes high expectations and recognises the work of the members of the organisation. This type of transformational leadership requires a high level of interaction among the members of an organisation.

In education, Da Costa et al. (2014) described transformational leadership as a result of increased motivation and commitment on the part of school directors and teachers. They argued that it is necessary to enhance the participation of all in collaborative work. Cornejo et al. (2014) emphasised that it is fundamental to guide teams in a particular direction toward excellence and organisational learning. They pointed out that strategic management, communication, delegation, negotiation, conflict resolution, teamwork, and the participation of families open the possibilities for change.

Shields (2010, 2016) proposed that transformational leadership should be extended to include a social justice perspective called transformative leadership. She studied the pedagogical conceptions of principals in relation to social justice and concluded that transformative leadership takes into account how inequalities in the outside world affect the results of what happens in educational organisations. She pointed out that transformative leaders do not dwell on failures or deal with superficial aspects, but rather, they focus on ensuring more equitable learning environments and pedagogical practices appropriate for all students. Shields' (2010) concept of transformative leadership goes beyond transformational leadership because it includes a more critical perspective.

Shields' (2010) work has inspired portraits of school principals in the U.S and Mexico. DeMatthews et al. (2016) studied a school leader, Mrs. Donna, who established a school in Mexico along the border with the U.S. She exhibited transformative leader practices, which included: leadership oriented toward the lived experiences of marginalised communities; a connection of school lives to community lives; commitment to a view of schooling that included more than academic achievement; a priority of interaction with the community; and most importantly for transformative leadership, a challenge to dominant ideologies.

Another school leader in northern California in the U.S. provided safety by protecting undocumented parents and students from the threat of deportation. She was sensitive to the culture of the community; she communicated regularly and had developed a critical consciousness through which she understood the implications of immigration enforcement that persecuted and marginalised parents in her school (Crawford 2017).

The transformative practices reported by DeMatthews et al. (2016) and Crawford (2017) were related to the practices of culturally responsive school leadership described in a recent review of literature by Khalifa et al. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership included critical self-awareness, developing, implementing and sustaining culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation, maintaining an inclusive school environment, and engagement with students and parents.

Schools, therefore, are challenged to help ensure that all students, without exception, have the same opportunities to develop their competencies, especially those who are in personal and family situations more precarious and at risk of falling into social exclusion. In this context, it is not enough for a leader to promote equity within the school and treat students equally. Instead, there is an obligation to address the marginalisation of students resulting from injustices in society requiring a greater level of interaction among the members of an organisation.

From Transformative Leadership to Applied Critical Leadership

Previous studies by the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) reported observations of transformative leadership (Shields 2010) among school staff who advocated for inclusiveness in many ways (Silva et al. 2017; Slater et al. 2016, 2017). They were able to set an example, build consensus, and establish trust.

Santamaria (2014) introduced the concept of ACL to analyse advocacy from a critical leadership perspective. She paid attention to diversity, critical theory, and educational leadership and included aspects

of both transformational and transformative leadership. ACL involves conducting critical conversations, assuming a critical race theory lens, building consensus, addressing stereotype threat, promoting academic discourse, honouring all constituents, leading by example, and establishing trust.

The intent of the current study is to examine school leaders who expressed commitment to providing a socially just environment to welcome students who were new to the culture and language or who had been oppressed and excluded from the dominant culture. The countries selected were Mexico, New Zealand, and Spain. The study forms part of the ISLDN which has carried out a series of international studies (McNae et al. 2017; Morrison et al. 2015; Norberg et al. 2014; Richardson and Sauers 2014; Slater et al. 2014; Sperandio and Wilson-Tagoe 2015; Szeto 2014; Torrance and Forde 2015).

Research Questions

The study set out to understand the issues surrounding social justice leadership in schools in México, New Zealand and Spain. The research questions were:

- What was the perspective of teachers toward the needs of different groups in the school community?
- What was the perspective of the principal about what interventions were important to address the needs of students and parents?

Research Design

Three schools with three school directors and three teachers participated in this study. The directors were selected according to the criteria established by the editors of this book, with the intention of drawing conclusions at an international level about social justice decision making and leadership through exploring rich stories of how social justice is enacted. The editors specified that each study should include three different

countries on a least two different continents, with at least one country classified as a developing country. The chapter authors are native to Mexico, New Zealand, and Spain, each having long standing research relationships with each other from work on international projects.

To select school principals, the researchers relied on their knowledge of the region and the reputation of schools. Each team asked public school administrators and experienced teachers to suggest school principals who met the selection criteria used by Theoharis (2010). He selected principals who:

> led a public school, possessed a belief that promoting social justice is a driving force behind what brought them to their leadership position, advocated, led, and kept at the centre of their practice/vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or other historically marginalizing conditions, and had evidence to show their work has produced a more just school. (p. 335)

The principals who most closely approximated the selection criteria and showed accessibility and willingness to collaborate were selected. They, in turn, named a teacher in the school to be included for interview on the basis of commitment to the social justice mission enunciated by the director.

A common protocol was used to collect three sources of data for this study. To address macro questions, the researcher in each country completed a description of the major national and state educational policies. A second protocol was used in an interview to address school issues from the point of view of a teacher. A third protocol was used in an interview with the principal to describe how student needs were addressed.

The interviews of teachers and principals lasted for 60–90 minutes and were transcribed and analysed to identify emergent themes, and then constructed as a written narrative. The interview transcripts and the narratives were translated into English for the researchers to make comparisons across countries. These narratives were examined for common themes among the schools in each country (Denzin and Lincoln 1994).

Case Study 1: Mexico

Educational Policy

Mexico is a multicultural country with a population exceeding 123 million inhabitants and with great linguistic diversity. While most Mexicans speak Spanish, more than 7 million speak any of the 68 registered indigenous languages. Almost 90% of the indigenous population lives concentrated in municipalities of high marginalisation with very low rates of social development, which is why, in recent decades, a growing number of them migrate in search of work. Part of this migration is received in the Mexican state of Baja California, the context in which this case was developed.

Cities such as Monte Alban, Teotihuacan, Palenque, El Tajin, Chichen Itza, among others, emerged over several millennia, leaving testimony of the great cultures developed in what is now Mexican territory. During the Conquest of Mexico, beginning in the fifteenth century, Catholicism and Spanish forms of government were implanted. Since then, indigenous people have been stripped of their land and excluded from civic participation. Although the Revolution restored many lands to the Indians, it did not allow the autochthonous communities to recover their self-sufficiency (Navarrete 2008).

As an equity policy, the Mexican educational system created the multicultural and bilingual educational modality for preschool, primary, and secondary schools. Within these schools, the instruction must be given in Spanish and in the indigenous language of the region, but the reality is that most of the teachers hired for the indigenous modality speak an indigenous language different from that of the community in which they work. In addition, these schools are inadequately resourced. Problems to do with infrastructure and lack of translated educational materials contribute to students getting the lowest results in national academic achievement assessments (Backhoff 2016). Moreover, the insufficient number of indigenous schools means that around 30% of indigenous children attend regular schools where teachers and principals do not have the training to work with students of different languages and cultures, as is the case with the school in which the present study was developed.

The School

In Mexico, students attend school in the morning or the afternoon. The school in this study was founded by the current principal in 2005 as an afternoon school to accommodate the overflow of enrolment from the morning school. This small school operates from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. with six grade level teachers, two technical pedagogical advisors, one principal and 133 students ages six to twelve from mostly indigenous families who migrated from Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas to the south of Ensenada, B.C. The principal started with concrete classrooms and wooden toilets. The school has adequate furniture, office space, a dining room and a playground. It has electricity, but it does not have access to telephone lines, Internet or plumbing for bathrooms. It is classified as a school with a high risk of student failure.

The Teacher

Jesús does not speak the mother tongue of his students. When he arrived at the school, he found students who did not speak Spanish, and noticed the overcrowding, poverty and hunger which many families experienced. His first grade had 21 students, of which 16 were indigenous. Some children arrived at class at 1:00 p.m. without having had breakfast, some had health problems and other children worked 30 km away from their homes.

In these circumstances, Jesús said that all he had left was to give the best of himself to his students. In the school they managed food for the children, which was appreciated by the parents because the school met their most urgent needs. The teacher commented with some anguish, 'parents expect a lot from the school…they treat us with great respect, hoping that we can do everything'. He pointed out that the relations between the teachers and the principal were very good, 'We have the ability to solve conflicts peacefully, we accept and respect ourselves.'

The school promoted collegial work and developed a plan to overcome lack of learning. According to Jesús, communication was the key, 'Parents and children see us as an authority to be heard; the

principal also involves us and consults us in all the activities, recognises us, respects us in front of the parents and lets us display our own leadership.' The social fabric built in the school was also a key factor to improve the school building. The school was built partly through the work of parents on weekends.

Jesús described himself as a loving teacher, his efforts were directed towards learning and developing self-esteem and values in his students. 'I try to make them feel proud because they speak two languages. I try to be in tune with them. I focus on their feelings.'

Jesús was concerned that parents treated girls differently from their male siblings: 'They leave them (girls) to take care of their younger brothers… there is a culture of machismo, the man is the one who makes the decisions within the family, and this culture is reproduced between brother and sister in school.'

He wanted his students to have computers and to enjoy more quality time with parents. He also indicated that educational authorities could be obstacles. From his perspective, 'maybe people have good intentions, but the system does not allow them to carry them out; they do not facilitate our role'.

In spite of the above, the coordinated actions between teachers and parents have yielded some positive results. Parents constructed better spaces in the school; teachers were successful in reducing the lag in student achievement, and students learned more and enjoyed their stay in the school.

The Principal

Guadalupe has directed both the morning shift and the afternoon shift at the school. Coming to know the parents, students, and teachers, she observed that the main problems within the school originated from poverty and its consequences manifest in high levels of illiteracy among parents, long working days, and unemployment, malnutrition, overcrowding in homes, and, in some of them, a sexist culture of violence and alcoholism. She attributed the lag in children's learning in the reading and writing of Spanish to the fact that their mother tongue differed

from that of the school, and that parents were barely able to provide financial support for their children. Despite these circumstances, the students stood out in the school zone for their good results in the national evaluations, which she attributed to strategies developed by teachers over several years. They used children as translators and tutors to facilitate the process of integration of students who arrive without speaking Spanish. Teachers focused on the basics, while school counsellors worked with children in a personalised way. They conducted an exam at the beginning of the year to identify children in need of special support.

The principal emphasised that in school the children were happy. She stressed that teachers share common values such as education, respect, and equality. For her, it was important to treat everyone equally. She expressed satisfaction in saying that after working hard, 'Children… respect the school, they respect each other more and they are very generous.'

She remembered that at the beginning, the school's structural condition was precarious and serious problems persisted such as pollution generated by a lack of cleanliness from the septic tank: 'Today we have better conditions for children in school, teachers and students have the basic materials in their classrooms.'

The relationship between the principal and parents was reported to be very close. The principal communicated with parents and visited homes to solve family problems. She worked with mothers to combat violence in the home and had the support of the community and the influence to bring the community together. She resolved conflicts in families working with women who were suffering from violence at home. For her, the major problem and risk situation was the time that children spent alone at home.

Guadalupe would like her students to have the same opportunities as others and not suffer discrimination when they meet children from other schools. She complained about discrimination in favour of whites or those who are better dressed. When her children visited another school to play games, the other children rejected her indigenous students. She intervened and said, 'No, this game is open to all and every child is equal, so let's all play together', and to the children of her school she said, 'Stay in the conversation and do not feel less important.'

She would also like the system to be more efficient rather than wearing down the school through requiring endless negotiations to obtain resources. She attributed her success to her ability to prioritise and persevere in a style that is demanding without being confrontational:

> First, they say no, (and) you have to return many times, but I do not let the authorities rest… I get along, but I can be demanding without fighting, I do not move from their offices until they give me what I need,… because the resources are not distributed equally in the schools, I fight for them.

Case Study 2: New Zealand

Educational Policy

In New Zealand, state education is free and secular. The majority (96%) of students attend state schools in varied socioeconomic contexts, ranging from small rural primary schools of fewer than 100 students to large urban secondary schools with rolls in excess of 3000 students. School governance is highly devolved, with individual schools governed by locally elected parent trustees and reporting directly to the Ministry of Education. The school principal is also a member of the Board of Trustees and plays a central role.

In comparison with OECD countries (PISA), New Zealand's education system is characterised by high quality and low equity. Despite being signatories to the nation's founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi, and guaranteed possession of taonga (treasures) including land, customs and language, indigenous Māori found themselves subjected to a European education system that subjugated local ways of knowing and marginalised Māori students. Consequent disparities in educational access, opportunity and outcome have persisted, despite a raft of educational initiatives and legislation requiring schools to enact the principles of partnership, participation and protection underpinning the relationship between Māori and the Crown.

The School

Introduced in the early 1930s (Neville-Tisdall 2002), intermediate schools cater for students aged 11–13 years. A combination of integrated curriculum and homeroom teaching, with separate specialist classes in technology and visual and performing arts subjects helps transition students from primary (years 1–6) to secondary (years 9–13) schooling modes (Dinham and Rowe 2007). One of 117 intermediate schools in New Zealand, Totara Intermediate is located in an urban North Island location. At the time of writing, 30 teachers served approximately 630 Year 7–8 students, 26% of whom are of Māori descent. The school's mid-socioeconomic status reflects significant disparity in material circumstances, including children who live in multi-million dollar homes and deprived residential areas, the latter predominantly populated by Māori families.

The Teacher

A career teacher of emerging adolescents in years 7 and 8, Andrea joined the staff of Totara Intermediate 18 years ago, following promotion from another school to the role of senior teacher. She currently teaches integrated curriculum to Year 8 students in a homeroom class. During her long tenure at the school, Andrea has worked with multiple principals and observed multiple changes in leadership philosophy and approach. Looking back, she reflected on a lack of strategic direction that meant 'there was leadership, but they weren't actually leading the ship', periods when the school's poor reputation in the community precipitated roll decline, pedagogy and practice that were data-thin and not well understood, and a 'rough patch' when staff relationships were particularly fraught. The crisis was such that Andrea contemplated leaving but the appointment of a new principal (Emma) restored her faith in her colleagues' ability to establish positive relationships and serve their students well.

Andrea outlines the 'massive' change that Emma has initiated internally and externally, through the development of culturally responsive

pedagogies that generated trust and accelerated indigenous student learning. In part, this change reflected more widespread advances in discursive teaching practice and data analysis, but it also demanded skill and resolve on the part of the principal: 'Emma sees herself as a change agent. That's her strength. She just had to get the culture right before she could change anything else.' A focus on open-to-learning conversations, the ability of the principal to role model desired change, and a physical environment that encouraged collaborative planning and teaching were crucial in establishing relational trust. An inquiry approach into best practice meant that strategies were co-constructed rather than imposed.

Critical to the shift in teacher mind frames that perceived Māori students in a deficit manner was the building of links with local iwi (tribal members). Field trips to local marae (communal meeting places) and landmarks meant Andrea felt 'empowered with a little bit of knowledge – we can read it as much as we like, but [need] to actually live it, and be part of it'. Her knowledge of Māori culture was further enhanced by the deliberate appointment of colleagues steeped in te reo (language) and tikanga (customs), and the professional learning undertaken of her own volition. Andrea stressed that for Māori students to make a minimum of one year's academic progress within 12 months, she had to know the whole child and form strong partnerships with their whānau (families). It is essential that children and parents feel safe confiding in teachers and believe that the latter will advocate for them. Acknowledging that parents' experience of schooling has often been an unhappy one, Andrea endeavours to meet them in their home, 'on the couch with six or seven parents, brothers and sisters, or uncles and aunties there', rather than expecting caregivers to consistently engage in Eurocentric ways on school premises.

She believes that the development of school values shifts from punitive to restorative behaviour management approaches through mechanisms such as Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L). Student voice, authentic learning contexts, and strong home/school partnerships have been key strategies in ensuring that students feel a sense of belonging that both celebrates and transcends ethnicity. She is mindful that intermediate teachers work with students for a short period of time and

feels morally obliged to interrogate and adapt her professional practice: 'They've [students] had 7 or 8 years at school. Nothing's worked.' Differentiated activities in Andrea's classroom mean that 'learning looks different' for individual students, and she emphasises the need for pragmatism in aligning content, presentation modes, and grouping strategies in ways that capture student interest, encourage reciprocity, peer support, and ultimately enhanced learning outcomes.

Andrea detected a profound shift from cultural tokenism that saw Māori performing arts treated more as a subject to cultural inclusion that meant indigenous ways of knowing were infused through every aspect of school life. She now perceives a need to refine and embed culturally inclusive pedagogy, rather than embark on radical change.

The Principal

Appointed to Totara Intermediate as a first-time principal, Emma acknowledged that it was not an easy school in which to begin her leadership career but 'there were many facets that appealed, and the job description grabbed me'. She acknowledged that this was 'a school in crisis and someone needed to love the place'. With many years working as a qualified teacher and national education advisory service facilitator, she possessed numerous professional skills and personal attributes. Emma realised that re-enfranchising the school within the community, reversing roll decline, and restoring staff morale would require her to maximise all of these assets.

Reshaping and building relationships was a critical initial step in Emma's leadership. She immediately recognised the tension between the desperate need to grow foundational relationships, but also implement the changes needed to accelerate achievement as quickly as possible. Emma set about developing relationships to reconnect the school with its surrounding community. She sought guidance from local indigenous tribes and indigenous tribal elders, drawing on their leadership and wisdom. Opening the school up to the community through clear and transparent communication channels helped to improve community engagement and perceptions of the school. Emma strengthened

relationships with parents and included them as facilitators of change, cultural experts and partners in the education process rather than disengaged obstacles to change and an audience for staff decisions. This practice extended to staff and students as she worked to cement herself in the relational matrix of the school. Her 'open door' policy enhanced her perceived availability and presence.

Reshaping school culture through embedding high expectations of behaviour was another critical feature of Emma's leadership that supported Māori students in the school. Initially, the school was perceived by the community, staff and students as unsafe. Emma observed the school context to be fraught with violence, with bullying at perilous levels. Rather than continuing with punitive measures such as detention, suspension and exclusion processes, she embedded collaborative and restorative practices to address behavioural issues. Strategies such as openly confronting racism and homophobic bullying were central, with Emma stating, 'We are a 'speak out' school.'

Through her leadership, Emma reshaped pedagogical practices and built capabilities in staff. With dialogue being promoted as a foundational strategy for building race consciousness (Horsford and Clark 2015), Emma provided opportunities for staff to critically reflect upon routines, rituals and practices that marginalised students within the school setting. Exposing people's deep-set beliefs about topics such as racism assisted Emma in developing a school culture that sought to disrupt practices that inhibited students flourishing. She proudly stated, 'We challenge social issues collectively.' Staff behaviour which failed to align with this collaborative approach was challenged in open conversations.

Emma reshaped systems and processes within the school, aligning what she described as the 'core business' of teachers with the needs of students. Robinson's (2011) student-centred leadership was core to her work, and she made changes to the teaching and learning programme, applying what she described as 'data driven decision making'—using student achievement data to refocus staffing and school resources. Mindful of the demands she was making on staff and the community, Emma was unapologetic and determined to 'work gently to roll that out' with firm, clear and high expectations that 'what's good for Māori, is good for everyone'.

Case Study 3: Spain

National and State Educational Policy

In Spain, immigrant students receive a free education and access to the public system of scholarships under the same conditions as Spanish citizens (Article 9 of the Organic Law 4/2000). This right includes obtaining the corresponding commitment to provide teachers with the same qualifications for the social integration of immigrants. This law is applicable in Catalonia, the region with its own autonomous government in which this study was carried out. From the year 2000 until 2010, a new phenomenon has emerged: Catalonia became a destination for emigration of people from other countries in Eastern Europe, North Africa, Latin America and several Asian countries, particularly China and Pakistan.

In the year 2000, the immigrant population represented 2.9% of the total Catalan population, increasing to 13.6% of the total population in 2016 (IDESCAT 2016). This situation has presented a difficult challenge for educational authorities. They must respect the rights of the children of these families and provide them with the necessary help so that they can be successfully incorporated into the educational system. The most prominent public policies in this area date from 2004, with the implementation of the Plan for Language and Social Cohesion (Departament d'Educació 2004). This plan has three main objectives: (i) to promote the social and school inclusion of all students, (ii) to consolidate the Catalan language as a vehicular language in schools, and (iii) to develop awareness of the equality and dignity of all people.

The two key strategies designed to implement the Plan relate to host classrooms and the training programme for teachers. Host classrooms are spaces for migrant students, who do not know the language of instruction, to attend in a special and individualised way to enhance their access to learning and inclusion (Besalú 2006). The time spent in host classrooms (usually one per school) is limited to only a few hours a day and for a maximum period of two years. The teacher training programme has only had partial success since it was basically aimed at teachers working in host classrooms rather than all teachers working

across the school. This initiative did not address the institution as a whole or involve all stakeholders to guarantee sustainability.

The School

The school is classified as highly complex. In Catalonia, highly complex schools serve students and families with many socioeconomic needs, in vulnerable situations. The school is located in a lower middle class urban area in the city of Santa Coloma. There is one group at each grade level, comprising three groups of preschool education and six groups of primary school. There are 254 students and 20 teachers. In total there are 12 different nationalities with immigrant students being predominantly of Moroccan origin, and other students being of Romanian, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Ecuadorian, Bolivian, Honduran, Dominican Republic and Nigerian origin. 10% of students are native to Spain; 90% are children of migrant families, some of which were born in Catalonia but did not have contact with the Catalan language until they entered school.

The principal of the school had 20 years of teaching experience including 12 years in management positions. The teacher who was interviewed had 15 years of teaching experience and taught first grade.

The Teacher

The teacher identified two reasons that led him to devote himself to migrant students, in situations of risk and social exclusion. The first reason related to his own personal history. He came from a humble, working class family and made great efforts to study in a very disadvantaged school. He wanted to help his students by providing them with opportunities he did not have. He said that offering opportunities for all is the best way to educate for social justice. The second reason related to the success of his students with disabilities and learning needs. He believed it necessary to have high expectations for all students, without exception, especially for those who live in vulnerable social and family contexts. He acknowledged that most teachers lacked the necessary

training to attend to the diversity of students with very different abilities included in ordinary classrooms, and that students needs are increasingly complex and heterogeneous due to migration.

The teacher did everything possible so that students with additional learning needs due to disability, absenteeism or immigration issues felt part of the group and kept pace with the others. He wanted to prepare them not only for going to secondary school, but also for learning how to overcome the problems that life posed for them. He wanted his class to be an example of social justice, in which students were not segregated from classmates.

He recognised the effort and actions of the director in supporting teachers in their commitment to social justice. He identified that some of the main obstacles to making this aspiration possible were the attitudes of some teachers, who paid attention only to students who learned rapidly and could follow their teaching; they tended to ignore other students because they required greater effort than they were willing to make and had very low expectations of students with the greatest need for help. Those teachers believed that it was not worth working with such students since they would leave school for low-skilled jobs or be responsible only for domestic tasks and the care of children.

The teacher explained that some native-born families commented negatively on the school because of the supposed advantages that disadvantaged families received: food tickets, scholarships including 100% funding of books and aid for the school canteen etc. In his view, he considered it fundamental to treat students without labels, prejudices or stereotypes since everyone deserved fair and equitable treatment.

The Principal

The principal raised with teachers that since the school had changed considerably over a short time due to massive immigration, that forms of work had to change. Improved and more equitable methodologies needed to be used with students especially those with special and/or emotional needs, for example, in relation to oral and written comprehension and expression.

She developed, together with the teachers, an in-depth analysis of the school. She sent the resulting diagnosis and corresponding list of requirements to the educational authorities and received some of the requested resources: two more teachers for the school and a complementary economic allocation. She also received exceptional help: a training program in emotional education for teachers, to prepare adequately for the care of children with emotional problems due to being torn from their natural environment, enrolling in a school in an unfamiliar country, with working parents.

The principal also implemented an Environment Plan with a network of social organisations that worked with children in adverse conditions. The plan was to conduct activities to reinforce learning several days a week. High school students came to the elementary school one day a week to help teach reading to the youngest students in sports, music, and theatre. Through theatre, students advanced in language learning and oral expression. She noted that participation in artistic activities provided an important motivating element for children.

She managed to have social service aides in the neighbourhood meet the neediest children before the start of school hours to avoid them being alone when parents had to go to work very early. The school also provided breakfast, and cared for the children for an hour after the school day while their parents were still working.

She supported the idea that education for social justice implied that, despite the shortcomings of the school, students must have the same opportunities and resources at their disposal as in other less challenged schools. She enabled teachers and students to actively participate in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) world through the use of computers, computer programmes, and digital whiteboards in all classrooms.

The principal believed that social justice required ongoing actions with continuity over time to avoid the obstacle of frequent teacher changes. Through creative processes of debate and negotiation, the principal convinced educational authorities to ensure a stable teaching team.

Discussion

The cases of schools in Mexico, New Zealand and Spain help to explain issues surrounding educational leadership in diverse international contexts. In this discussion section, we discuss these issues from a policy perspective, from the teachers' points of view, and from the director's vantage points.

Policy Context

The schools in this study were attempting to accommodate the needs of students from marginalised populations. Most countries aspire to universal participatory citizenship at least in policy pronouncements. However, the most influential factors in diversity experienced in these schools were the asymmetries of development between countries and regions, as well as the high levels of poverty and marginalisation of some populations that increased international and/or national migration of the poorest to the regions with greater economic development. This has generated enormous challenges for the host regions to educate in diversity. Despite the existence of inclusive educational policies in the countries, schools were overwhelmed by the complexity and insufficient resources allocated to meet the educational needs of the growing immigrant and indigenous populations.

A continuing problem is the assignment of students to schools. In each country, marginalised groups were concentrated in very few schools. The distribution is not fair and encourages the creation of ghetto schools where education for social justice is much more difficult. In some cases, native-born teachers and families manifested attitudes of discomfort and rejection of poor families. Teachers and directors considered it unfair that the school gave them preferential treatment for the granting of economic aid, social services or educational assistance.

Future efforts to improve conditions for these marginalised populations of students should take an integrated approach. Rather than setting up special schools for these populations, they should be integrated with other students. In cases where students are already living apart in poor areas, creative policies are needed to bring them together with others.

Professional development programmes are needed to give teachers training to understand the cultures of the children and gain an appreciation for their language and life circumstances. Additional resources are needed for this professional development as well as to provide programmes to address the emotional well-being of students who have experienced trauma either from migration from another country or from discrimination from the larger society.

Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers in this study recognised the needs of indigenous and migrant populations, such as work, food, shelter, clothing, health and education. They acted in a committed manner to ensure that the provision of education and food were established as a minimum condition for learning.

Educational practices that were inclusive and oriented towards social justice were evident in the public schools studied here. They spoke of the need for critically responsive pedagogy over deficit thinking. They wanted to recognise the language and culture of the students, and they made the development of relationships a priority. These students had a great need for attention and help since they belonged to families who came from poor communities.

Directors' Perspectives

The directors in this study came to schools with challenges from ongoing problems. They began by conducting an in-depth analysis of the school and working in a collaborative way with staff to make a plan.

They undertook the task of turning around the school to improve achievement and attend to students' emotional needs at the same time. They believed that a good emotional climate and social cohesion among students was necessary for improved educational results. Children needed to feel valued and go to school happy. Educating for justice and social cohesion requires strong collaboration between the school and family. Directors strived to meet this requirement for involvement, but their efforts often fell short.

Increasing the level of interaction among the members of the organisation, as well as collaborative work to respond to school diversity, are common practices of transformational leadership. However, the educators interviewed for this study also showed a critical perspective because they understood how external inequality affected their educational task.

The care practices of educational leaders speak of the sensitivity, commitment and creativity deployed to counteract the effects of poverty and reduce injustice. In one way or another, they welcomed students who did not know the language and dominant culture of the institution that received them so that children felt an important part of it.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Leading for social justice goes beyond providing for the basic needs of students; it means developing in them the confidence and skills to participate in society at the highest level, to inculcate a critical consciousness to envision a more just and humane society. These goals are well-pressed by Banks (2017) who surveyed global migration issues around the world and proposed a citizenship typology. Every nation-state needs the loyalty of its people, and in turn, in a democracy, the people can expect to participate in the political process. According to Banks, the level of participation can vary across several levels, which he calls 'failed citizenship', 'recognised citizenship', 'participatory citizenship', and 'transformative citizenship' (p. 367). At the lowest level, failed citizenship refers to those who are marginalised and structurally excluded because of ethnic heritage, race, culture, language, or religion. Failed citizenship may include recent immigrants and refugees as well as those who have suffered slavery, discrimination and segregation over long periods.

The next level, recognised citizenship, extends legal rights to all groups, but participation may be on a low level or not at all. Next, participatory citizenship conveys more extensive political activity to vote, influence policy, and run for office. Lastly, the highest level of citizenship is transformative. Banks uses the term in the way Shields (2010) has described as a critical approach that recognises oppression and the myriad ways that injustice affects people.

Banks' (2017) framework can be applied to social justice leadership in the schools that we studied. This perspective has the advantage of taking into account the global context to understand key educational challenges, and at the same time, offers clues of what to look for in the philosophy of school leaders and the programmes carried out in schools.

To move from failed citizenship to recognised citizenship these schools did the following:

– coordinated work focused on the well-being of students,
– provided timely diagnosis of students who fell behind,
– used strategies within and outside the classroom to abate failure.

To go beyond recognised to participatory citizenship the schools also did the following:

– communicated assertively and closely with school community members,
– modelled behaviours to develop shared values,
– consistently followed values to improve school life,
– held a deep compassion and love for children,
– expressed solidarity with families and commitment to the management of resources to meet basic needs for learning.

Banks's highest level of transformative citizenship was evident in some pronouncements of directors and teachers, and occasionally also in their actions. The Mexican teacher challenged parents about gender issues; the principal advocated against discrimination of students by those from more privileged schools. All of the principals challenged the deficit beliefs about children held by teachers and asked them to reflect on their own values.

These cases have highlighted the overwhelming challenges of accommodating diverse families who had few resources and little skill to navigate the new terrain. However, we also found a tremendous hope and optimism on the part of the families. They expected that their children would have better lives. Each of the school principals and teachers demonstrated a deep commitment to improve the conditions of children in their schools. Their efforts were enacted differently depending on the context in their country. Future work should examine the extent to which these conditions have been sustained.

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7

Leadership for Social Justice: Intercultural Studies in Mexico, United States of America, and Spain

Celina Torres-Arcadia, Elizabeth T. Murakami and Cristina Moral

Introduction

As countries aim to improve the quality of education through comparative results such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the principal's role becomes instrumental in enacting leadership decisions, especially in schools serving populations in high-need contexts. The school's influence and impact is known to extend not only to the

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C. Torres-Arcadia (✉)
Leadership and Management Department,
Tecnologico de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico
e-mail: ctorres@itesm.mx

E. T. Murakami
University of North Texas, Denton, TX, USA
e-mail: elizabeth.murakami@unt.edu

C. Moral
Department of Didactic and School Organization,
Faculty of Education, University of Granada, Granada, Spain
e-mail: cmoral@ugr.es

experiences of students but also to improving the lives of students despite challenging factors relating to family and/or social environment. This is particularly important since, according to PISA results, it is estimated that 35–50% of the total variance in academic performance can be related to family and social environment (INEE 2007). Mexico, U.S., and Spain provide rich contexts for an exploration of the social justice leadership practice of school principals. Based on the OECD report, socio-economic status directly affects the performance of students. Principals in high-need schools seemed to face specific challenges in providing needed resources to sustain those schools in order to positively impact on low-income students.

The practice of social justice leadership in each country's schools may present different nuances, depending on contextual and societal characteristics. In this chapter, we examine the degree to which the school leader's role can be framed within social justice and the extent to which the high-need context impacts their leadership. The chapter is organised to first, review relevant literature to develop an understanding related to each country, shaping a sense of social justice. Looking to address this objective, some data is presented to contextualise social justice within the educational context. Later the methodology is described as well as the context where each case was documented. The findings are discussed, highlighting the emerging themes. Finally, a discussion and conclusion section is included which discuss key implications arising from the study's findings.

A Review of Social Justice Concepts

The analysis of social justice in different countries may depend on a number of assumptions. For example, we could assume that a well-organised society respects the rights of citizens and is effective in 'regulating a public conception of justice'. What is considered just or unjust, however, is often in dispute (Rawls 2009, p. 4). In observing social justice in different societies, the challenge is to consider a set of principles that determine what is just or unjust in each given society analysed, and to also consider what is a 'proper distribution of benefits and burdens' (Rawls 2009, p. 4). We based our approach taking into account Rawls'

(1999) reference to the differences generated by inequality in the distribution of resources, established in each country.

According to Rawls (1999), a political conception of justice in a democratic regime is necessary in order to develop a concept of social justice, where citizens are valued in their freedom to exercise equal opportunities, assuming that these citizens live in a society that is effectively regulated by a public conception of justice (Rawls 2001). A clearly articulated public conception of justice provides a collective view, where citizens can referee their experiences against unjust situations or, as policy actors, generate ways to avoid or revert unjust practices.

Leadership for Social Justice

Leadership for social justice can be understood as a moral imperative that educational leaders bear to promote developmental opportunities and reduce inequality through educational institutions and practices (Beyer 2012). Young (2011), for example, argues that justice begins with an examination of domination and oppression among social groups. The author says that 'where social group differences exist, and some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, social justice requires explicit acknowledging and attending to those group differences in order to undermine oppression' (p. 43).

The principal's role is key, particularly in schools that serve populations in high-need contexts, since the influence of the principal may result in student success, despite limiting factors previously discussed. School principals must be intellectual activists who generate awareness to reveal the conditions of injustice that occur in schools (Dantley and Tilman 2010). They must have the courage to leave the system that contributes to inequality (Rodríguez and Fabionar 2010) and to reach a commitment and an action (Merchant and Shoho 2010), which requires changing work methodologies with disadvantaged students (McCray and Beachum 2014) in the search for a socially just pedagogy (Furman 2012).

As each society defines what constitutes 'just' or 'unjust', such negotiations directly affect schooling, as a public institution working with

principles and policies that guide fairness through a hierarchy of decision-makers in relation to funding, services, or justice, for the fair treatment of people. The society and larger community seems to determine what fairness means at a societal scale for the given city, state, or country. In each site, diverse social groups can coexist, as 'collective[s] of persons differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life' (Young 2011, p. 43). Therefore, a group represents an expression of social relations, and exists in relation to other groups, that, together, create agreed cultural norms that form a culture of a given society. It is in this context, composed of multiple and intersecting variables, that we considered social justice in each country.

Analysing social justice from country-specific perspectives presented a challenge for us as scholars, not least in relation to articulating unique societal forces, and presenting a comparative analysis of how each country is determining the promotion of students under the premise of social justice. First, it was important to ascertain what kind of justice we encountered in each context, making meaning of how justice is reflected in schooling practices. Secondly, we analysed each other's country to generate a comparative understanding of how school principals navigated societal pressures and enacted social justice using expectations laid out for them by their state/nation and their supervising bodies.

We sought to understand the perspectives of principals, especially in high-need environments where degrees of utilitarianism (Rawls 2009; Sidgwick 1883, 1907) did not necessarily improve the local conditions of families. In Table 7.1, we share each country's context with implications for the analysis of education for social justice issues, since the school is a key place to exercise social justice (Wang 2015).

Methodology

This study forms part of the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN). The study is based on case studies with multiple perspectives (Yin 2009), since it supports the understanding of complex social phenomena such as school leadership, particularly when it is exercised in vulnerable contexts. Criteria for the selection

Table 7.1 Education for social justice: Mexico, U.S. and Spain

Country	Mexico	U.S.	Spain
Population living in Poverty	46.2% (CONEVAL 2017)	13% (Semega et al. 2017)	27.9% (EAPN 2017)
Disadvantage context is related historically with	Discrimination against Indigenous populations	Discrimination against African American, Native American and Latinx students and their families	Discrimination against Romany communities and immigrant families
Education and equity	The education provided by the State will tend to develop educators to promote respect for human rights and a conscience towards justice (DOF 1917)	Education is individualised to improve the experiences of students in schools, and their rightful participation in society. Nonetheless, educational achievement is uneven among racial/ethnic groups (NCES 2018)	Quality education is sought for all children equally regardless of their economic and cultural levels (LOMCE 2013)
Educational resources	Most schools that serve students in contexts of poverty have fewer resources and fewer qualified staff (INEE 2007)	Funding for public schools is unequal and based on local taxes, which perpetuates poverty and unequal quality of educational services (Biddle and Berliner 2002)	The disadvantaged and advantaged schools have similar resources, but there are marked differences in the level of commitment and motivation deepening the inequality gap

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Country	Mexico	U.S.	Spain
Educational results	Only 76% of the students complete secondary school within age expectations (SEB 2014) Based on PISA results, Mexican students' academic performance is below the OECD average (OECD 2015) Just a quarter of each generation completes a degree in higher education (INEE 2007)	84% of high school students in public schools who started as 9th grades reached graduation in 4 years in 2015–2016. The Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) index however shows that completion rates are lower for American Indian/Alaska Native (72%), African Americans (76%), and Latinx (79%) (NCES 2018)	About 30% of high school students do not get the Compulsory Secondary Education degree. The early dropout rate is 23.6% (double the European average of 12%)
Educational leadership for social justice focus	Leadership practice and vision should address and increase educational equity, so students have access to learning (UNESCO 2009)	Social justice leadership in schools should address students' oppression based on differences and act with advocacy towards changes that can improve students' experiences to advance inclusion, access, and opportunity (Theoharis 2009; Jean-Marie et al. 2009)	The concept of social justice is related to achieving an equitable distribution among social goods, ensuring that human rights are respected with all individuals, regardless of their social class, origin, ethnicity, gender, religion, or condition

of schools was purposefully based on the social justice focus of this comparative study, to include schools with a high representation of the historically marginalised population, as well as a high number of students identified as economically disadvantaged by state public reports. Table 7.2 includes information about the selected schools and their context.

Two individual semi-structured interviews with each principal, individual semi-structured interviews with at least three teachers and support staff in each school, one focus group with parents and a focus group with students were conducted to generate the data. Semi-structured guides were used to conduct the interviews and focus groups. Focus groups and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Data analysis was guided by multiple case study analysis (Stake 2006). This consisted of the categorisation of data using an open coding system. The main categories were: the context in which schools were located; the leadership style of leaders serving these schools; and strategies planned for social justice practices. Ethical considerations included the respect for differences across countries, recognising that each case can be unique even within its' own country. The common theme of principals' leadership provided us with a comparable analysis.

Findings: School Leaders' Actions

In this section, we report on the examination of school principals' leadership practices when developing high-need schools' sustainability. We particularly focused on an international approach regarding the meaning of social justice in the context of three countries, and especially to what extent the high-need context impacts on school principals' leadership and advocacy. Most important in this study was to analyse each context, followed by the leadership style of leaders serving high-need schools. Table 7.3 includes information about principals' characteristics. An analysis of strategies these leaders planned as relating to social justice practices follows, demonstrating how the principals valued the development of self-esteem and a sense of belonging, in order to build a clear vision for the school.

Table 7.2 The schools and their context

Country	Mexico	U.S.	Spain
School pseudonym	Secondary School Tierra y Libertad	Lion Cub Elementary	Secondary School Cervantes
Location	Southern Mexico	Metropolitan city in Texas	Small town 7 km to Granada City, Spain
Social and economic characteristics	About 30,000 inhabitants, the majority being of Mayan descendant. Half of the population speaks indigenous languages such as Maya and Nahuatl. It is a farming area devoted to the production and collection of tropical fruits. More than 44% of the population cannot read and write or they have incomplete primary education. Most of the students have a day job to help with family expenses and also to pay for their studies	About 1.5 million inhabitants where one in five inhabitants are living in poverty and population lives in economically segregated communities. The school's population is majority Hispanic. Only 10% of the neighbourhood population around the school over 25 years of age holds a bachelor or higher degree. There is a low rate of mobility, with families attending school and living in the area for generations	About 18,392 inhabitants. The population includes Romany communities, as well as immigrant. Most students accepted in this school come from low socio-economic backgrounds. Their families have precarious employment or unemployment situations. The families have a very low academic level and, in some cases, are illiterate
School population	70 students from secondary level	429 students from early childhood to grade 5	700 students from secondary, bachelor and professional training

(continued)

Table 7.2 (continued)

Country	Mexico	U.S.	Spain
School configuration	6 pupil groups served by 13 teachers and six administrative staff. The school personnel allocation is complete, and the teachers are assigned to teach in accordance with their field	There were 26 teachers, 30 staff and 5 support professionals. The average student-teacher ratio was 17 students per teacher (TEA 2017)	There were 64 teachers. The school personnel allocation is complete, and the teachers are assigned to teach in accordance with their field
School academic performance	The 2013 National Evaluation highlighted that 72% of the students were below performance level and the rest of the students showed basic levels (ENLACE 2013). In 2015, in the new evaluation system named PLANEA, 100% of the students were performing in the lowest level for Mathematics (PLANEA 2015)	The 2017 state accountability report shows that the school is in the top 25% of all elementary schools in the state demonstrating student progress. The students were performing with distinction in the areas of Reading, Mathematics and Science (TEA 2017)	The school has received several awards for improvements made both in relation to the level of student-friendliness and in relation to improvement in the students' academic results

Table 7.3 Principals' characteristics

	Mexico	U.S.	Spain
Pseudonym Academic degrees	Mr. Cárdenas Bachelor's degree in social sciences, a Master's degree and Ph.D. in Education Sciences	Ms. Acuna Bachelor's degree in education and a Master's degree in educational leadership	Mr. Quijano Bachelor's degree in education and psychology
Background and experience	Male in his forties. He had been working in the public education system for 5 years. He was assigned to Tierra y Libertad where he had previously been commissioned three years ago as a teacher	Female in her forties. She grew up and attended school in the same district where she has been a principal for 5 years at the time of this research, and 16 years previous to that serving the district as a teacher and specialist	Male in his fifties. He started working in this school as a school counsellor for 4 years. He was appointed as the school principal in his 5th year and he has currently held the principal position for 12 years

The School Context

Sun and Leithwood ([2012](#)) identify that school context needs to be taken into account to explain the variation of leadership's educational outcomes, since context represents the reality where leaders work. Leading high-need schools may require an understanding of students' problems as well as school community issues, in order to make adaptations required to respond to these realities (Furman [2004](#); Klar and Brewer [2013](#)).

Adapting to the Context

We found some examples of such flexibility to the school organisation in order to respect the rights and dignity of its community members. For example, in the U.S., Ms. Acuna perceived a need to support families especially in developing authentic support in connection to the contextual realities in which the students and their families were immersed. To this end, she addressed inequities in relation to a lack of safety, health, or other local community support, by establishing the school as the centre of the community. She changed the access to gates, drive-in, and student pick-up areas, while at the same time, inviting parents to be part of activities in school. She did so with authentic purpose, by preparing parents, and sharing the importance of the school as a space where children could be empowered to confront societal challenges. Ms. Acuna, who grew up in the same neighbourhood as her students, reflected:

> I try to lead by example and when people ask me where I am from. I get excited because I came from poverty and I came from probably a chance of nothing - and was able to kind of stay in my district and show my kids I can be an example…not only to the students at school and teachers, but to my own children.

Her reflection related to the economic, political, and social landscape of the U.S., and how it impacts not only on students but their families.

Significant in this case was the success of students as a reflection of the commitment of principals and teachers, who persevered with serving areas with less resources and increased challenges. The mission to serve in high-need communities also relates to a concern with teacher biases that can negatively impact social justice efforts in high-need schools.

Improve Teaching and Learning in Spain

Mr. Quijano adopted an attitude of 'taking risks' to seek new ways to improve the curriculum because he understood that the traditional way to deliver the curriculum does not work in the school's context. He adapted the curriculum to the needs of the students with the objective of responding to student diversity, 'seeking excellence, seeking to reach the maximum' as he put it. In his quest to achieve the best way to address diversity through excellence, complacent attitudes in daily routines were not accepted. He routinely ran a self-assessment process essential in order to know where the school is failing, so as to develop continuous improvement.

The established national curricula was found not to work with disadvantaged students, and, the continuous reflection on curricular issues with teachers moved the school in a direction where taking risks and planning new ways of curricular design became part of the teachers' activities (McCray and Beachum 2014). When teachers are better adapted to their students' needs and are aware of contextual factors affecting their achievement, activities that increased the participation of students and their development, exponentially improved learning for students (Riley 2013).

Leadership Style of Leaders Serving High-Need Schools

It was important to consider whether the leadership style of principals serving in high-need schools corresponded to meeting the needs of high-need schools. A principal from Spain provided an example

of shared leadership, as an effective way to promote social justice practices.

A Foundation for Shared Decision-Making

In Spain, Mr. Quijano was aware that in order to achieve the academic success of his students, he had to have a good project for Attention to Diversity, with a strong group of teachers to initiate it. For this reason, the principal sought, above all, to practice collaborative leadership, creating a structure so that distributed leadership was developed through shared decision-making among all the teachers (Harris 2014). The principal planned and coordinated a large number of effective and efficient meetings between teachers and heads of department in order to keep teachers informed and to achieve shared decision-making about school improvement. Mr. Quijano explained:

> I have shared power with the teaching staff and their authority as leaders did not consist of creating the feeling that they were 'at the top' imposing their criteria. By contrast, it encouraged and fostered a feeling of sharing power with the teaching staff in making decisions.

Mr. Quijano shares power, supporting teachers as leaders, keeping them informed, motivating them and engaging them in the school's educational projects. The principal supports projects that teachers design and create, because he thinks that it is essential to generate a spirit where everyone contributes to the improvement of students, valuing every idea as important.

Strategies Planned for Social Justice Practices

The school is a complex organisation consisting of multiple interactive subsystems (Bryk et al. 2010), where the school principal acts as a catalyst promoting the active and positive involvement of school community members.

Developing Self-Esteem and a Sense of Belonging

In Mexico, Mr. Cárdenas made a big effort to motivate members of the school community through the promotion of self-esteem and a sense of belonging. Beginning with the teachers, the principal recognised their work and gave support where they needed, as one teacher expressed:

> In the parents' meeting, the principal commented about one of our students and how he achieved success thanks to his teacher. It is very important being valued and recognized, both students and teachers.

Developing self-esteem in children who attend marginalised schools is a key factor to their success. For example, Mr. Cárdenas took any chance to involve students in extracurricular activities to promote their self-esteem. A teacher expressed how such involvement in activities was a big incentive to move forward:

> When an objective is achieved, something is achieved, a contest, maybe not necessarily the first place, the second place, it makes us feel good, they recognize our work and well, it is flattering, that someone recognizes us in our work and gives us reasons to move forward, to improve.

Parents' involvement is also important, particularly for students in marginalised communities (Leithwood et al. 2010; Handford and Leithwood 2013). As such, principals should understand parents' challenges, taking into account that the link with the school is also an opportunity for parental involvement and recognition. In this sense, a parent of Tierra y Libertad School explains how the principal included them in the process of decisions about the school funds:

> The principal let us know at a meeting about the money the school had received, asked us what we wanted and if we agreed on what he planned to do. The parents agreed, no parent refused. We all recognized that the school needed a lot of things.

A Clear Vision for the School

In Spain, Mr. Quijano maintains a clear vision and well-defined sense of direction in his decisions. He often uses the metaphor of navigation to explain the importance of having a clear vision of where the school is heading: 'the boat cannot go adrift; the boat must have a clear and well-established direction'. In addition, his vision is 'active and vibrant' without losing its power to energise and attract. It is not a purely bureaucratic vision, but a vision that is kept *alive*.

Mr. Quijano has built the school's vision connected to the school's contextualised challenges related to gypsy and non-gypsy students, emigrants, to broken families and parents with few levels of academic study. For this reason, Mr. Quijano talks about his Project of Attention to the Diversity as 'unique'. It is a vision characterised by a high degree of academic optimism because he is sure that they can improve students' academic achievement. This optimistic vision opens the door to change and improvement and stimulates a spirit of innovation.

Establishing a Culture of Authentic Learning

Ms. Acuna in the U.S. recognised that the most important group in Lion Cub Elementary were the teachers. In the development of a culture of learning, leadership for social justice required that principals prepared teachers by developing a culture of respect where all students benefitted, regardless of their stage of development prior to enrolling in the school.

The students were performing very well in Reading, Mathematics, and Science despite their context. Ms. Acuna used Reading to exemplify her approach. She set several short periods where the Librarian would meet with students, in small groups or individually, to support reading beyond the classroom reading time. Ms. Acuna believed that redirected time for instruction was key to providing individual support for

students. She encouraged teachers to always use direct intervention for academic and social support.

Ms. Acuna was generating a culture of learning when nurturing a socially just environment for students, teachers, staff, and parents. She talked about generating a culture of respect. She reflected: 'Would I want a principal that's going to be in my face and that's going to degrade me and always correct me, or would I want somebody to show me and to talk to me like a professional?'. Part of being a principal, for Ms. Acuna, was to be a leader who would set the tone for stakeholders in the school: 'There is always going to be problems, and people always are going to have good and bad days. My job is to de-escalate conflict so that we can work on what is important.' Ms. Acuna also encouraged teachers to move beyond set goals:

> I say to our team: do not allow *that* accomplishment to say that 'I'm done'. The work only begins because…how do we sustain success and how do we improve on it? Like now that we have academic distinctions - how do we improve in Reading? We still need to work on improving Reading and Math. How do we now make it better? So, there are a couple of things that I have done and that we are working on to make sure that we get better.

Ms. Acuna recognised that her work towards the success of students related to her personal experience. She was always reminded of her upbringing in the same socio-economic conditions as the students. She stated:

> I get emotional because it is sad to me that some people do not believe that these students can succeed. I tell my staff all the time, you know, we know what everyone else says…we know that - but we have to be different. I always share with them my story and I tell them what people told me: 'You're not going to be successful.' So, when I see my kids I do not appreciate, and I do not like when somebody tells me that my students cannot be successful. I truly believe this, and it is not cliché, because it is possible. And it is our job to help them figure it out, right?

Discussion

Common to all three schools analysed in this chapter was the importance of considering the context in which the students were immersed. Beyond the academic scores, the context in which students live affects the entire school community. We confirmed that principles and policies guiding fairness is dependent of each country's definition at a societal scale, and consequently in their expectations of schooling. The cases analysed in this chapter show school principals demonstrating 'post-heroic leadership' characteristics (Day and Gurr 2014), or a mix of transformational and instructional elements, with a marked collaborative and democratic character. This is why all the strategies used are always aimed at incorporating teachers, students, parents, and community—towards a focused direction, since running a school entails achieving the improvement of learning outcomes as a collective effort.

The sample of schools in this chapter, however, brought commonalities between the countries regarding social stratification in schools serving historically marginalised communities. In Mexico, the evening school provided the opportunity for working youth to get an education. In the U.S., a school in a predominantly Latina/o community had teachers who did not believe the students could succeed. And in Spain, an awareness of schooling as reproducing inequality directly related to the need to understand how social justice can be enacted.

The principals selected for the study were cognisant of a need to promote developmental opportunities for students, and the need to provide an education that would reduce inequalities (Beyer 2012). Principals in high-need areas were found to have added responsibilities beyond the academic achievement of students (Medina et al. 2014). In the case of Spain, truancy and apathy were of concern, for teachers as well as the principal. All three principals highlighted the importance of setting a vision, clarifying each other's roles, and reinforcing policies before even beginning the work related to academic improvement. It was interesting to note how the need to enforce rules was perceived as paramount in generating a foundation for school improvement.

In Spain, shared decision-making was important to generate involvement and a sense of belonging among teachers. In Mexico, Mr. Cárdenas regularly recognised and valued the teachers. In the U.S., Ms. Acuna reminded teachers that when students demonstrated passing scores, that their work was just beginning. The principals were relentless in promoting a culture of learning, in order to deliver social justice.

The principals displayed characteristic features of a leadership style that could be described as 'post-heroic leadership' (Bennett and Murakami 2016; Day and Gurr 2014; Drysdale et al. 2014). That is, comprising a mixture of transformational and instructional elements with a marked collaborative and democratic character. This influenced the strategies they use, always aimed at incorporating teachers, students, parents, and community working in the same direction. They understand that running a school to achieve the improvement of learning outcomes is a collective effort, never a single person endeavour, which requires everyone to move in the same direction.

Conclusion

About 40 million youth in the 35 countries included in the OECD are in danger of not being in employment, education, or training (OECD 2016). Similarly, poverty is a common concern in all three countries in this study, with pockets of historic poverty and diminished chances for social promotion. Among this group of countries, we find students suffering from an 'intergenerational transmission of disadvantage' (OECD 2016, p. 2). It is therefore, our goal, when focusing on research addressing high-need schools, to document principals with a vision of providing social justice examples of improving the lives of children around the world.

Reducing school failure, producing a more just and egalitarian education, giving everyone the right to quality education, are common goals currently being considered by governments and departments of education throughout the world where ISLDN researchers are active. As researchers in this project, we search for advocates that generate alternatives, strategies to ensure that school leaders and teachers are getting

the support to envision and demand quality and equity in their respective countries (OECD 2012).

Research on social justice identifies the need to investigate the practices that identify leaders capable of achieving the desired 'quality and equity' in education as articulated by the OECD (2012). Our research highlights that one of the variables that contributes to achieving this 'quality and equity' in education is the leadership variable. It is therefore necessary to identify the features and competencies that characterise social justice leadership, to have a point of reference from which to build programs and plan actions that support the professional development of leaders capable of achieving this goal. Comparative studies such as this one will hopefully help build understandings of leadership practice in different countries, as a way to progress towards educational social justice.

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Local Implementation of National Policy: Social Justice Perspectives from the USA, India, and Wales

Ken Jones, Pamela S. Angelle and Caroline Lohmann-Hancock

Introduction

Attributing generic descriptors to national educational systems is convenient but highly misleading, particularly when cross comparing countries. Global comparatives, such as those depicted in the PISA results (Meyer and Benavot 2013), produce performance descriptors that cannot convey internal variations in quality. The macro view obtained through policy analysis might suggest consistent and coherent

K. Jones (✉)
Education Consultant, Swansea, UK

P. S. Angelle
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies,
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, USA
e-mail: pangelle@utk.edu

C. Lohmann-Hancock
University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Carmarthen, UK
e-mail: C.Lohmann-hancock@uwtsd.ac.uk

implementation through the rhetoric of national government legislation. However, the interpretation of policy through meso (regional) and micro (institutional) filters (or even through individual compliance or non-compliance) often results in policies being misinterpreted, reinterpreted, or ignored in their enactment.

Ward et al. (2016) highlight the implementation of policy and the nature of its enactment, or 'policy response' as 'both an attempt to solve problems and an attempt to persuade social actors to subscribe to particular beliefs that delineate action' (p. 43). They argue that in the prevailing neoliberal hegemony, the discourse that surrounds policy is managed by those in power so that 'specific education policy discourses are deliberately and constructively (re)used, (re)emphasised, and (re) iterated until they enter the public consciousness and become reified' (p. 46). As these researchers note, the implementation of policy may not mirror the intent for which it was designed: 'Policy response is highly contextualised, complex, and fragmented. There are no universal "truths" about policy implementation: the journey from principle to practice … is a contested one which involves institutions and individuals in a process of "creative social action"' (p. 47).

The key role of school leaders in using policy to transform practice is fundamental and interventions by school leaders may be designed to reinforce policy requirements, to re-interpret them or to undermine their effects. Uncritical policy replication, by which a school leader applies national or regional policies regardless of local impact, may serve a functionary purpose, perhaps to comply with legal requirements or a non-creative 'policy borrowing' where ideas are adopted to provide 'quick fix' solutions (Phillips and Ochs 2003). Critical policy intervention may derail a policy or modify it sufficiently so that it works within the local context. This may be ideologically deliberate or pragmatically appropriate so that ideas or requirements formulated elsewhere are made appropriate and workable for local situations.

Mourshed et al. (2010) highlight the importance of interventions in the school improvement process, applicable in enacting (or not) social justice policy. They differentiate between the general principles of improvement and the context in which the improvement takes place and state:

> School systems that sustain improvement over the longer term have learned both how to navigate the challenges of their context and to use their context to their advantage. The leaders of these systems tailor the … interventions required to their system's performance stage and circumstances. (p. 20)

The role of the school leader is therefore central in determining how national policies on social justice are enacted. This chapter presents the views of education leaders (micro level) in the USA, India, and Wales to consider the extent to which social justice policy is modified to maximise local impact as well as conforming to national (macro) level requirements. The studies in this chapter explore the social justice policy contexts in three very different nations and ask whether the national policy rhetoric is evident at institutional levels or if re-interpretation has occurred to take account of local circumstances.

Methods

Data for this research were collected as part of the larger International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) Social Justice (SJ) strand's research on school leaders' enactment of social justice. Respondents in this study were asked to volunteer, following recommendations of university and school personnel, having been given the ISLDN SJ definition of a socially just leader. No criteria regarding gender, ethnicity, years of experience, student achievement levels, or school context were considered in the selection of principals who were perceived as social justice leaders. Respondents were situated in schools in the USA, India, and Wales and, in India, the setting of a college of teacher education was additionally chosen to examine what might be seen as 'first tier' social justice policy within the education system.

Respondents were interviewed using a standard protocol across ISLDN countries. Interview times varied from 60 to 90 minutes and were recorded and transcribed, then coded and categorised (Lincoln and Guba 1986). To ensure confidentiality, all respondents and schools were assigned pseudonyms.

Findings presented below from each principal interview are preceded by a description of each country's policy context, followed by the place of social justice in each country's educational policy. Finally, each principal's site and context are described, along with principal perceptions of how social justice is enacted at the micro and meso level in light of macro policy.

Findings

Case 1: The USA

Policy Context

The USA is a large country with 50 states, each operating under the same national guidelines with individualised state and local education policies. A singular meso context is therefore impossible to apply to schools. The USA is often referred to as 'a melting pot' of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and philosophies. Schools, as a result, face myriad social justice issues, including gaps in achievement between races and gender, students with disabilities, and an ever-increasing disparity in income groups.

Created as a federalist form of government, the US national government enjoys a unique relationship with the 50 individual states and the localities within these states. This relationship is outlined in the Tenth Amendment to the US Constitution, also known as the Reserved Powers Clause, which states that 'The powers not delegated to the USA by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people' (US. Const. Amend. X). National issues, such as military defence, are held within the power of the federal government which greatly outweighs the power of the individual state and local governments. However, in areas such as education, states' rights take precedence. US educational policy has tread in somewhat murky waters because all three branches of the government, legislative, judicial, and executive, at the national, state, and local levels have

been involved in the definition, shaping, and implementation of educational policy.

Policy Interpretations of Social Justice

US educational policy, in the latter half of the twentieth century through to the present day has centred on two goals; first, the goal of providing equal educational opportunity for all children and second, the need to demonstrate accountability for the educational outcomes for all children. In a justification of the first goal, Joseph (1977), in his discussion of social reform in the 1970s, noted that 'emphasis has been put on the notion that the prime function of education is to promote social mobility and that equality of educational opportunity will lead to broader social equality' (p. 102). Thus, the second goal has focused on the accountability for implementation of the first goal.

The mid-twentieth century saw the beginning of a period in US educational policy which brought a demand for equal opportunity for all US citizens, regardless of race, gender, or ability, brought about through school integration and federal oversight. Both national and state governments increased their financial support to assist schools in supplemental services to reach subgroups of students who had not previously been served. While this revised educational policy initially addressed African-American children following the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, other groups quickly followed in pursuit of their share of equal educational opportunity. These groups included advocates for linguistic minority students and parents of students with disabilities. One of the most critical pieces of legislation in the 1970s was the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Parents hailed the act as a step forward in quality education for all children while opponents, particularly state and local school personnel, perceived the act as 'unwarranted intrusion into educational affairs by federal officials who prescribed expensive and personnel-intensive remedies without providing funds for their implementation' (Urban and Wagoner 2004, p. 321).

The passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act also began a political era in which public accountability became more closely linked to the receipt of federal funding. The massive outlay of public monies prompted policymakers to insist on evaluation mandates, with reports sent to the federal government (Fowler 2013). Market forces gained standing with the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policies for chronically low performing schools. Individuals' right to choose a school for their child, following the public notice of failing schools as part of NCLB accountability, formed the impetus for an increased focus on market forces in education. The call to provide educational opportunity for all children, not only children of colour and children of poverty, rose in prominence and, as a result, parental choice became a factor in educational policy.

The most recent reauthorisation of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), was signed by President Barack Obama in 2016. While still requiring standardised testing, this law gives more freedom (and responsibility) to the states to fashion their own educational policies. Measures of achievement must still include subgroup reporting. However, states are now required to measure school success with a variable of their own choosing. Thus, while some control is returned to the states to determine how student achievement is measured within the parameters of equal educational opportunity, reporting of accountability in how this is implemented is still required.

Perhaps the greatest concern of opponents to current US educational policy was in relation to the initial assumption of the policymakers. NCLB and ESSA are framed in a system of inputs and outputs, with public accounting for the outputs. However, the difficulty in imagining education as a knowledge and skills factory is that students do not enter school on a level playing field. Children begin their school careers with different foundations, language acquisition, and abilities, with some progressing through school with additional support needs, physical, intellectual, or emotional. The policy expectation is that all students must proficiently meet standards on the same tests to adequately progress to the next level each year. Notions of social justice remained absent from the discussion.

Site and Context

US participants in this study were both male secondary school principals. One US principal (John) was a first-year Caucasian principal at a rural southeastern US school, characterised by high poverty with a large number of students with disabilities. The American urban principal (Barry), a veteran African American principal located in the US Deep South, had over ten years of experience leading schools. At the time of the interview he was placed in a large urban high school, characterised by a diverse student population, though the predominant student population was African American.

The distance between the US schools in this study is approximately 600 miles, serving very different student populations and community cultures. Both schools are supported by public money, generated through taxes, and governed by boards of education who are locally elected and, often, not educators. While local government zoning regulates attendance in the rural school, students outside of the attendance zone may be offered admission if space in the school allows. See Table 8.1 for participant and contextual data.

Table 8.1 Principal and meso contextual data

Schools	John USA	Barry USA
Location	Rural town; Southeastern USA	City; Southern USA
Grade configuration	Grades 9–12	Grades 9–12
Student population	328	1128
Student ethnicity		
White (%)	88.5	41.8
Non-white (%)	11.5	58.2
Economically disadvantaged students (%)	61.3	65.8
Students with disabilities (%)	16.2	7.2
Principal		
Gender	Male	Male
Ethnicity	White	Black
Education	EdS	EdD
Experience as principal	1 year	12 years

Leader Voice

Despite the differences in school context and experiences, both US principals hold quite similar views about social justice. Both principals described being a social justice leader as providing opportunity for all students, now and in preparation for the future. Barry believed social justice means:

> treating all kids with dignity and respect so that they know that their value is of substance, that they mean something to somebody somewhere. That they are given the opportunity to be whatever they want to be and are successful at it, regardless of what their background may be.

Barry posited that working toward social justice means all children are given an equal chance to be their best self. John agreed, stating that social justice allows:

> teachers to see the value in each of those students and for administrators [head teachers] to see the value in each of those students… to where they can lead and guide and direct that student on that path of learning to better themselves for their future [this] is, I think, the crux of social justice and every student.

To work toward social justice, the school leaders must not only believe that all students can achieve and learn, but also have a desire to make school a place where students can accomplish this. However, actually carrying out this vision is more difficult.

In the USA, principals must complete a principal preparation program, obtain a master's degree, and pass a national licensing examination to obtain a principal's licence before working as a school principal. As part of principal preparation training, most universities require coursework in national and state education policy as well as national and state educational law. Thus, principals enter the profession with knowledge of the federal and state mandates under which they are employed. However, school context and student population bear heavily

on principal perceptions of policy. Factors which may support or hinder the work of socially just school leaders are viewed through the lens of the context in which they practise the work of social justice. This held true for both US principals interviewed in this research.

Barry described his student population as a 'classic melting pot', with children of poverty representing 65.8% of the student population. Students live in diverse surroundings such as on country farms and in inner-city government housing projects, though a few students live in large multi-story homes. Considering his school context, Barry expressed concern that policy and mandates which emanate from policy take the view that 'one size fits all'. He believed that 'we need to figure out what we want to achieve with our populations', offering an example of how the state has mandated how schools will report accountability to the federal government. The state now requires that all students must achieve a minimum passing score on the American College Testing exam, a test required to enter university in the USA. Barry argued that 'we cannot take out of the equation the culture of a particular state or region'. In his region, Barry believes requiring a university entry examination for the community student population is problematic, explaining:

> Did we really take into consideration the culture of [our area]? Did we take into consideration that a lot of our kids in leaving high school will go off to work in the family business? …. So when we talk about making sure that we put all of our kids in a university track when their interests may not be university, we run a risk of discouraging students who may want to take an alternative track, to focus on their true interests which may be to be the captain of their own fishing vessel… or for them to be in some kind of agricultural field.

Barry viewed this example as a form of government intervention that fails to promote social justice. He discussed those students who enter secondary school with skills of a 10-year-old student. His question for policy makers was:

how are we to keep kids from getting frustrated when they are failing all of these [mandated examinations]? …They shut down. They get frustrated and they become discipline problems. They try to figure out the quickest way to get out of this situation. If they are old enough, they will drop out of school. I think that is the biggest social injustice.

John stated that he believed parts of some of the policy mandates are needed, noting that mandates sometimes 'facilitate some of the injustices in our schools'. Accountability mandates can be motivation for both teacher and students to achieve. However, John's concern was how the achievement was measured:

The measurements that they use, in some situations, kind of separate the haves and have nots. Our students that are from the low socioeconomic groups, struggle in a lot of cases, dealing with the higher order thinking and the higher order subjects in high school because they [enter secondary school] behind. Parents aren't able to spend as much time with them as some of the more affluent members of our community.

John perceived that federal mandates from NCLB and ESSA helped schools use data to 'identify and focus on those gaps between students, either because of their socioeconomic status or their ethnic background or because of their disability', thereby aiding schools in closing achievement gaps. However, John also strongly felt that federal and state policy worked against socially just leadership. He explained that:

In some instances, it [policy] actually ties our hands. We feel like we need to focus on the end result in a lot of cases, rather than the whole child. Those needs of children are sometimes put on the back burner and we are focusing more on the academic, the rigor, the relevance, and achievement goals before we look at the needs beyond academics. Sometimes we need to see the causes of those deficits and try alleviating those deficits. Instead, we focus on the end result. I think sometimes when we focus on alleviating those deficits, we create an opportunity to have even greater achievement.

Case 2: India

Policy Context

India is a diverse and highly complex nation, geographically, socially, and culturally. It is a federal union made up of 36 states and union territories, which are subdivided locally into smaller administrative divisions. Legislation is created in the form of three 'lists': the Union List, under the control of central government, covers areas such as defence which requires uniform national policy; the State List, for which policies are devised by State Governments, including police and agriculture; and the Concurrent List, covering areas in which law can be made by both central and state governments. Education falls under the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India, where policies are determined centrally and regionally.

Under the Indian Constitution, all children between the ages of six and fourteen have a right to free schooling. A significant proportion of schools in India are managed within the private sector with nearly one-third of compulsory age pupils attending private sector schools which are better funded than Government Schools and, consequently, attract better-qualified teachers.

Policy Interpretation of Social Justice

The complexity that is India is illustrated by the fact that in 2015 the CEOs of Pepsico, Microsoft, Google, and MasterCard were all Indians. The Indian company Tata has a significant profile in the global market and more than 100 Indian companies now have market capitalisation of over a billion dollars. However, as a marked contrast, with the second largest population in the world India is home to one-third of all world poverty with 22% of Indians falling below the poverty line, and an estimated 50% of the nation's population lacking the ability to meet their most basic needs (Outreach International 2018). The 2011 census recorded the population of India as over 1.21 billion with over 833

million people living in areas classified as 'rural' and 377 million living in urban areas (Government of India 2017). Within these overarching figures lies a tapestry of social, religious, and economic disparity, illustrated by contradictory extremes which are both visible and politically challenging. Pervading this is India's caste system which Jensenius (2017) has described as 'the world's largest and most oppressive social order' (p. 4).

Social justice was a central theme in the build-up to independence in 1947, and after independence the designation of electoral quotas for disadvantaged groups became national policy. Arguably, the scale of social reform needed in India required central government intervention and the quota system did that. The administrative language of government uses the term 'Backward Classes' to identify those deemed to be disadvantaged and entitled to special treatment. Positive discrimination policies were applied assertively so that a percentage of parliamentary constituency places were reserved for the Scheduled Castes (previously known as 'untouchables', now commonly referred to as 'Dalits'), Scheduled Tribes ('Adivasis'), and 'Other Backward Classes' (OBCs) designated by caste and class. Jensenius (2017) argued that the change in well-being of Scheduled Caste members was partly a result of this policy intervention. India's quota policy also applies to education and 'in 2000, 27 per cent of the people who were considered part of the backward class … had a reserved spot in universities' (Richardson and Sauers 2014, p. 106). This is a significant piece of positive discrimination enshrined in national law and applied rigorously at institutional level, though it has unintended consequences. Bajpai (2010) dismissed the view that policy debate by politicians is purely rhetoric. He argued that 'in the course of arguing over policies, Indian politicians produced a rich and sophisticated body of public reasoning linking caste inequalities, social justice, and job quotas' (p. 2) so that when the legislation on quotas was passed, 'Prime Minister V. P. Singh termed it "a momentous decision of social justice", and parties opposing the government's decision were careful to preface their criticisms with avowals of support for the cause of social justice' (p. 3).

This image of a nation of contrasts is prominent in the literature as well as on the streets and in the villages of India. Rizvi (2007) pointed

out that although India has a fast-growing technological and global economy, growth is not the same as development, as he noted:

> It is the best of times and it is the worst of times. There is affluence and poverty, beauty and squalor, opulence and deprivation. … On the one hand, India has achieved remarkable expansion in food production, and … famine deaths have been virtually eliminated. Yet, 55 percent of children under five years old remain malnourished, nearly twice the levels reported in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. (p. 756)

Regional inequalities still exist between rural and urban communities and women continue to face discrimination. Rizvi (2007) argued:

> While Indian democracy in many ways is one of the marvels of our time, it is also clear that the democratic institutions in India are not functioning optimally and their record in promoting social justice has only been partially successful. (p. 760)

Site and Context

In India, interviews were conducted with the Principal and Vice Principal of a College of Teacher Education (via Skype) and with the head teacher of a government (i.e., public sector) school (via email). They are not intended to be representative of the region or of India as a whole but provide perspectives on the challenges facing educational leaders in enacting social justice principles. The college of teacher education (referred to as 'the college') was established in 2000 and currently has 500 graduate and 100 postgraduate students studying to be teachers. Khera was its first principal. Preet is his vice principal and takes responsibility for much of the day-to-day management and leadership of the college. If social justice principles are to be more deeply embedded in schools in India, the new entrants to the teaching profession (and therefore the new future leaders) will be the conduits of the message and colleges of teacher education are important vehicles in delivering this.

The head teacher of the government school, Sunil, explained that his school had 2560 students on roll ranging in age from 1st to 12th class.

A feature of the student intake is its diversity, representing different religions, castes, languages, and social classes. Students and families originate from many different regions of India and around 25% of students are Scheduled Caste, formally seen in the Indian Constitution as the lowest part of Indian society. Nevertheless, the school occupies a privileged position, located on the campus of the local university and has a high percentage of students whose parents are government employees.

Leader Voice

The education leaders from India had similar perspectives on social justice, despite institutional differences. Khera explained that the College of Teacher Education had been established when there were very few institutions of Initial Teacher Education, at a time when there was a national need to produce sufficient, and high quality, teachers to meet the diverse needs of the student population. This was a self-financed private institution as were many institutions set up at that time, and the rapid expansion of the sector has led to concerns over quality of provision and recent moves by the Government of India to reduce the number of institutions (Government of India 2012) (Table 8.2).

Students in both the school and college are from different regions, castes, and class levels and speak many languages. 'Meeting the educational needs of such a diversity of students in terms of social class,

Table 8.2 Principal and school contextual data

College/school	Khera	Sunil
Location	Suburban, Northern India	Suburban, Northern India
Grade configuration	Post compulsory	Grades 1–12
Student population	1500	2560
Economically disadvantaged students (%)	30	25
Principal		
Gender	Male	Male
Ethnicity	Indian	Indian
Education	PhD	MA/MA(Ed)
Experience as principal	18 years	15 years

language, and religion' is seen by Sunil, the school leader, as his main challenge. Similarly, the college leaders explained how disadvantaged students from the Scheduled Class are admitted as part of the quota system which reserves a proportion of places for them as part of the positive discrimination policy employed by the government:

> We admit students who have little money. There are two streams: 1. The Government gives scholarships to poorer students, especially to Scheduled Class and Other Backward Classes. 2. There are also poor students who are not covered by the government scheme because they are not of the appropriate caste and the college offers concessions to these (free books, free accommodation in hostel, and sometimes free transport in college vehicles)….It is the quota system and we have to comply… [However], certain castes are not covered under this policy (the higher castes) and these receive no benefits from the government even though they are poor or disadvantaged. If the government is unable to help them, we will. We aren't typical in doing this - other colleges may comply with government policy but they will be less generous.

This college does more than others to reach out to disadvantaged students because, as Khera said: 'Ours is a non-commercial institution established for the uplift of the poorer community. This is the first objective of our constitution and the first line in the college mission statement is: "To develop self-esteem and self-confidence among the weaker sections and provide equal opportunities"'. The local communities of both the school and College are similar:

> basically rural, now becoming urbanised, The nearby industrial town is encroaching on our community and the surrounding rural area. There is a great deal of poverty in our community. It's not a wealthy area and most people belong to the Scheduled Caste population.

Because the State of India to which the two institutions belong is so diverse, the leaders found it difficult to say whether their institutions were typical, except in their diversity. Khera pointed out that, 'There are many different types of religion, caste, language … the only common factor is the general poverty'.

In the school, women make up the majority of teachers and in the college 95% of the students are female and only 5% are male, which is, according to Khera:

> …typical for teaching in India. Also, women achieve higher grades than men so will gain places on merit. Migration to other parts of India from this region is high, mainly for men. We would like more male students but can't change the merit grades. We go to schools to try to motivate more men to come into teaching.

In terms of local implementation or re-interpretation of policy, there is no deviation from the government's centralised admissions policy. Preet explained that the college conforms to reservation quotas:

> …determined by the government of India. The National Council for Teacher Education in India regulates entry numbers for ITE all over India. The State can only regulate admissions. There are 15% of places which we have admission within our own control – the rest is government controlled. These 15% are only in self-financed institutions; it's not possible in government institutions.

The teaching of social justice is part of the school and college curriculum. Community service is a part of the school curriculum. For Khera, the college principal, social justice is about giving; that is: 'equal and fair opportunities to all with at least a minimum level of living and dignity to every individual. It's not a complete concept, just a way of living ethically'. Sunil, on the other hand, defined social justice as, 'equality and equity of opportunities to marginalised persons'.

For Sunil, the main indicators of social injustice are discrimination, illiteracy, the caste system and gender inequalities. For Khera and Preet:

> the main cause of injustice is the sheer size of the population. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness about human life, gender inequality and the unequal distribution of the economy are the result. A key issue is also the vested interests of our political leaders.

The education leaders had a clear view on policy and practice of social justice. Sunil's view was optimistic that social justice could be improved: 'by providing awareness to teachers and students and by implementing the policies of India'. Khera and Preet had a more pragmatic line on policy:

> The problem in India is at the implementation level, not at the policy level. There are lots of policies – for health care, free education, social welfare, public insurance and education for all. The reason they aren't implemented is because of corruption – there is administrative failure at all levels. … there is no need to conflict with the policies – you just have to implement them.

As a postscript, Preet raised an important point:

> Reservation policy has existed since 1947 (when India became independent) – initially only for 10 years but 70 years later we still have it. But if we help a Scheduled Class person gain entry to university, where there are restricted places, we are depriving someone deserving of a place who may be just as poor but not from the SC group. Social justice can lead to injustice as well.

Case 3: Wales

Policy Context

Wales is part of the United Kingdom but has its own language, culture, and education system which is parallel to, but separate from, England. The population of Wales comprises just over 3 million people, 20% being over 65 with only 17% under the age of 15 years (WG 2016). Through the Government of Wales Act (1998) the National Assembly for Wales was established with its associate range of devolved powers, including education (HMSO 1998; Birrell 2009). While Wales is devolved from UK central governance, it is not regarded as an

independent country. Devolution assured an education system designed by Wales for the people of Wales (Garcia and Baker 1995). Initially after devolution, education was the responsibility of 22 local authorities, with some too small to sustain effective provision. Thus, in 2014 four Regional Consortia were introduced to provide a more coherent overview of the 22 local authorities of the education system (Estyn 2015; Governors Wales 2013). Consequently, although Wales has a relatively small population, the administration of education is in the hands of national government (macro), four regional consortia encompassing 22 local authorities (meso), and the schools themselves (micro).

Policy Interpretation of Social Justice

> The Welsh have traditionally regarded themselves as having an unusually high respect for education….The wide interest in education, which undoubtedly exists in Wales, can be seen not only as an outgrowth of its cultural tradition but as a consequence of its economic poverty. (Istance and Rees 1994, p. 11)

Despite the regard for education, high levels of poverty and unemployment reduced young peoples' aspirations (Ward 2013) and so a forward-looking education system to ensure social justice was needed. Today, education has its own related social justice policies, seen in A Curriculum for Wales—A Curriculum for Life (Welsh Government 2015a), Qualified for life: An education improvement plan for 3–19-year-olds in Wales (Welsh Government 2014a), and Education in Wales: Our National Mission: Action Plan 2017–2018 (Welsh Government 2017b). Arguably, the number of policy reviews initiated by the Welsh Government is disproportionate to the size of the population of Wales. OECD (2014) highlight this and state: 'their sheer number and the seeming sense of urgency to publicly respond … may … have hindered reflection and learning and stretched capacity to manage them strategically' (p. 126) leading to a lack of coherence of social justice policy within and across sectors.

Site and Context

The interviews for this research were conducted with educational leaders at a Welsh Secondary School A with approximately 900 pupils, and a Bilingual Primary School B with 430 pupils in South West Wales. The catchment for School A is centred on a coastal town with an estimated population of 317,000 in 2017 and this is the only Welsh medium secondary school in the area. School B is located within a deprived town with an estimated population of 35,000. Both schools are located in areas with high levels of unemployment and relative poverty. Interviews were conducted via email and telephone which enabled the researcher to tease out the narrative and experience of the two school leaders Gareth (School A) and Ioan (School B), both incorporating social justice and fairness as part of their own personal narratives. As Wales has a range of social and urban differences, and the prominence of Welsh, English, or bilingual education varies from region to region, Gareth's and Ioan's perspectives are in no way intended to be representative of all educational leaders in Wales. To contextualise the interview data it is useful to understand the demographics of the school catchment area as indicated in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3   Principals and demographics

Schools	School A Gareth	School B Ioan
Location	Coastal town	Deprived town
Grade configuration	Secondary school (ages 11–18)	Bilingual primary (ages 3–11)
Student population	900	430
Welsh speaking (%)	20–30	5–10
Economically disadvantaged students (%)	7.3	38
Principal		
Gender	Male	Male
Ethnicity	Welsh / British	Welsh / British
Education	PhD	MBA
Experience as principal	13 years	12 years

Leader Voice

Both schools are within post-industrial areas which have experienced an associated climb in unemployment figures. Many children in Wales live in relative poverty and the percentage of children living in households below 60% of the median income has steadily risen since 2012 (Welsh Government 2014b). Significantly, School B is located in one of the most deprived areas in Wales, with very high levels of economic disadvantage while School A is in one of the more affluent areas with a 'low percentage of those eligible for free school meals'.

The differing levels of deprivation in the two schools impact upon the focus for School Leaders; Gareth commented that the main challenge to providing high quality education for students is 'budget cuts', but he noted also that the speed of change with government policies on Social Justice is coming 'thick and fast'. For Ioan, these challenges centred on the school's location and demographics. School B is:

> in a severally deprived community. Low income families and poverty are very real barriers to the children. Part of the problem lies in accessing high quality community assets which are poor in quality and repair. The new school will be a hub offering the opportunities these children miss.

Gareth explained how social justice policy is enacted at the school (micro) level by seeing pupils 'as part of a family' and by engaging with the local community; principles of fairness and social justice are embedded not only in the curriculum, but also in the ethos of School A. He commented:

> In Social Justice terms we, as a Welsh medium school, have an intake which is predominantly from people who have strong links to the local area and Wales; many students do well although we do have those students who are not first language Welsh [speakers] and at times struggle with the curriculum.

School B had a similar approach; however, the opportunities for pupils are in stark contrast to School A with Ioan highlighting the modelling of pupils' 'expectations':

[seeing Social Justice as] providing hope and opportunity to the children in this school [by pursuing] the primary goals of educating the children to be able to thrive in the society in which they live.

Ioan saw his role of school leader as to:

actively pursue partnerships or projects that serve to promote access to opportunity that the community cannot offer…reading policy documentation [and] thinking about how I can enact it at school level.

His dedication and passion for social justice was evident:

I am relentless in finding those connections that reduce the levels of inequality that exist here… I expect the staff to in some measure to behave in this way, big or small the acts make a difference.

For Ioan:

the school is the … asset which serves and is located in its community with all the relationships that come with this. I feel that this is the most powerful aspect of the school's work.

All staff are seen as part of this process.

In contrast, Gareth outlined that despite a plethora of Welsh Government policies 'many teachers did not know what social justice means'. Consequently, the school provides its own professional development sessions which explore social justice policy in a more generic sense:

For me, social justice is an integral part of educating 21st century students … Social justice as a 'title' is not used greatly at … school level. Terms such as 'Hawliau'r Plant' *[the Rights of Children]* and the UNICEF convention on the rights of the child are more familiar to staff and students.

The National Curriculum in Wales has provision for social justice education within its Personal Social (Health) Education (PSE/PSHE) strand which 'prepares learners to be personally and socially effective',

by providing learning experiences in which they can 'develop and apply skills, explore personal attitudes and values, and acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding' (WAG 2008, p. 4).

The two schools take quite different approaches to social justice in the curriculum; according to Gareth, School A uses external 'inspirational speakers' talking on subjects such as 'the rights of women in the workplace'. Whereas Ioan said School B focuses on the voice of the child within the curriculum:

> If SJ is about equity then children should be offered the forum and experiences to offer their views and see the results of their voice. We use agencies and lessons to talk about race, poverty, drugs and alcohol misuse, domestic violence etc. through the PSHE curriculum but it is more than this.

Gareth also sees the voice of the child as essential as he advocates 'open and frank discussion with students, and staff, is an aim to encourage students to "aim high" in all aspects of their academic life. Just having a policy won't make it happen'. He goes on to say that one of the real challenges for educators in School A is 'convincing students from disadvantaged backgrounds to study A-levels in the 6th form' and he spoke highly of one Welsh Government initiative, Seren (Welsh Government 2017c) which supports Wales' brightest students in gaining access to leading universities. However, he acknowledged that 'although the policy is to support "social mobility"', by focusing on the More Able and Talented pupils it 'may result in the 'less able' potentially being left behind or forgotten' (WG 2015b).

The national Pupil Development Grant (PDG) (WG 2017a), provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils to raise standards through working with parents to improve attendance, behaviour, homework, and self-esteem and PDG funding was used in both schools. However, Gareth admitted that when using PDG, 'an unintended outcome may be that teachers focus on More Able and Talented pupils at the expense of those who are less able'.

The WG's focus on national targets, is seen by Ioan as outside the role of the school as it can only respond to:

family focused local solutions that make the biggest scale difference in the community we serve. WG have big ambitions and the ideals enshrined in these polices are good ones…on the ground it's the enactment of these polices that makes the difference…it's about making that difference for every pupil…at this scale.

For both Gareth and Ioan, there were elements of challenging the social justice agenda while acknowledging their relative power. As Ioan explained:

There are lots of big ideas that the classroom can offer elements of a wider strategy of social re-engineering or reduce social inequalities but we are educators [although] we don't shy away from the issues we face.

For both Ioan and Gareth education echoes Freire's (1992, p. 40) need for 'hope'. Ioan shared that 'it is about the families and how school can inspire and drive changes here. We offer hope' (Ioan).

Conclusion

The three nations chosen for discussion in this chapter present interesting variations in policy formulation and enactment, and show that the area of the nation and the size of population, have little bearing on the ways in which policy is enacted. The studies demonstrate that social justice is an important part of the national policy framework in the USA, India, and Wales, and these very small-scale interviews with education leaders do not suggest that national governments are insincere in their policy making. The education leaders interviewed here felt that the essence of government policy on social justice is sound, though questions arose from the US school leaders. A passionate commitment on the part of these individuals to enact social justice principles was heard across countries. So there should be a win-win situation which will lead, if not to the eradication of social *injustice*, at least to the active promotion of social *justice*. In reality, however, the trickle-down of policy energy often seems to dissipate before reaching implementation level

and at regional, local, and institutional levels, implementation becomes haphazard. Paradoxically, as is the case in India, social justice policies may actually have unintended consequences of injustice to those in the community marginalised by 'affirmative action' (Bajpai 2010, p. 675). Finally, these studies constitute tiny samples of the national picture. They illustrate that national generalities rarely apply consistently at local level and that headings such as The USA, India, and Wales need to be used critically and carefully.

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9

The Significance of Context in the Enactment of Social Justice

Pamela S. Angelle and Deirdre Torrance

Introduction

The essential nature of schools as organisations is quite similar across the world. However, the countries and communities in which these organisations are placed vary by demographics, policy, political climate, and resources. They are also led by people with myriad beliefs and values. Context may play a role in principal decisions, influenced by colleagues, parents, students, and the 'specific educational circumstances in which they find themselves' (Dempster et al. 2004, p. 165); thus, reinforcing that context is an essential consideration in 'defining

P. S. Angelle (✉)
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies,
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, USA
e-mail: pangelle@utk.edu

D. Torrance
Moray House School of Education,
University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK
e-mail: deirdre.torrance@ed.ac.uk

and influencing who principals are and what they do' (Hausman et al. 2000, p. 5). The ways in which the external influences of context, situated in policy and political discourse, along with the issues brought to bear by the internal and external school community and stakeholder demographics are key in shaping the practice of social justice in schools (Angelle et al. 2015, 2016; Torrance and Forde 2017a). The work of the social justice leader at the core of the school's context is the subject of this volume, *Cultures of Social Justice Leadership—An Intercultural Context of Schools.* Principals' beliefs and values are instrumental in determining to what extent context guides their praxis (Angelle 2017; Forde and Torrance 2017), particularly in 'leader intent and interactions within various situations of practice' (Bredeson et al. 2011, p. 19).

Context also factors into the ways in which leaders enact social justice for marginalised children (Angelle 2017; Angelle et al. 2015). The emphasis placed on social justice and the expectations for how this emphasis is enacted in schools stem predominantly from the school leader. The role of leadership in schools places the principal at the intersection of the macro context, that is, the socio-cultural dimension and the social-political discourse, and the meso context, which includes the school specific and school community dimension (Torrance and Forde 2017b). The work of social justice in the macro and meso contexts is influenced by and enacted through the micro context of the school leader's history, experiences, and beliefs.

The examination of socially just leadership has gained prominence in research over the past decade. However, exploration of the intersection of social justice and the context in which it is practiced has been limited (DeMatthews 2016; DeMatthews et al. 2016; Oplatka and Arar 2016). Furthermore, the influence of context on social justice practice is not clear when considering Western views alongside views from Eastern cultures. Members of the ISLDN have worked to develop a construct of 'social justice' which has enabled researchers to investigate the influence of culture and context on practice, conceived broadly as being about working to ensure opportunities and success for children from marginalised groups. This construct of 'social justice' seems to have a universal acceptance but the specific contextual issues and barriers encountered, and the ways in which a social justice leader works to address them

are shaped by culture, both at the societal macro level and within the immediacy of education and the school meso level.

While some have emphasised that the practice of social justice may differ by context, others maintain that the essential nature of social justice means that 'it is embedded in several attitudes, concepts, and principles that we believe hold true across contexts and sociopolitical and cultural milieus' (Shields and Bogotch 2014, p. 1250). Others have posited that social justice is not a universal concept for leaders but rather, is defined by the society and the culture in which it is practiced. As Oplatka and Arar (2016) noted:

> Our conclusion is simple; traditional societies need a particular conceptualization of leadership for social justice that is based on entrenched social norms giving unique meanings to issues of justice, respect, interpersonal relations, equality and equity in education. Otherwise, any attempt to 'force' western-based concepts of social justice and leadership on the educational systems of these societies is doomed to failure as these concepts might be too normatively remote from local interpretations of life and the 'correct' structure of the society. (p. 354)

Thus, research that explores social justice leadership simultaneously with context rather than contrasted against it, as well as investigations that examine the role of context in relation to leadership for social justice is much needed (Bogotch 2000). The work in this volume has answered that call, through such explorations on an international scale.

Insights from the Volume's Chapters

Research findings in this volume have been generated from countries across the globe in both developed and developing nations, Western and Eastern cultures. Chapters include the voices of principals from New Zealand, Belize, The United States, Palestine, Haiti, Turkey, Ireland, Scotland, Pakistan, England, Jamaica, Spain, Mexico, Wales, and India. The plight of marginalised children across the world is framed in the dedicated agency of the socially just leaders described in these pages.

A brief re-examination of the chapters is provided to foreground the conclusions drawn across the chapters.

Jacobson's study in Chapter 2, *Social Justice Leadership for Academic, Organisational and Community Sustainability in High Needs Schools: Evidence from New Zealand, Belize, and the USA*, examined socially just leaders in three high needs schools; early childhood education in New Zealand, an elementary school in the United States and a secondary school in Belize. While the context and educational level of the schools in these three countries varied widely, the beliefs and practices of the principals regarding marginalised children were quite similar. In all instances, he found leaders who prioritised a community of care, with an emphasis on shared goals, and an embrace of the community.

Arar, Ogden, and Beycioglu offer an alternative to the Western view of social justice. Chapter 3, *Social Justice Leadership, Perceptions and Praxis: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Palestinian, Haitian and Turkish Principals* articulates the stories of social justice leadership in Palestine, Haiti, and Turkey. The issues of social justice brought about by the external political contexts call on the principals in these cases to rely on the micro context of their personal beliefs and resilience. The history and culture of the Palestinian, Haitian, and Turkish contexts placed an emphasis on the vision and values of the leaders, more so than centralised government policy and mandates. Thus, the practice of social justice includes the work of navigating oppression at an economic and cultural level.

In Chapter 4, *Systems of Education Governance and Cultures of Justice in Ireland, Scotland and Pakistan* from authors King, Forde, Razzaq, and Torrance cogently described balancing governance and social justice in Ireland, Scotland, and Pakistan. Exploring issues of accountability and regulation, the authors examine policy through the lens of social justice. Noting that school leaders are often restricted, rather than supported, by governance systems in their social justice work, the authors question how schools can bring about equality. The top-down model of compliance mandates at the macro level limit the effectiveness of social justice leadership at the meso, or school, level.

Miller, Roofe, and Garcia-Carmona provide an alternative to social injustice through curriculum change in Chapter 5, *School Leadership,*

Curriculum Diversity, Social Justice and Critical Perspectives in Education. The central question in this chapter was how school leaders might use the curriculum to bring about social justice in schools. These authors posit that culturally responsive pedagogy, through teacher training and a curriculum that offers lessons in tolerance and respect, might begin to bring about change in schools. Moreover, they suggest that transformative leadership and centralised curriculums may pave the way for such change.

Chapter 6, *Leadership for Social Justice in Schools in Mexico, New Zealand, and Spain* documents the work of Slater, Silva, López-Gorosave, Morrison, Antúnez, Corrales, and McNae. Examining how school leaders can best meet the needs of marginalised students, the attributes and behaviours of principals who successfully work for social justice are examined in light of the policy context in each country. Meeting the needs of all children, modelling socially just behaviours, including all stakeholders, and caring for the welfare of the students they serve were qualities found in the leaders described in this research.

Likewise, in Chapter 7, *Leadership for Social Justice: Intercultural Studies in Mexico, United States of America, and Spain*, the principals who served in the high needs schools in the research of Torres-Arcadia, Murakami and Moral also demonstrated characteristics found in socially just leaders in chapters throughout this volume. They articulated the importance of a vision for the school, shared leadership and collaboration, high expectations, and the inclusion of all stakeholders. Each of the principals in this chapter emphasised the importance of education as a weapon against inequality.

In Chapter 8, *Local Implementation of National Policy: Social Justice Perspectives from the USA, India, and Wales*, Jones, Angelle, and Lohmann-Hancock examined the emphasis on policy and the ways in which national policies can both help and hinder the work of social justice. Principals from these diverse countries each had to negotiate the policy mandates from the macro level while also meeting the needs of marginalised children at the meso level, a balancing act not always easily attained. This research found that well-intentioned policy is not always implemented as intended as principals work for social justice, leading to arbitrary policy contexts at the local level.

Commonalities Across Contexts

The countries examined in this volume are as diverse in size as they are in their cultures. The countries represented here include myriad discourses around education, vast differences in social, economic, and political dimensions, and, while the school leaders in these studies work for social justice, the issues of social justice often differ from country to country. Nonetheless, commonalities were found in the stories and voices of the leaders described in these chapters.

As we noted in Chapter 1, the framework for these chapters was generated from the work of the ISLDN members, examining context from a macro, meso, and micro perspective. Morrison (2017) turns to the work of Gronn and Ribbins (1996) for the definition of context used by ISLDN. These researchers asserted that:

> if reconceptualized as the sum of the situational, cultural and historical circumstances that constrain leadership and give it its meaning, context is the vehicle through which the agency of particular leaders may be empirically understood. (p. 454)

With this common understanding of context, findings from this volume were viewed through the lens of a macro, meso, and micro perspective. Macro level contexts included aspects of the socio-cultural dimension (political, economic and social) as well as each country's socio-political discourses; that is, discourse surrounding governance, issues of social justice and equity, and the educational standards in which students must demonstrate competency. Despite the differences across countries, the macro context served to explain the national level in this research (see Fig. 9.1).

The macro context issues were particularly salient in the research of King et al. as they questioned prioritising benchmarking and target scores in light of the issues facing the children of Ireland, Scotland, and Pakistan. Arar et al. offered a perspective of the sometimes overwhelming macro context of politics and economies, as leaders sought to meet the needs of marginalised children. Jones et al. noted that
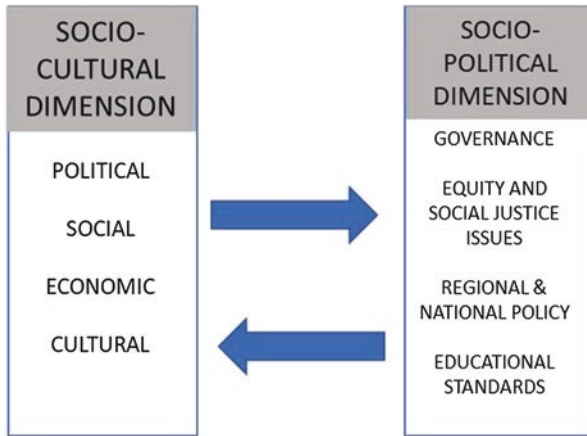
Fig. 9.1 Macro context. ISLDN Social Justice Strand. (February, 2014b). *A Micro/ Meso/Macro conceptual frame for social justice leadership in schools (V2).* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International School Leadership Development Network, Atlanta, GA. Reprinted with permission

policy as intended at the macro level was often not the policy implemented in practice, as principals worked to balance policy with student needs.

The meso context refers to the school-level factors which might include school and staff profiles. Furthermore, the meso context includes community characteristics such as ethnicity, socioeconomic factors, and the stability or transient nature of the community. In some cases, the history and culture of the surrounding community has an influence on the priorities and decisions made at the school level. Figure 9.2 illustrates the macro and the meso context.

Miller et al. speak to the importance of the meso context on social justice as they describe the benefits of a universal curriculum, one which embraces culturally responsive pedagogy. The authors recommend initial teacher education that encourages culturally responsive lessons, which might serve as motivation for learning with a recognition of the value of all cultures. The comparative analysis provided by Torres-Arcadia et al. enables the reader to understand the meso context
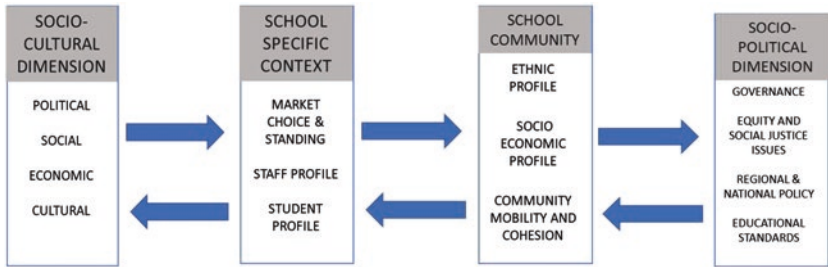
Fig. 9.2 Macro/Meso context. ISLDN Social Justice Strand. (February, 2014b). *A Micro/Meso/Macro conceptual frame for social justice leadership in schools (V2).* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International School Leadership Development Network, Atlanta, GA. Reprinted with permission
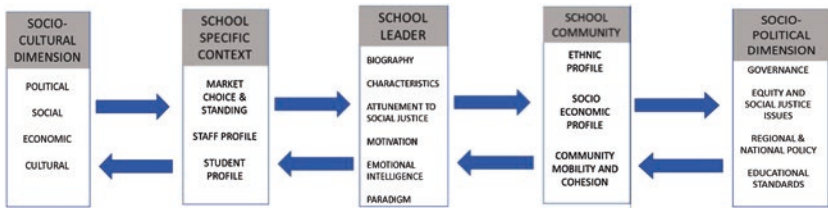
Fig. 9.3 Macro/Meso/Micro context. ISLDN Social Justice Strand. (February, 2014b). *A Micro/Meso/Macro conceptual frame for social justice leadership in schools (V2).* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International School Leadership Development Network, Atlanta, GA. Reprinted with permission

in which the leaders work, and appreciate the actions taken by them in their social justice practice.

The micro context is found in the leader of the school. The values, beliefs and convictions integral to the principal constitute the context from which school decisions predominantly stem. Furthermore, the leader's story shapes the values and beliefs; that is, the leader's background and prior experiences all influence how the leader views social justice. See Fig. 9.3 for the elements of the macro, meso, and micro context.

While all cases included in this volume speak to the micro context of the leader, two chapters specifically address the micro context. Jacobson discusses the leadership practices of three principals from

three diverse settings and notes their emphasis on establishing shared educational goals. Moreover, these principals worked to build trust and establish community relationships. Through their daily social justice practice, each of the three leaders in this chapter acted as role models and 'child-centred' leaders. Slater et al. also focused on the leader in the cases presented, recognising the leader's emphasis on shared goals and modelling behaviour. The leaders in this chapter made care for children their priority. Relationships with stakeholders allowed them to garner resources to support the marginalised children they served.

The Realities of Context

While the macro, meso, and micro contexts described in these chapters may be neatly defined in the figures herein, the reality of school life, across and within countries is rarely so linear. As school leaders go about their daily work, the macro, meso, and micro contexts overlap at points and, at other times, are not considered at all. However, when policy is implemented and supportive of social justice, when the needs of the students at the school level are addressed, and when the beliefs and values of the principal place marginalised children as a priority, that is where the work of social justice can be found (see Fig. 9.4).
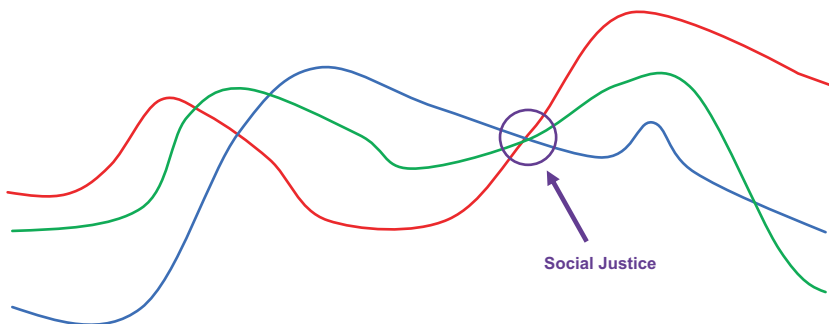
Fig. 9.4 The convergence of context and social justice

Conclusion

Cross-national comparative studies have become more common as technology has created avenues through which to gather data. The value of cross-country comparative case studies lies in the opportunity to explain similarities and differences across nations or to observe the same phenomenon in a variety of national contexts (Hantrais 1999). However, comparative studies also have been criticised for ignoring the nuances of culture in addressing findings, opting instead to use the 'average' societal culture in a country (Cheng 2000). Moreover, comparative studies have been accused of lacking methodological rigour (Osborn 2004). To address the need for understanding country-specific culture, values and beliefs, as well as policy implications and implementation, a team approach, or collaborative cross-national research, may be undertaken. Collaborative cross-national research involves individuals from several countries who collect and analyse data in their home country, often using the same methodology and data gathering instruments, then coming together as a team to explore data across cases to generate findings on an international basis. This volume has employed such methodology to offer a perspective on the ways in which context influences the work of school leaders in high needs schools as well as through the lens of social justice.

Collaborative research on an international scale brings with it a richness of learning for the researcher, including increased knowledge beyond the familiar with opportunities for critical reflection on practice. However, challenges encountered not normally faced in home country research must be acknowledged and negotiated as international project team members work collaboratively. Even if all researchers speak the same language, essential issues such as definitions, acronyms, and the vernacular, as well as structural systems and policies, must be clearly understood by all. Failure to do so can create misunderstandings regarding cross-national contexts and findings. Moreover, once data are collected and discussion of findings ensues, making meaning across international contexts from these findings is essential.

The idea of making meaning from data collected from principals interviewed in a number of countries is documented here. The unique parameters of these chapters to include data collected from at least three countries, one of which being a developing country provide accounts that focus not only on the actions and behaviours of the principal, but also on the culture of the community, as well as the policies and political climate in which the schools are situated. The parameters set for the chapters herein allow for a distinctive opportunity for both the researcher and the reader to examine how context influences the agency of principals.

The significance of this articulation of data collection and analysis is to begin to lay a foundation for a grounded theory of international socially just leadership in schools. Studies exploring social justice in high needs schools have offered a lens to view socially just leadership in individual contexts by country (Gewirtz 1998; Zajda et al. 2006). Cross-national studies of socially just leadership have proved elusive, thus, leaving scant literature upon which to build a foundation for a theoretical lens through which to view international socially just leadership. This volume begins to fill that gap.

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