

The Field of Educational Administration as an Arena of Knowledge Production: Some Implications for Turkish Field Members

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| Abstract | Article Info |
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| <p><i>In this article, the authors argue for the foundation of the field of educational administration that is specifically oriented towards the Turkish (and oriental) educational contexts, and is critical about the adoption of 'alien,' imported theories and concepts 'blindly.' Underpinned by literatures from sociology of knowledge, educational research and epistemology of sciences, the development of educational administration as an Anglo-American field of study is briefly analysed, followed by an attention given to the major distinctions between Turkish educational systems and school leadership and those in Anglo-American nations. The paper concludes by suggesting four challenges for Turkish scholars and researchers whose main focus is on educational administration and leadership, such as the generation of applied knowledge from and for the Turkish educational system, as well as the exploration of new areas of study that are unique to the Turkish contexts.</i></p> | <p>Article History:</p> <p><i>Received</i> December, 4, 2016</p> <p><i>Accepted</i> December, 20, 2016</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords:</p> <p><i>Fields of study; Educational administration; Turkey; Principals; Leadership; Transitional societies</i></p> |

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Introduction

The work of university faculty has long been devoted to teaching (Lee, 1968), either to engage in scholarly activity of as high a standard as possible (Bialecki, 2001), or simply to prepare young students for admission to the profession in the larger society (Wolff, 1969). Particularly, the university produces stores and disseminates highly-regarded scientific knowledge for its own sake through research, libraries, and teaching, respectively (Bleiklie & Byrkjeflot, 2002; Whitley, 1984). The impending result of the university's dual structure is the division of the university into two halves: the acquisition of professional knowledge versus the employment of 'pure' research (Pelikan, 1992). Most of the work of knowledge production, though, is conducted in academic disciplines that together comprise the university (Furlong & Lawn, 2011).

According to McCulloch (2002), the different disciplines in the education field, namely educational sociology, psychology, history and philosophy, present central pillars of this area of knowledge in the twenty-first century. Four basic disciplines form what is sometimes known as "the foundation of education", Furlong and Lawn (2011) further provide a new understanding of the current institutional positions of education disciplines and point to the theoretical, practical and methodological achievements of each discipline as well as to their potential ability to contribute to educational research in the twenty-first century.

Educational administration (EA) as a field of study that is strongly related to the discipline of education faces consistently the pendulum of theory versus practice (Oplatka, 2009), and therefore, is influenced to a large extent by contextual arrangements and structures (Barakat & Brooks, 2016; Bowers, Shoho & Barnett, 2015). In this sense, the establishment and development of EA as a field of study occurred



historically in North America and therefore its basic conjectures are rooted deeply in the Western culture and society (Hallinger & Chen, 2015). For example, the Theory Movement that emphasized the significance of empirical reports that draw solely on quantitative methodologies for the field's development underpinned within positivistic perspectives of science and society (Oplatka, 2010; Wang & Bowers, 2016).

This historical background coupled with the expansion of this field during the last four decades to other countries leads us to pose several challenging ponderings as a basis for this article; can the field of EA be applied to the Middle East (and Turkey) context when its intellectual roots are in North America and Western Europe? Can we incorporate the principles of modern educational management into organizational systems outside the spheres of the western world? And so on. In other words, these and related questions bring us to deal with the dichotomy 'traditionalism' versus 'modernism,' 'west versus east,' 'developed versus developing countries,' and the like.

The foundation of Turkish journals in EA and policy and an Academic Society for EA scholars in this country challenges us to ask if there is a place for Turkish (and Middle Eastern) field of EA that is distinctive and particular for this region. Based on scholarly work that focused on disciplines and knowledge, as well as on writings in EA about the epistemological aspects of it as a field of study, we would like to suggest that any justification for a positive rejoinder to the question posed above depends on three assumptions:

1. The main purpose of the Turkish field of EA is to develop theoretical and applied knowledge that is particular to the Turkish context, including the similarities and distinctions between different religious and ethnic groups within Turkey.
2. The Turkish EA field's orientation is not to adopt or apply theories, models, and insights developed in Anglo-American nations 'blindly' into the local context but rather to examine their suitability and relevance very carefully in light of the

cultural and social differences between these two parts of the world.

3. The Turkish EA field is expected to handle methodological issues that are more appropriate for conducting research in this country.
4. The Turkish EA field is expected to train young scholars and researchers whose educational perspective is based on local Turkish contexts rather than merely on alien and remote contexts.

In the remainder of this article, we present briefly the knowledge about EA field developed in Anglo-American countries, then move to discuss educational leadership in developing/transitional countries, in general, and in Turkey, in particular, and end the paper by suggesting some challenges for Turkish researchers in EA who strive to develop a knowledgebase that is particular to Turkey and its cultural and social structures.

EA as an Anglo-American Field of Study

Let us start with historical understandings of the origins of EA as a field of study. Historical accounts of the field (e.g., Callahan, 1962; Campbell, 1981; Culbertson, 1988) have seen the last quarter of the nineteenth century as the beginning of EA as a field of study in American universities. The search for efficiency in the American education encouraged many educators to participate in administrator preparation programs, leading in later years to the institutionalisation of EA academic programs and departments.

Until the 1950s, EA was substantially oriented to normative concerns, taught by senior American educators (superintendents, senior principals) who had retired and delivered their practical knowledge and wisdom to prospective administrators. The spirit of logical positivism originated in Social Sciences coupled with common dissatisfaction with the prescriptive nature of the field led to the



emergence of the 'theory movement' which defined the knowledge in EA in accordance with conventions of a modernist, positivistic, and rational-empiricist approach to science (Culbertson, 1988; Griffiths, 1983). In its proponents' optimistic view, an improvement in the administrative practice of educational institutions would be brought about when a prescriptive knowledge was replaced by a stable, cumulative, empirical and generalizable knowledge base.

Despite much criticism of this movement in later years, it helped the field gain an academic legitimacy as an area of study underpinned by scientific principles, and therefore, it was granted a place in the ivory tower. Indeed, many universities, first in US and later in other western countries, established graduate programs in EA, research grew in volume and quality, and researchers linked themselves to government agencies which agreed to fund their work (Riffel, 1986). Most of the professors of EA in that time, however, were white and middle-class American males.

Under the supreme of the social science disciplines in the field, EA borrowed relevant concepts and theories from these disciplines, and its programs became more specialised and increasingly theoretical and quantitative (Walker, 1984). The belief of many members of the field in those days was that a knowledge base produced in the disciplines and 'translated' into the world of educational practitioners would help them in their work. This belief, however, engendered an intellectual controversy. Some scholars at that time criticised "the trend toward a discipline-based approach to the study of EA" (Culbertson, 1974, p. 7), suggesting to replace it by trends toward the use of more applied bodies of knowledge.

The calls for more applied knowledge in the field are related to the debate over the universal nature of 'administration' and 'management.' Scholars like Hodgkinson (1978) and Foster (1999) asked whether administration and administrative process occur in substantially the same generalised form in all kinds of organisations and whether they are prescribed by organisational and national

contexts. Likewise, Bates (1980) indicated that "educational administration is an umbrella term that covers a multitude of ideas and activities representing considerable differences of view between various groups with the profession" (p. 2). Similarly, Foster (1999) ardently claimed that "knowledge is always produced in specific contexts, which are time and space dependent" (p. 104), which means that our knowledge in EA is unlikely to be universal.

It is widely accepted, then, that EA is closely linked to the social and cultural contexts within which it operates, and therefore, establishing universal ideas and theories is much more problematic (Barakat & Brooks, 2016; Hallinger, 2013). In line with this standpoint, Culbertson (1988) claimed that the knowledge of EA 'is infused with the norms of the society to which it is connected, [and] it has a distinctly social character' (p. 23). Indeed, the field tends to focus its research on timely topics, such as curriculum, special needs, and program and administrative structure, as Ogawa et al. (2000) maintained. Similarly, Oplatka (2012) described EA as a field having its practical legacy, "relating to it as being a professional discipline" (p. 37).

In line with the contextual influences on the field's development, EA as a field of study, including the sub-field of 'educational leadership,' has developed along ethnocentric lines, being heavily dominated by Anglo-American paradigms (Dimmock & Walker, 1998; Oplatka, 2010; Ribbins, 2007; Wang & Bowers, 2016). A great deal of EA material is embedded in the proverbs, myths, rituals, customs, and traditions of Anglo-American people (Hallinger, 2013). Thus, models and theories of leadership by themselves do not describe the and how of leadership practices and are not necessarily relevant to different cultural contexts (Arar & Oplatka, 2015). Similarly, educational reforms and policies draw almost exclusively on perspectives of educational leadership taken from Western literature and practice, thereby giving an impression that Western administration is a universal structure, but it is not (Barakat & Brooks, 2016). For example, Magno (2013) illustrated the particular



features of educational leadership in Azerbaijan in the Post-Soviet period that is embedded with a mix of both western and traditional forms of school governance, a stark distinction from current notions of educational leadership in many Western countries:

"School directors would like more control of school budgets and to be more autonomous, while the Minister (of education) supports autonomous decision making but not full decentralization of finances. This reflects the convergence with some neoliberal values (i.e., competition), which may also resonate because of historical value placed on competition among students and schools (e.g., academic Olympiads)...efficiency was not mentioned explicitly in Azerbaijan, although, because it is a low-resourced context, participants mentioned the importance of transparency in the way funds are expended at the school level" (Magno, 2013, p. 119).

The existence of schools, educational leadership positions, and administration in Turkish (and Middle Eastern) educational systems justify the foundation of EA as a field of study aimed, like everywhere in the world, at exploring administrative and managerial aspects of education. However, the distinctive contexts of Turkey (and the Middle East) make it necessary to adopt theoretical views and conceptual lenses that are different from those commonly used in Anglo-American nations.

Educational Leadership in Developing/Transitional Countries

To begin with our argument we would like to present the major findings of a research review conducted 12 years ago by Oplatka (2004). The purpose of the review was to shed light on the contexts and characteristics of principalship in developing countries and to discern similarities and differences between principalship in developed and developing countries and within the latter. Although the reviewed articles were representative of only a small portion of developing countries, a part of the world that is constantly and rapidly changing, a number of insights into educational leadership in developing countries could still be provided.

First, although neither generalizations upon the role of the principal, nor a particular portrait or model of principalship in developing countries can be made and determined, several common features of principalship in these countries were evidenced in this review. In respect to role position, despite changes in some countries, yet principals receive relatively limited autonomy in the centralized educational systems characterizing most of the developing countries and are required to obey their superiors unquestioningly. The cultural scripts underpinning this position appear also to present societal constructions of the 'right' leadership style, in that principals are expected to adopt an autocratic attitude in their engagements with teachers and stakeholders.

Likewise, principals in developing countries were found to focus, by and large, on routine management, control maintenance and simple, output-based teacher appraisal, and were likely to refrain from involving teachers and parents in decision-making, delegation of responsibilities, or major school change initiation. In only a few cases was a slightly different picture revealed (e.g., Thailand, Hong Kong, Tanzania). Not surprisingly, leadership functions such as staff and curriculum development are not often observed in their work.

Three predominant dissimilarities within developing countries in terms of principals' role expectations and performances were identified through a comparative analysis of the papers reviewed here. One of these centers on the position of principalship in the cultural and societal beliefs and values underlying the principal's role expectations. Clearly, there are points of differences between East Asian countries and other transitional countries. Thus, whereas the principalship is perceived in the former as an important element in the success of large-scale reforms, it gains a minor societal position in the latter (See: Hallinger & Chen, 2015).

East Asian countries are also exceptional within the developing countries in respect to instructional leadership and school-parent relationship. As opposed to African, for example, principals in some



East Asian countries were found to attach importance to instructional leadership and to the setting of school aims, and some of them were even observed to promote quality teaching and share a vision with their teachers. It is assumed, then, that developing countries that undergo rapid economic growth and major reforms in their educational system (e.g., Chapman, 2000; Hallinger, 1998, 2013; Hallinger & Chen, 2015) are likely to adopt, as part of this process, Anglo-American conceptualizations of effective principalship (e.g., models of instructional leadership), at least on the normative level.

The third insight, reflected through a comparison of the findings on principalship in developing countries with those in developed countries, yields some common as well as different features. While similarities were found primarily between Western principals and their counterparts in East Asian nations (e.g., the importance of the role, the high value attached to instructional leadership, vision building, the need for parental involvement), there appear to be major distinctions between developing and developed countries in most of the themes discussed here (Hallinger & Chen, 2015).

Some words about women leadership in developing/transitional countries are needed. In two reviews about women leadership in developing countries (Oplatka, 2006) and in the Arab World (Arar & Oplatka, 2015) six major barriers to women's advancement to leadership positions in school are recurrently discussed by researchers in different developing countries. Some of the obstacles are also well-known to researchers in developed countries (e.g., gender discrimination, women's low self-confidence, or job-family conflicts). Others, however, seem to be particular to women in developing countries (e.g., cultural background, low girls' participation in primary education, majority of men in teaching positions). Likewise, it seems that the few women in leadership positions in developing countries adopt an 'androgenic' style, i.e., a combination of 'masculine' and 'feminine' leadership styles, that derives, by and large, from the strong male-dominant values in

developing nations, coupled with women's own tendencies and needs.

Educational Leadership in Turkey

The Turkish educational system serves millions of children coming from diverse religious and ethnic groups that together composed of the Turkish society. According to Andrews (1992), there are at least 21 ethnic groups and 10 religious backgrounds. Within the larger macro-culture in the Turkey are many smaller sub-societies or subcultures known as micro-cultures (Chinn, 2002). Some 70-80% of the population are ethnic Turks; the remainder is comprised of legally recognized (Armenians, Greeks and Jews) and unrecognized (Kurds, Albanians, Bosnians, Georgians, etc.) minorities. The vast majority of the population is Muslim (Arar, Beycioglu & Oplatka, 2016). Additionally, The Turkish society is highly diversified also between seculars and religious Muslims, who hold different perspectives and beliefs as regard to many areas including democracy, education, and so on (Kaya, 2010).

Yet, education is a uniform for people in all parts of the country, and the transmission and advancement of the dominant Turkish culture is an integral part of this education (Inalcık, 2006; Sahin, 2006). In this sense, the cultural and ethnic diversity of this huge country has been marginalized in the national curriculum and textbooks in favour of the creation of one dominant Turkish culture. A policy of melting pot seems to prevail, although no government has ever declared such a policy (Arar, Barakat, Turan & Oplatka, 2017).

The Turkish educational system is centralized under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), and supported by the central government. The Ministry supervises and controls all educational institutions in the country and is responsible for planning, programming, implementing, monitoring, and controlling the schools and higher education institution. This control is achieved, at least in part, by provincial organizations in 81 cities and 850 districts, with a



directorate of national education in each province and district. But, in fact, the MoNE has almost absolute power over decisions affecting the administration of all schools (Sahin, 2006). For example, teachers and schools can only use textbooks and teaching materials approved to be suitable by the Ministry (Sahin and Gulmez, 2000).

Given the highly centralized ideologies that dominate the Turkish public administration, it is hardly surprising that local principals are virtually representatives of the central authority at school levels. They run their schools in collaboration with school-level commissions, teams, and school councils not only to ensure efficient use of resources but mainly to comply with education laws, regulations, and policies as well (Beycioglu, Sincar, Özer, Ugurlu & Yıldırım, 2014). In recent years, however, and in parallel to the Turkish government to join the European Union, several reforms have been introduced into the Turkish educational system aimed among other things at changing the centralized organizational structure toward localization; democratization of and participation in school management and at increasing the quality of teacher training (Arar, Barakat, Turan & Oplatka, 2017).

Several studies conducted in 2015 pointed to correlations between local principal's participative leadership following the decentralization of the educational system and teachers' organizational behavior (Kılınc & Özdemir, 2015), shared decision making in the staff room (Balkar & Özkan, 2015), and teachers' tendency to solve professional problems independently and discretionally without involving the principal (Özdemir, Sezgin & Özen-Kılıç, 2015). Along the same lines, Turan and Bektas (2013) found that a leadership style that emphasizes vision, guidance, encouragement and personal challenges is related to teachers' commitment to participate in decision-making and school activities.

Likewise, local school principals have been appointed to their position without any managerial training. In 2003, Işık states that "there has been a separation between the study of educational

administration at universities and its practice in schools...there were no links between academic programs designed to prepare school administrators and the employment policies for the principalship" (p. 261). But, in the last decade prospective state school principals have been required to complete a pre-service administration programs of 120 hour education. Wildy et al. (2010) indicated the Turkish principals need better preparation programs because they face many complex challenges such as highly centralized system, high social and ethnic diversity, and new reforms. Thus, principals in Balkar and Özkan's (2015) study claimed they need more knowledge in developing school culture and resource management and mobilization. Despite many years of nepotism and personal relationships in the appointment of principals in Turkey, a recent study found that women principals in Turkey face stereotypes and barriers on their way to principalship, but at the same time they reported being supported by supervisors and local officials (Aslanargun, 2012).

Interestingly, Turkish principals expressed more positive attitudes towards change initiation and implementation in their school (Aslan et al., 2008), but at the same time questioned the relevance of new reforms introduced by the MoNE to the school and claimed they should participate in the initiation and planning of these reforms (Akin, 2016). Thus, school principalship is not regarded yet as a true profession in Turkey (Karataş, 2016), i.e., there is no professional view of school administration as an independent role unrelated only to teaching qualifications or instructional skills and is of high significance to school improvement and effectiveness. In fact, despite recent attempts to re-construct educational leadership in Turkey, local principals still represent the authorities and have become a means for policy implementation for the central government, mainly due to the central authority's will to control. Educational leaders in the Republic of Turkey hold their positions as bureaucrats under the central organization's command and are in charge of implementing the policies generated by the central bureaucracy (Arar, Barakat,



Turan & Oplatka, 2017). This situation resembles the status of school principals in many developing/transitional countries, though (Arar & Oplatka, 2015; Oplatka, 2004).

Towards a Distinctive Turkish Field of EA

In this concluding part of the paper we would like to argue that the distinctive cultural, social, and organisational environments in which the Turkish principal works pose four challenges for EA scholars and researchers in this country that rely, to a large extent, on the generation of local knowledge base rather than on an imported one. Put it another way, we encourage Turkish EA researchers to conceptualize their research purposes and questions based on local, traditional forms of governance and educational leadership rather than merely on theories and concepts developed in Western countries. In doing so, the Turkish EA researchers will enrich the particular knowledge about educational leadership in Islamic and traditional/secular (transitional) society/multi-ethnic country rather than examining the application of 'alien' theories in the Turkish educational arena.

Challenge One: The Generation of Turkish Applied Knowledge in EA

Following the emergence of neoliberal ideologies and the consecutive changes in economic and political conditions in the Western world, there has been a dramatic increase in the incentives for universities and, in turn, for academic fields of study to produce knowledge that has commercial value (Furlong & Lawn, 2011; Rynes, Bartunek & Daft, 2001). This knowledge is distinguished from theoretical knowledge by being carried out in a context of application, heterogeneous, and more socially accountable and reflexive (Arar, 2015; Gibbons et al., 1994; Barakat & Brooks, 2016). Thus, studies in EA are gradually and steadily adopting the forms of applied knowledge as the principal's work is contingent upon time, events and contexts (Bischoff, 2008; Oplatka, 2010; Wang & Bowers,

2016). These recent trends open the gate for Turkish EA researchers to generate an applied, contextual-based knowledge that is tightly connected to their own (traditional) culture and society. This kind of applied knowledge seems to be different from the one produced in the Western countries for being used in education districts and schools whose cultural underpinning is compatible with the origins of western constructions of the 'proper' schooling. Needless to say that these constructions are not necessarily 'accepted' by people in transitional and oriental cultures.

To become relevant, we believe, the Turkish research in EA should become more accountable and involved in school performance and policy issues in this country. Following Boyer (1982), Turkish EA researchers should generate knowledgebase that can be helpful to Turkish schools, teachers, and other role-incumbents in local educational systems. For example, they may seek for knowledge about the ways to construct the practical elements of 'school improvement' in the Turkish schools and communities, the preferred traditional and modernist mechanisms to facilitate women's promotion into leadership positions, the manners by which Turkish school leaders can combine traditionalism and modernism to improve learning and teaching, and the strategies to help minority students to feel part of the Turkish country.

We do not argue, though, that EA researchers in Turkey should refrain from importing ideas and knowledge from other parts of the world, but rather that they should be very careful about the adoption of advanced knowledge that draws on issues and problems that belong to different societies. They should tacitly accept dominant White norms and privileges, as Bush and Moloji (2008) suggested, not blindly. For example, the absence of full school autonomy, as recommended by the reform of school-based management, is not always or entirely a disadvantage in many traditional/transitional societies (see Karp, 1995 for learning about the African context in this respect), although most models of leadership nowadays glorify shared governance and participative decision-making in schools



(Wang & Bowers, 2016). After all, teachers everywhere are more likely to value research if they are able to interpret findings in the context of their own situation (Everton, Galton & Pell, 2002). School leaders are not exceptional in this respect. They deserve research that is relevant to their own culture and society, not studies whose findings are inapplicable in their local contexts. For example, we would like to read a study about the imperial past of Turkey and its 'home' for multiple and diverse cultures that together represent the connection between East and West. The implications of this social mosaic for education need further investigation, we assume.

Challenge Two: Improving the Turkish Educational Administration

The second challenge follows from the former one refers to Turkish EA researchers' responsibility to conceptualize models and research questions aimed at improving the practical aspects of EA and school leadership in their country, a challenge that is consistent with the aims of educational research (Everton et al., 2002), and has been conducted in the past by Turkish researchers, yet insufficiently in our view. But, as the role of faculty members worldwide is to demand evidence rather than anecdote for answers, and to generate new knowledge and formulate new theories through research (Furlong & Lawn, 2011; Humes & Bryce, 2001), improving the Turkish EA makes it necessary to suggest mechanisms for improvement that are local-based. For example, given the particular characteristics of many transitional societies, including these in Turkey, one may ask if the adoption of standard for measuring student achievement everywhere in its education districts is the 'right' way to run a school in every local community. Similarly, Turkish EA scholars may mull over the relevance of 'instructional leadership' in the improvement of school leadership in their attempt to better understand the local realities of great diversity in the educational system. In doing so, they will allow people from a wide variety of ethnic groups to express their own cultural perceptions of

teaching and schooling, and in turn, will increase the public legitimacy to minority groups.

After all, many Turkish school leaders face, first and foremost, unique problems such as the transition from developing to developed country or the multi-ethnic/religious aspect of this large country. This makes us believe that the role of the Turkish EA researchers is, among other things, to provide local school leaders with practical strategies to fill the needs of the local educators and students effectively and profoundly. For example, their commitment to cultural gap between adults and young people (students) in a transitional society merits highlighting.

Challenge Three: The Exploration of New Educational Arenas

A basic purpose of every field of study is to contribute to the greater illumination and understanding of different aspects of our experience and our world (Barakat & Brooks, 2016; Bridges, 2006; Furlong & Lawn, 2011). Thus, and consistent with EA researchers worldwide (Bowers et al., 2015; Oplatka, 2010; Wang & Bowers, 2016), Turkish EA researchers need to consider exploring new arenas of educational administration and leadership not yet discovered in Anglo-American educational systems, either due to less of interest by Western scholars, or simply because these arenas are unique to transitional societies. A fresh Turkish (or oriental) standpoint from which to explore uncharted areas of educational administration and leadership may enlarge our understanding of spirituality and leadership, the positive consequences of 'centrality' for teachers living and working in traditional societies, and the effective ways to integrate students from different ethnic/religious groups in public education, three common phenomena in many developing/transitional countries that many Anglo-American countries might cope with in the future due to massive waves of immigration. After all, Turkey has been experiencing considerable waves of immigration from Syria and Iraq in recent years.



Challenge Four: The Promotion of Critical Discussions in EA

Academic field members exist in the preparedness of individuals to think up, explore and criticise new concepts, techniques or representation, and arguments (Bowers et al., 2015; Bridges, 2006). The role of the faculty members is to ask difficult questions and educational research is not exceptional (Furlong & Lawn, 2011). It is, according to Bassey (1999, p. 39) a "critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgments and decisions in order to improve educational action." Thus, despite the political situation in the Middle East in recent years, Turkish EA scholars have to suggest critical reports on normative expectations from principals that are based solely on European conceptions, on one hand, and critical accounts on traditional arrangement of educational leadership and governance prevailing in many educational systems that obviate school improvement and effectiveness (e.g., nepotism, tribal considerations). They have to focus on the daily difficulties Turkish principals face from a critical point of view.

Turkish EA researchers, then, needs to re-explore and challenge the epistemology and methodology of existing theories and concepts in educational leadership and administration imported to their country from overseas, as well as to provide local policy-makers with greater insight into principalship in transitional (oriental?) countries and the local cultural and social influences upon principalship. Otherwise, policy-makers might adopt imported reforms without acknowledging the plausible influences of local contexts on the suitability and successful implementation of these reforms. For example, they might adopt western-originated reforms that ignore the great cultural and ethnic diversity of the Turkish educational system and are unlikely to suggest fruitful solutions to the complexity of teaching and leading many different and distinctive communities.

Meeting these four challenges may contribute twice. First, a community of Turkish EA scholars, like any academic community

(Furlong & Lawn, 2011; McCulloch, 2002; Wang & Bowers, 2016), who share a domain of intellectual inquiry, heritage, tradition, a specialised language or discourse may further develop in the future. This may lead to an infrastructure of books and articles and a system of communication that are fundamentally Turkish.

Second, although only recently the Turkish MoNE has formalised procedures for preparing and developing school leaders (Kılınc & Özdemir, 2015), current scholarship on school leadership preparation and development is mostly imported from Anglo-American nations. Unfortunately, as we saw so far, this scholarship is less focused on Turkish (and oriental) issues as it is deeply rooted in the Anglo-American culture. It ignores, for example, traditional forms of leadership, poor work conditions in many peripheral Turkish schools, and the very limited budgets allocated to education in many parts of Turkey. A leadership development program that will take into account the unique complexity of the Turkish context might benefit very much from this scholarship.

Thus, the development of Turkish scholarship in EA may help establish leadership preparation and development programs that are more oriented to educational leadership in this country. For example, the content of these programs may comprise much attention to issues of leadership in traditional, male-dominance, societies, the empowerment of students to prevent high rates of drop-out, school politics in small communities, and the like. Turkish prospective school leaders ought to come up with a new type of educational leadership that grounds their work in their Turkish cultural and social heritage and that prepares them to understand and carry out their responsibilities in the local educational arenas rather than in allegedly 'universal' ones. This kind of preparation ought to express concepts such as multicultural educational dialogues, moral leadership, transitional nations and education, and national coherence.



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