

IMPORTANT WORK IN A TIME OF VOLATILITY: TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY, CITIZENSHIP, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE EDUCATION

Benjamin Mallon

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Over the past few months, we have all witnessed and experienced the impact of a global pandemic as well as the global reignition of social movements seeking redress for systemic and longstanding racism. Alongside the ongoing rise of populism, global conflict and the existential threat posed by climate breakdown, we are reminded that our lives are continuously shaped by structures and processes that transcend the globe. This timely publication, edited by Mary Drinkwater, Fazal Rizvi and Karen Edge, provides a valuable reflection on how transnationalism as ‘a set of processes relating to social, economic and political connections between people, places and institutions, across national borders, potentially spanning the world’, shapes understanding of local and global identities and relationships (Drinkwater, Rizvi and Edge, 2019: 5). Most importantly, the book considers how transnationalism might be employed as a framework to transform democracy, human rights and global citizenship education.

The central concept of this volume, transnationalism, emerged from an ongoing collaboration between the Graduate School of Education at the University of Wisconsin (Madison), the University of Melbourne, the London Institute of Education (now University College London) and, more recently, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. These relationships culminated in the development of an online graduate course, around which the chapters in this edited volume are developed.

The book begins with an exploration of how educational policy and practice has been shaped by transnational processes, which are not simply constructed by governments and corporations, but are also driven by people. In a chapter of particular importance in light of the rise of populism against the backdrop of climate breakdown, Fazal Rizvi provides a deep consideration of how global mobility, in all its forms, has shaped the economic, political and cultural reconfiguration of the world. Transnationalism in this context presents significant opportunities, but also significant risks, particularly for the most vulnerable, and raises the question of how education can support learners living with such realities. Rizvi considers typical responses to this challenge, before making a compelling argument that the concept of ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’ (Rizvi, 2019: 45) can support learners to consider and reflect on their sense of place within an interdependent and interconnected world, and to explore their responsibilities in relation to possible global solutions.

The second section of the book explores democracy and democratic education in four different contexts. Stemming from research in Kenya, Mary Drinkwater argues through a critical, decolonial framework, that the ‘thinning’ of democracy as a result of neo-liberal globalisation, requires a new narrative of robust global democracy. Drawing on Ancient Greek conceptions of participation, African and indigenous knowledge, and Hannah Arendt’s ideas around action and pluralism (Arendt, 1958), Drinkwater argues that, to support young people’s engagement with active global citizenship, educational practices should be underpinned by a more global narrative of democracy.

For those readers interested in higher and adult education, Tristan McCowan provides a fascinating analysis of alternative higher education (HE) institutions in Brazil. Considering whether it is possible for radical transformative education to exist within the mainstream, McCowan explores institutions on either side of, as well as those straddling the line separating mainstream and non-mainstream education. Through their alternative conceptions of access, curriculum and governance, including those with deep connections to marginalised local groups, pan-Latin American connections and transatlantic connections to African countries, these institutions depart from mainstream HE provision. However, McCowan also identifies the

challenges of resourcing and recognition that are experienced by those seeking to develop radical alternatives from inside and outside the Brazilian education mainstream.

Within a Canadian context scarred by processes of violence, the chapter by Reva Joshee, argues that approaches grounded in a Gandhian inspired 'slow peace' (Joshee, 2019: 97) can support the positive transformation of diversity and social justice policy. This chapter raises important questions as to how the development of policy can be supported by truly inclusive processes. The chapter by Karen Edge highlights the importance of transnational comparative analysis, as research considering educational leadership in England, the United States (US) and Canada, exposes significant learnings. Edge explores how processes of educational decentralisation, whilst holding potential for democratisation of knowledge and expertise, may lead to the reproduction of the very narrowness those from certain perspectives are seeking to overcome.

The third section of the book considers how a focus on transnationalism and transnational perspectives may shape citizenship and global citizenship education. The opening chapter of this section will be of particular interest to those concerned with global citizenship education (GCE) in the formal education system, in which Mark Evans provides a useful overview of early characterisations of GCE's learning goals, practices and orientations. With a specific reference to the development of GCE in Canada, Evans charts the challenges facing a widening and deepening citizenship education, namely barriers to practical implementation, the need for sophisticated pedagogies and the importance of the incorporation of a justice lens. Delving deeper into the historical roots of educational cosmopolitanism, Julie McLeod provides a rigorous overview of what Fuchs (2004: 757, cited in McLeod, 2019: 159) describes as an 'institutionalised internationalisation' of education. Focusing on the interwar years, McLeod considers, with a particular focus on the Australian context, how the League of Nations and the International Bureau of Education (IBE) sought to influence the content and outcomes of educational practices. This chapter provides a meaningful analysis of the processes of internationalisation, alongside important

developments in progressive education, but also highlights how current agendas and debates may be shaped by deep rooted and potentially exclusionary conceptualisations of global citizenship.

In the third chapter of the section, Hugh Starkey provides a strong argument for the employment of a right-based citizenship education approach to achieving the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) challenge of 'learning to live together' (Delors, 1996: 91). Starkey draws on ideas of cosmopolitan citizenship, where practice can support young people's action to defend their rights and the rights of others. Starkey considers the evidence supporting the efficacy of the Rights Respecting Schools Award in the United Kingdom, identifying the potential of the Convention of the Rights of the Child to inform school policies and practices, but also noting the shortfalls in addressing broader questions of global injustice. Drawing upon empirical research, Ann Phoenix clearly demonstrates how language brokering represents an important act of citizenship for young people as they support their transnational families to negotiate lives in new countries and contribute to society through their work. The global nature of these actions, Phoenix argues, can provide the basis for future global citizenship.

The fourth and final section of the book utilises transnationalism as a lens to explore peace-building, peace education and human rights education. Stephane Chatelier provides a philosophical negotiation of the space between cultural relativism and cultural imperialism in his chapter exploring humanism and education. Focusing on the contemporary work of UNESCO, Chatelier considers philosophical, ethical and political critiques of humanism, moving from a particular focus on post-colonial theory to consider human rights and globalisation. Chatelier argues that negotiated humanism and human rights may inform education which seeks to address such significant challenges. Considering the challenges and possibilities of peace education in Pakistan, Sarfaroz Niyozov and Munir Lalani provide a particularly interesting historical background to the forms of violence and conflict that have shaped the region. The chapter considers how education has both supported and suffered from violence, with extreme consequences for those young people within the

education system. Niyozov and Lalani then explore the potential of a model of peace education, with reflections on the work taking place in Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development.

In the book's final chapter, Kathy Bickmore explores the experiences of young people in Mexico, Bangladesh and Canada to investigate how social conflict is both experienced in day to day life, and as a part of school curricula addressing these issues. Bickmore draws together a wealth of literature on conflict, violence and peace to illustrate a very useful model comprising the direct, cultural and socio-structural dimensions of conflict and peacebuilding education. Qualitative research in the three contexts unearths young people's experiences of direct gender-based violence and conflict and socio-cultural dimensions of gendered conflict, yet reveals that these issues were, for the most part, not addressed within the classroom. This chapter illustrates the significant risks faced by young people, particularly young women, as they negotiate conflict and violence in their lives, and highlights how a transnational perspective can shed light on globally shared experiences which necessitate responses from educators working in very different contexts.

In summary, the book skilfully situates debates within the complex and dynamic landscape of transnationalism. For those working in higher education, the entirety of the book provides a useful insight into the content and development process of a transnational education programme. Those engaged with educational policy will find important critical perspectives on policy development. For those working as educators in the areas of GCE / development education (DE), particularly those focused on human rights, peacebuilding and migration, several chapters provide valuable theoretical perspectives on these issues. For those working with young people, the chapters from Starkey, Phoenix and Bickmore in particular will stimulate important reflection. Ultimately, the publication offers a great deal for those seeking theoretical frameworks and practical insights to support the positive transformation of educational policies and practices.

References

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Benjamin Mallon is Assistant Professor in Development and Intercultural Education in the School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies in the Institute of Education, Dublin City University. He researches and teaches in the area of Global Citizenship Education, with a particular focus on pedagogical approaches which address conflict, challenge violence and support the development of peaceful societies. Email: benjamin.mallon@dcu.ie.