

Chapter 1

Globalisation, Ideology, and Human Rights



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Globalisation, Ideology, and Human Rights: Introduction

Globalisation and Education Reforms

Globalisation has become a significant construct in education and policy discourses. A number of social theorists (Appadurai, 1990; Giddens, 1990; Rust, 1991; Robertson, 1992; Paulston, 1997; Zajda & Rust, 2021) argued that globalisation was one of the outcomes of modernity, which was characterised by the nexus of new structural political, economic, cultural, and technological developments (Appadurai, 1996; Robertson & Khondker, 1998; Wallerstein, 1998; Giddens, 2000; Zajda, 2021). Globalisation, according to Ampuja (2021), is now the ‘most important key-word’ of the global triumph of neoliberal capitalism. He argues that these concepts have become ‘dominant in the social sciences, to the point of establishing a new theoretical orthodoxy that we can define as globalisation theory’ (Ampuja, 2021). Consequently, globalisation has also acquired a new meta-ideology that carries strong elements of Western ideologies (Daun, 2021).

The term ‘globalisation’ is a complex, and constantly evolving construct, as well as a euphemism, concealing numerous contested meanings, ranging from Wallerstein’s (1979, 1980, 1989) ambitious ‘world-systems’ model, to Giddens’ (1990) notion of ‘time-space distanciation’ highlighting the ‘disembeddedness’ of social relations – their effective removal from the immediacies of local contexts,

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and Castells' (1989, 2000) perception of globalisation as way of networking, proposing that the power of flows of capital, technology, and information, constitutes the fundamental morphology of an emerging 'network society' (Castells, 2000). Furthermore, globalisation, by means of ICT, became a powerful new mode in the transfer of capital, labour production, consumption, and consumerist culture, resulting in significant quantitative and qualitative change, affecting major organizations, governance, and individuals.

Globalisation has become a significant construct in education and policy discourses. A number of social theorists (Appadurai, 1990; Giddens, 1990; Robertson, 1992; Paulston, 1997) argued that globalisation was one of the outcomes of modernity, which was characterised by the nexus of new structural political, economic, cultural, and technological developments (Appadurai, 1996; Robertson & Khondker, 1998; Zajda, 2021). Globalisation, according to Ampuja (2021), is now the 'most important keyword' of the global triumph of neoliberal capitalism. He argues that these concepts have become 'dominant in the social sciences, to the point of establishing a new theoretical orthodoxy that we can define as globalisation theory' (Ampuja, 2021). Consequently, globalisation has also acquired a new meta-ideology that carries strong elements of Western ideologies (Daun, 2021).

Since the 1980s, globalisation, marketisation and academic standards driven reforms around the world have resulted in structural, ideological and qualitative changes in education and policy (OECD, 2020; Zajda, 2020a). They included an increasing focus on the UNESCO's concepts of knowledge society, the lifelong learning for all (a 'cradle-to-grave' vision of learning) representing the lifelong learning paradigm and the "knowledge economy" and the global culture. In their quest for excellence, quality and accountability in education, governments increasingly turn to international and comparative education data analysis. All agree that the major goal of education is to enhance the individual's social and economic prospects. This can only be achieved by providing quality education for *all*. Students' academic achievement is now regularly monitored and measured within the 'internationally agreed framework' of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This was done in response to the growing demand for international comparisons of educational outcomes (Zajda, 2020c). To measure levels of academic performance in the global culture, the OECD, in co-operation with UNESCO, is using *World Education Indicators* (WEI) programme, covering a broad range of comparative indicators, which report on the resource invested in education and their returns to individuals.

On the surface, we see the influence of globalisation in the foods we eat, music we listen to, news we view, and places we travel. The ramifications of globalisation are huge and may be conceptualized with different foci. For instance, the World Health Organization's (2021) definition of globalisation emphasizes interconnectiveness and interdependence of peoples and countries as well as the opening of international borders to increasingly fast flows of goods, services, finance, people and ideas, and changes in institutions and policies at national and international levels that facilitate or promote such flows. In geography, globalisation is defined as the progressive processes of economic, social, cultural, technological, and institutional

relationship exchanges between societies and individuals around the world (Youmatter, 2021). The term globalisation used by economists describe growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information (PIIE, 2021). Financial globalisation refers to the rise of international financial exchanges and monetary exchanges, like the stock market. Political globalisation focuses on governmental and nongovernment organizations working together on an international level. Cultural globalisation concerns interpenetration of beliefs, principles and customs as a supra-cultural emerges. Technological globalisation occurs through electronic communication dissemination, while ecological globalisation focuses on people's understanding of the Earth as a single global entity where air, water, and climate link all peoples of the planet into a singularity (Youmatter, 2021). Authors in the book have selected different dimensions of globalism to explore in their chapters.

Sometimes globalisation is regarded as beneficial to the peoples of the world; sometimes it is associated with a series of negative outcomes. For instance, an economic-market definition of globalism advocates for a consumerist, neoliberal, free-market world. While this ideology is embraced by many powerful individuals who claim it transmits democracy and benefits everyone, it may also reinforce inequality and be politically motivated (Steger, 2013). While globalisation appears inevitable, its implications on humanity may vary depending upon how one views different aspects of it. This variation adds to the richness of the debate on it, especially as it impacts human rights. Therefore, how it is viewed and what aspect of globalisation authors emphasize will combine to help us to have a more comprehensive vision of its relationship to human rights.

Ideology as a Construct

The term *ideology* refers to a system of ideas and beliefs that is dominant within a group or society, and which affects most if not every sphere of social interaction and organisation within it: political, economic, scientific, educational, and cultural (Zajda, 2014). The origins of the concept ideology can be traced to eighteenth-century French philosophical thought. The term *idéologie* (ideology) was coined by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1795), to define ideas that were to be used in clarifying and improving public debate – in particular, he wanted to provide the necessary rational foundation for the critique of the dominant intellectual and political traditions that defined his era. He created the term by combining Greek 'idea' (form) and 'logos' (knowledge). the concept of ideology is closely connected with power, with domination, control and justification of a political system. It should be apparent that educational institutions play a significant role in promulgating a society's dominant ideology (see the work of Michael Apple) – and under some circumstances in fostering awareness and generating resistance, the work of Paulo Freire is a good example here.

The core sense of the term is quite apparent in Marxist and neo-Marxist writings where, from a class-conflict and structural-functionalist perspective, 'ideology' refers to a core set of ideas and values which consolidates and legitimates the existing political and economic system and relations between social classes. The main function of the ideas constituting the ideology is to maintain the *status quo* of the economically, socially and politically stratified society (Zajda, 2014).

Overall, an ideology is a system of dominant ideas and ideals that may form political, economic, or social theory and policy. It is a set of values, ideas or beliefs of a group or individual that characterize a particular viewpoint. Mannheim (1936) viewed ideologies as thought systems that serve to defend a particular social order, and often express the interests of its dominant or ruling group. Conflict and Marxist theorists expanded the definition to include oppression and exploitation (Cole, 2019). Ideology is part of our social construction of reality. As Kumar (2006) notes, the study of ideology focuses on the distinction between appearance and reality, between error and truth, between a necessarily distorted subjective consciousness and an objective world. Ideology as a concept can be seen as a lens through which a person views the world. Sociologically speaking, it refers to the sum total of a person's values, beliefs, assumptions, and expectations that exist in society, within groups and between people, which shapes our thoughts, actions, and interactions. It ultimately impacts the types of social structures that we create and influences what trajectories society at large pursues (Cole, 2019).

Major Human Rights Discourses

Human rights are defined by the United Nations (2021) to be rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and others. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination (Vissing, 2021). Human rights are embodied in treaties, conventions, protocols and statutes outlining how states should undertake commitments to each other and their citizens (Vissing, 2019). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), signed in 1948 after World War II has become the basis of human rights policies treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) are fundamental (Frezzo, 2015).

Human rights can be considered to be an ideology because they offer an account of the existing order, a world-view, meaning they propose moral boundaries of the world as some think it should be. Human rights advance a model of a desired future, a vision of what a good society should look like and explain how to bring about that desired social change. Understanding human rights as an ideology helps researchers overcome blind spots that arise from narrowly defining human rights as a struggle

over rights. Human rights offer a set of ideas that provide the basis for organized political action, which may be intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power, just as do other ideologies (David, 2018; Heywood, 2003; Murphy, 1972; Mutua, 1996; Vissing, 2020). As David (2018) observes, understanding human rights as an ideology offers us the analytical tools to systematically evaluate the evolution of the Western-led global institutionalization of values and norms. By understanding human rights through the prisms of the institutionalization of organizational and doctrine power, we may advance our understanding of how human rights are internalized across different socio-political strata.

Neier (2012) argues that human rights have become the major ideology of our time. From the days of the Magna Carta and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, society has developed a large array of human rights treaties. International law emerged to help enforce the protection of human rights (Vissing & Williams, 2018; Vissing, 2021). But some scholars of international law believe that human rights law is not really law because there is no global sovereign to enforce its compliance. Moreover, Neier finds that international law purports to regulate the behavior of citizens, which can only be done by an individual state. As example, the United States has not ratified most human rights treaties because it recognizes no authority higher than the Constitution. But scholars like Teitel (2011) assert that international human rights law is “humanity’s law.” Henkin (1968) finds that the beneficiaries of human rights law are different from those of international trade law or international arms control law: they are not the other states which are parties to the treaty, but individual lives that are at stake. This creates a paradoxical relationship between international human rights and sovereignty (Neier, 2012).

In many ways, the argument for human rights may be similar to that of global social justice, a hot issue in International Political Theory (IPT). Steger et al. (2013) examine ideological claims and policy proposals of the transnational justice movement and single out the core ideology of the global justice movement (GJM) as fundamental in understanding human rights advocacy. Justice globalism envisages a global civil society with fair relationships and environmental safeguards. They identify seven key values: transformative change, participatory democracy, equality of access to resources and opportunities, social justice, universal rights, global solidarity and sustainability they feel are fundamental to the ideology of justice globalism.

Evaluation

Human rights education is essential to maintaining democracy, equality, freedom, and the full realization of human rights. It contributes significantly to promoting equality, respect for human dignity, preventing discrimination and enhancing participation in democratic processes. It reflects societal standards that need to be learned by each generation and transferred to the next. The United Nations produced two important policy documents on human rights in 1966: *The International*

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966), and *the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (drafted in 1954 and signed in 1966). The later declared that all humans have the rights to health, food and employment. In addition, the United Nations' (2015) *Millennium Development Goals Report* focused on *poverty eradication* as the greatest *global challenge* facing the world, and *economic rights*, such as food, health, and *education* (United Nations, 2015). Its first goal was to 'Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger' (p. 14). However, what is also missing in the discourse of human rights education is the politics of human rights. It has to be accepted that *human rights policy documents* are not neutral, but are inherently *political* in their origin, development and application (Zajda, 2020a).

Despite the seemingly egalitarian spirit of the reforms for human rights education, equality and social justice in education and, in view of the market forces dictating privatisation, decentralisation and marketisation in educational institutions, ambivalent legacies of the past, and unresolved critical education and policy issues, pertaining to social justice, continue, by and large, to remain the same, and are still on the policy agenda (Zajda, 2015). There is a need to consider issues in human rights and social justice with reference to all citizens globally, including indigenous people. According to the UNICEF data, there are an estimated 300 million indigenous people worldwide, roughly 5% of the world's population. Despite this significant presence, national schooling systems have 'ignored, minimized, or ridiculed their histories pre- and post-Western contact, as well as their cultural contributions toward social and environmental sustainability' (Arenas et al., 2009).

Some researchers have argued that human rights and social justice are difficult to achieve in a society where social inequality debate is dormant. The difficulty of attaining social justice in the global economy was explained by Rikowski (2000), who argued that sustainable social justice is impossible on the basis of social stratification globally. The challenge we face today is one of addressing equity and fairness in the global community. The full promotion of economic, social and cultural rights will demand a deep political, social and cultural change in many nations globally (Zajda, 2021).

The future will depend as well on our ability to make human rights education relevant beyond the spheres of law, political institutions, or international relations. Human rights education must be explored and understood by all active citizens, irrespective of ideology, race, ethnicity, gender, or religion (Vissing, 2021). The effects of globalisation compel us to address issues of democracy, economic and social equity, the rule of law, and meaningful participation in real and authentic decision-making process (Zajda, 2020a). In the *re-envisioning* of the human rights education, as a social action platform for social justice, peace and tolerance, we need to re-examine:

- current evidence concerning the nexus between social justice, cultural transferability and human rights
- competing and contested democracy models
- language issues in cross-cultural research, intercultural dialogue and education

- issues of race and ethnicity in the discourses surrounding regional and global cultures
- the unresolved tensions between religion, politics, and values education
- gender research in the global culture
- citizenship education and life-long learning
- globalisation, economic and social change and the implications for equity, access and democracy (Zajda, 2020b).

Conclusion

Effective human rights education has the potential to create a more equitable, just, tolerant, peaceful society for all in the global culture. But it will remain a mere hollow policy rhetoric, or ‘magic words’, unless we debate more vigorously social, cultural, political and economic inequality in the global culture, within the legal framework of human rights education discourses, grounded in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and the *Millennium Development Goals Report*. We need to critique the existing status quo of stratified societies and nations, neoliberal politico-economic imperatives, repressive political systems, and forces of globalisation, which have affected all levels of society and culture, reinforcing cultural, political, and economic social stratification. This has serious implications for a genuine and empowering human rights education and social justice in schools in the future. Human rights education will need to become an integral part of progressive and critical pedagogies for social justice, equality and pluralist democracy.

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