Chapter 11
Discourses of Globalisation, Ideology, and Human Rights: Major Trends

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Discourses of Globalisation, Ideology, and Human Rights: Introduction

> *We are all citizens of one world; we are all of one blood. To hate a man because he was born in another country, because he speaks a different language, or because he takes a different view on this subject or that, is a great folly. Desist I implore you, for we are all equally human…Let us have but one end in view, the welfare of humanity. Comenius (1592–1670).*

Comenius, also known as Komenský, was the bishop of a protestant Church, the Bohemian Brethren whose members had been were forced into exile when the Habsburgs imposed Catholicism on Bohemia. What was innovative at the time was his radical idea that all children, from both sexes and all social classes should be educated. According to Mount (2011), Comenius developed his philosophy, very similar to today's 'holism', where all knowledge combined could be used, to offer a new and visionary education of individuals for peace:

> Comenius thought that he could put all the knowledge, philosophy, theology, geography and history, into one system of knowledge. And that system would then be the basis for the re-education of mankind towards peace and brotherhood (Mount, 2011, cited in Jan Amos Comenius: A Bohemian in Amsterdam, 2011).

These ideas, modern in terms of conceptualisation for the seventeenth century, indicated that at that time, there were active progressive thinkers, like Comenius, who believed in the universal peace and brotherhood. Some 300 years later, The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) was launched, as an international policy document defining the rights and freedom of all human beings. This document can be regarded as the most significant policy document in the history of

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human rights. It defined, for the first time that fundamental human rights had to be recognized and universally protected. The UHHR was eventually translated in more than 500 languages and resulted in more than seventy human rights treaties, which continue to be used today in discourses of globalisation, democracy, human rights and social justice.

Defining Human Rights

There are numerous definitions and conceptions of human rights. However, there exists a global consensus that human rights refer to freedom, justice, and equality: the rights that are considered by most societies to belong automatically to everyone. Ozdowski (2021) stresses that human rights help us to recognise that every person has 'inherent dignity and value' and that in this sense human rights are global—they are the same for all people. This is what makes human rights truly 'universal' and global. Furthermore, human rights, from a cultural perspective, are international mores, and norms that help to protect all people everywhere from severe political, legal, and social abuses (Vissing & Williams, 2018). Human rights include the right to freedom, diversity, privacy, due process, and property rights. The right to freedom of religion, the right to a fair trial, and the right to engage in political activity are significant principles of a pluralist democracy. These rights exist in morality and in law at the national and international levels. The main sources of the contemporary conception of human rights are the Universal Declaration of Human Right (United Nations, 1948). The 1948 *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* defined the fundamental rights of people, including:

- The right to life
- Freedom of thought, opinion, and religion
- The right to a fair trial and equality before the law
- The right to work and education
- Freedom from torture and arbitrary arrest
- The right to participate in the social, political and cultural life of one's country.

Human rights education is essential to the full realization of human rights, social justice and fundamental freedoms and contributes significantly to promoting democracy, equality, respect for human dignity, preventing discrimination and enhancing participation in democratic processes (Vissing, 2021). It reflects societal and legal standards that need to be learned by each generation and transferred to the next, in order to preserve and maintain the principles of democracy, equality and freedom.

Social and Cultural Dimension of Human Rights Education

There is an ambivalent nexus between social stratification, inequality and human rights. The greater the social inequality, the less one finds human rights and social justice. The prospect of widening inequalities in education, due to market-oriented schooling, and substantial tolerance of inequalities and exclusion, are more than real (Milanovic, 2012, 2013). Access and equity continue to be enduring concerns in education. This was confirmed in the OECD (2009) study: 'Across OECD countries, over 40% with less than an upper secondary qualification are not even employed…Even those with higher levels of education are vulnerable if they become unemployed. Around half of the unemployed young adults aged 25-34 with lower and upper secondary attainments are long-term unemployed' (OECD, 2009, p. 13, see also UN Millenium Development Goals report, 2015; Human Rights Report, 2020; OECD, 2021a, 2021b).

The creation of a more equitable, respectful, inclusive, and just society for everyone is a dream for all concerned citizens on spaceship Earth, be they democratic policy makers, empowering and egalitarian pedagogues, and informed and active citizens, who believe in human rights education and the much needed policy reform. The United Nations declared 1995–2004 as the Decade of Human Rights Education. It stressed that the human rights education was a powerful tool to fight racism and discrimination in all spheres of education and in society. Social and cultural dimensions of human rights education include ideology, power, inequality, education, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, and social justice.

Major discourses of human rights education tend to remain at a policy rhetoric and humanistic pedagogy level. As such, they seemed to be uncritical of the existing status quo of legitimized social and economic inequality. We could ask the following: What social action is needed to move from proclaiming the rights and obligations of people in a given country, towards effective and empowering implementation of those rights and obligations? How can we best ensure that the rhetoric of human rights is matched by reality? We need to recognise that the ideology and the politics of human rights play a significant part in the discourse of human rights education (see Zajda & Ozdowski, 2017).

Children's Rights

Human rights education is particularly relevant to teaching children's rights. Ozdowski (2009) in *An absence of human rights: Children in Detention*, stated that 'The imprisonment of children under mandatory detention policy in Australia's detention camps was one of the worst, if not the worst, human rights violations in the Australia's post World War II history'. Children have the right to special protection because of their defencelessness against mistreatment (Vissing, 2019). The first United Nations statement devoted exclusively to the rights of children was the Declaration on the Rights

of the Child, adopted in 1959. This was a moral rather than a legally binding document. In 1989 the legally binding Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations. In 54 articles the Convention incorporates the whole spectrum of human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – and sets out the specific ways these should be ensured for children and young people.

- Around 11 million children die each year from largely preventable diseases caused by lack of clean water and inadequate health care. Through improved access to clean water, food and immunisation, the lives of many children are being saved.
- Around 101 million primary school age children worldwide are not enrolled in school. Most of these are girls. Millions more children are enrolled in schools now than at any time in history.
- Around one in six children aged from 5 to 14, 16% of this age group are working around the world.
- Close to 2 million children have been killed in armed conflicts in the past decade.
- Nearly all countries in the world have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and committed themselves to promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of children (Zajda, 2010).

In addition, there is a great deal of empirical evidence on the occurrence of different types of human rights violations in many countries today (Gates, 2013; Vissing, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2021; EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World). EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy adopted a new action plan (2020–2024) to promote human rights culture and fights against human rights abuses in some countries today:

> One of the highest profile EU actions in 2020 against human rights violations and abuses was the establishment of a dedicated *EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime*. This is a real breakthrough. It sends a clear message that human rights violations and abuses will not be tolerated, no matter where they happen. In 2020, the EU also adopted the new *Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020–2024)* which sets out the EU's ambitions and priorities and places human rights prominently in its external action.

Conceptualising Human Rights Education

Fundamentally, human rights education movement refers to the transfer and acquisition of knowledge concerning human rights and the necessary skills of how to apply them. Human rights education is also about adoption of universal values and behaviours that are respectful of others and compliant with such universal standards. This is especially important in a globalised world, where many different cultures and religions meet and need to interact peacefully (Vissing, 2020; Zajda, 2021). The UDHR in particular, and other relevant treaties, provide us with universally agreed basic standards of decent behaviour; standards that are cross-cultural and trans-national. Thus, human rights education provides us with an all-important

link between universal and therefore global human rights standards and local values and practices.

As such, human rights education encourages intercultural dialogue, reduces conflict and builds mutual respect around universal values. It delivers an important peace building capacity, as it develops the relevant knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes: all necessary for a peaceful and harmonious co-existence. It also empowers individuals to participate in a broader community and in authentic democratic processes which promote inclusive citizenship, equality and advancement of the rule of law (Ozdowski, 2021).

Some recent research suggests that human rights education does not address our growing diversity and interdependence, which is needed to help students address global complexities affecting their lives (Spreen & Monaghan, 2015). We need to explore research dealing with the recent shift from HRE to Global Citizenship Education (GCE) (Dill, 2013; Spreen & Monaghan, 2015).

There are many models of human rights education. Tibbitts (2012) for example, identifies three predominant models that are 'linked implicitly with particular target groups and a strategy for social change and human development' (p. 163). These include the *Values and Awareness Model*, which focuses on HRE in school curricula and public awareness campaigns as a primary vehicle of transmitting basic knowledge of human rights issues and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); the *Accountability Model* which targets professionals directly involved in public or civil service (e.g. lawyers, policemen) and focuses on knowledge related to specific rights instruments and mechanisms of protection; and the *Transformational Model* which seeks to empower vulnerable populations to recognize human rights abuses and to commit to their prevention (Tibbitts, 2008).

Current Research on Human Rights Education

Contemporary research questions in human rights education can be summarized as follows:

1. How can researchers and educators better understand and analyse human rights education within specific cultural contexts
2. How are human rights conceptualised in different nations globally?
3. Will a better knowledge and critical understanding of human rights produce better pedagogical outcomes in schools?
4. Are there ideological differences in implementing human rights education in developed and developing countries?
5. What is the development and impact of human rights education on nations, characterised by neo-colonialism, dictatorship, totalitarianism, oppression, violence, wars and conflicts?

6. How can we use comparative education research in promoting a more balanced and effective human rights education globally? (Adapted from *Contemporary issues in human rights education*, 2011)

In general, human rights education research globally, can be divided into four broad categories: *humanism*, *progressivism*, *reconstructionism and critical discourse analysis*. The first three correspond to curriculum theorising and curriculum design models over the last five decades. *Humanistic* perspective in education and human rights education focuses on knowledge, the enhancement of human development, autonomy, and values. According to Aloni (2014), humanistic education is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rights of the Child:

> Humanistic education, designates a variety of educational theories and practices that are committed to the world-view and ethical code of Humanism; that is, positing the enhancement of human development, well-being, and dignity as the ultimate end of all human thought and action – beyond religious, ideological, or national ideals and values. Based on a long philosophical and moral tradition and manifested in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rights of the Child (Aloni, 2014).

A relevant humanist perspective is developed by Veugelers (2011), who focused on values and norms, as well as citizenship education. He showed how discourses on values have changed in the last decades and what the possibilities are for a humanist perspective on both autonomy and social involvement. He argued for a 'critical democratic citizenship with a strong focus on meaning-making, diversity, bridging, and embedding morality development in political processes of social justice'(p. 4). In her human rights research, Kiwan (2015), like Veugelers (2011), and other human rights researchers, also focuses on what it means to be a human being within the context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and citizenship education. It can be argued that if the source of human rights is the individual's moral nature, then individuals are guided by their moral compass. In short, human rights are value-based, hence normative. Consequently, Kiwan (2015) argues that contemporary human rights discourses are 'increasingly coupled' to citizenship education (Zajda & Ozdowski, 2017).

Progressivist perspective in education was developed to stress the individual and experiential learning, best captured by John Dewey and his child-centred pedagogy. Dewey focused on the child's personal experience in learning in his book *Democracy and Education* (1916), which became a guide for progressivist and experiential pedagogy during the twentieth century. This was a new thinking in education, in contrast to the traditional education of the nineteenth century, which was based on preparation for the university. Learning by doing, or experiential learning, is the key principle of progressivist pedagogy. Experiential learning, as opposed to traditional and rote learning, denotes knowledge acquired from experience, rather than formal schooling (Dewey, 1938). Experiential learning theory (ELT) defines learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience' (Kolb, 1984). ELT offers a pragmatic and holistic perspective of the learning process. Experiential learning can be traced to the experimental pedagogy of John

Dewey, Jean Piaget, Carl Rogers, Ivan Illich, Paulo Freire and others. Experiential learning is relevant to other major educational theories, 'including critical pedagogy, progressive pedagogy, empowerment-based pedagogy, and transformational pedagogy' (Zajda, 2008).

Reconstructionist perspective in education and human rights education focuses on improving people's lives in their cultural settings. Since culture is ubiquitous in our society, with its core elements of ideology, organizations, language, values and technology, it is most relevant to human rights education. By examining the existing economic and social conditions, defining inequality, individuals become more aware of factors responsible for it, and engage in social actions to change the conditions perpetuating economic and social inequality. The *Transformational Model* of human rights education of Tibbitts (2008) is a vivid example of this (see Zajda & Ozdowski, 2017).

Critical discourse analysis examines and analysing power relationships in society, as expressed through language and social practices. Foucault (1977) used the role of discourses in wider social processes of legitimating and power, and emphasizing the construction of current truths. Foucault attempted to trace the beginnings of internalised moral behaviour, or a reflexive relation to the self in human beings. Examples are presented of various approaches to discourse analysis, including deconstruction and preferred reading and interpretation of the text. Discourse, derived from critical theory, is fundamentally a form of critical and deconstructive reading and interpretation of a text. Rea Zajda (1988) used discourse analysis in her work to examine the construction of the self, gender and identity. She argued that 'Discourse is concerned with the social production of meaning'. These meanings, she argued, can be 'embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behaviour, in forms for transmission and diffusion and in pedagogical forms' (Zajda, 1988, p. 11).

With reference to discourse analysis, Zajda (1988) argued that discourse 'can also refer to not only statements, but social or institutional practices through which the social production of meaning takes place or is embodied' (Zajda, 1988, p. 11). She was one of the first researchers to examine, construct and use discourses of the self and sexuality. More importantly, Zajda (1988) challenged the neutrality of knowledge and ideology in language and text. Zajda (1988) argued that the critical aspect of discourses challenges both 'the accepted hierarchical structuring of authority concerning knowledge and the neutrality of knowledge and ideology. It asks questions about the historical and cultural conditions in which discourses emerged' (Zajda, 1988, p. 12).

Critical discourse analysis perspective is particularly relevant for examining specific patterns of power relationships in human rights policy documents, as expressed through language and social practices. It lends itself to the used in deconstruction of the text, in order to critique knowledge and the social production of meaning.

Current research on human rights education, as discussed here, includes discourses of human rights, historical, contemporary, and future issues in human rights education, human rights for a global citizenship, extremism vs. human rights, a victim-group's approach to human rights education in Colombia, unintentional

messaging about children's rights in children's books, an interdisciplinary, and international global policy outlook of the optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the importance of rights-based intervention in clinical sociology, and emerging trends in discourses of globalisation, ideology, and human rights.

Zajda and Vissing (2022) argue that effective human rights education has the potential to create a more equitable, just, tolerant, peaceful society for all in the global culture. Carroll (2022) suggests that the human rights record in the Global South largely reflects an 'absence of care/concern for human life, though before we apportion blame and castigate the leaders and peoples of the Global South, we should perhaps first examine our own roles in the creation and propagation of the many human rights abuses that have been documented' (Carroll, 2022). Historical, contemporary, and future issues in human rights education is provided by Swindell and Wright (2022). Their analytical framework, drawn from prominent theories of globalisation and human rights is used to examine critically how education systems have responded to address social, political and cultural changes. The authors offer pragmatic directions for human rights and education including global citizenship education, situated in human rights, and global sustainability.

The legal issues confronting migrant and refugees children in Europe, is addressed by Rodrigues (2020). He suggests a top priority strategy, a green line applicable to all Member States in matters relating to children, regardless of whether they are migrants, refugees, or unaccompanied minors. Vissing (2021), argues that there are 'civil, political, economic, cultural, and social rights, and rights unique to certain geographic, demographic, or indigenous groups'. She stresses the need to protect the human rights of each group and helping in the prevention of violence and the protection of citizens (Vissing, 2021).

Holland (2021), on the other hand, in her case study, examines a victim-group's approach to human rights education in Colombia, and argues that human rights education provides a promising blueprint for intervention in peace building contexts. The author provides examples of how the women themselves, activists in human rights had their lives threatened or even taken.

Juchniewicz (2022) analyzes children's books, in order to provide effective strategies, in order to introduce children to their rights through picture books. She reviews the ideological shifts in how children's rights are portrayed in picture books, as the world has become more globalised. She argues that a 'book that is provided to or selected by a child can in this way plant seeds of understanding regarding their rights and generate a sense of self-esteem' (Juchniewicz, 2022).

The topic of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography is examined critically by Tanya Herring (2022). She refers to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 22, is a section of Child Law, in order to ensure that a child seeking refugee status or considered a refugee receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance outlined in the Convention. This research investigates the seldom studied role of General Comments across human rights instruments and State obligations, concerning children.

Hudson (2022) examines the historical development of mental health as a human right in the context of globalization. The author argues that there exists a growing research in mental health field, establishing mental health care as a human right. A key element of this policy has been the 'effort to establish an international consensus on the rights of mental patients, including the rights to health and mental health care, and mental health itself' (Hudson, 2022).

Fritz (2022) employs clinical sociology with reference to human rights-based intervention, in order to offer the idea of rights-based intervention, discusses why rights are included in the definition of the field of clinical sociology. Clinical sociology is defined as a creative, humanistic, rights-based and interdisciplinary specialization that seeks to improve life situations for individuals and groups in a wide variety of settings (Fritz, 2022).

Finally, Zajda (2021) argues that the right to freedom, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of religion and the right to engage in political activity are significant principles of a pluralist democracy. The chapter concludes that in order to advance the discourse of human rights for all, and participatory democracy, we need current evidence of significantly more human rights education at every level: beginning with teaching human rights to children.

Human Rights Education, Implementation and Emerging Policy Issues

Recent research suggests that human rights education is recognised as an essential tool for building stability in post-conflict societies (Baxi, 2007; Holland, 2010; Smith, 2010; Unicef, 2011; Donnelly, 2013; EU, 2020; Vissing, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2021). In some circumstances, it can also deal effectively with racism, bigotry and xenophobia (Ozdowski, 2009). However, at the same time, many human rights education questions remain unanswered. Human rights education is not only about principles and goals. It is also a dialogue about tools and methodologies that can be used to deliver the quality and value-added education, which reflects the values of social justice and human rights. Human rights education deals with questions of strategies and priorities. For example, should we concentrate on human rights education for legal professionals, in developing countries, or perhaps, should we give a priority to community learning, or focus on primary school children. Human rights education is also about relevant pedagogy and curriculum development that are appropriate and effective in promoting the concepts and values of human rights.

Some researchers have argued that human rights and social justice are difficult to achieve in a society where social inequality debate is powerless, dormant, or ineffective. The difficulty of attaining authentic social justice globally 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, and challenging dominant ideologies, authoritarian power structures, and oppressive totalitarian regimes. The full promotion of economic, social and cultural rights will demand a deep political, social and cultural transformation and change in many nations globally (see Zajda & Ozdowski, 2017).

The future of human rights education will depend on our ability, skills and power 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. The effects of globalisation compel us to address issues of economic and social equity, the rule of law and meaningful participation in real and authentic decision-making. 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.

As above demonstrates, in order to address human rights for all, and participatory democracy, we need to develop and consolidate a strong emphasis on human rights, inclusivity and the values of social and economic justice. In the classroom we need to ensure that children have a meaningful and well-grounded approach to their own rights and responsibilities, as they mature into adulthood. Both families and schools are powerful shapers and agencies of socialisation and the best places to begin nurturing and teaching an understanding of cultural diversity, human rights and democracy (Vissing, 2020).

Conclusion

Effective human rights education has the potential to create a more equitable, just, tolerant, peaceful society for everyone 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 and economic inequality in the global culture, within the legal framework of human rights education, 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, authoritarian and dictatorial power structures, dominant ideologies, and forces of globalisation, which have affected all levels of society, reinforcing cultural, political and economic social stratification. This has serious implications for realizing a genuine and empowering human rights education and social justice in the future. Human rights education will need to become an integral part of critical and progressive pedagogies for social justice and pluralist democracy.

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