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## BOOK AND MEDIA REVIEWS

# Human rights education: a vehicle for negotiating the challenges posed by global migration?

Banks, J.A. (Ed.) (2017) *Citizenship Education and Global Migration: Implications for Theory, Research, and Teaching* Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association. 528 pp., US\$ \$45.00 (paperback) ISBN 978-0-935302-64-6; USD \$90.00 (hardcover) ISBN: 978-0-935302-63-9; US\$ 65.00 (eBook) ISBN: 978-0-935302-65-3.

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### **Human rights education: a vehicle for negotiating the challenges posed by global migration?**

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In this seminal collection, renowned multicultural education scholar James Banks brings together key findings and perspectives of scholars and educators from eighteen nations across the globe on theory, research and practice in multicultural education and citizenship in an age of global migration and diversity. This collection builds on insights gleaned some 15 years earlier on the growing challenges of balancing national unity with diversity in multi-cultural states, insights that were published in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives* (Banks, 2004). The precise focus of this new book is to consider how citizenship education in schools can facilitate the structural inclusion of immigrant students from diverse ethnic, cultural, racial, religious and linguistic groups into their nation states. 'Structural inclusion' is defined by Banks in the preface to the collection as '...a set of attitudes and beliefs among students that are characterized by a feeling of political efficacy, political empowerment, and a belief that they can influence political and economic decisions that affect their lives by participating in the political system of their nation'. Given the unprecedented levels of migration in the intervening years and the now well-documented evidence of structural exclusion and marginalisation of minoritised groups in nation-states around the world, the book's ambition is a timely addition to the previous volume and a compelling one for exploring possibilities on how to adapt to a pressing global reality.

The book is carefully organised into seven parts, helpfully summarized by Banks in the introductory chapter to guide the reader. Part 1 introduces cross-cutting issues, concepts as well as meta-ideas for how citizenship education could be progressed in the contextual reality of global migration. Thus, Castles describes in Chapter 1 the key issues arising from international migration: emerging trends (such as the growth of forced migration, migration by women and temporary migration); the dilemmas faced by migrants in terms of discrimination, xenophobia, denial of full citizenship rights and limited educational opportunities; the difficulties for communities in coping with the unexpected advent of multiculturalism. In Castles' view, the development in many states of models of multicultural education to meet the educational challenges posed offers a clear advance on assimilationist and

exclusionary forms of schooling; nonetheless, he flags some of the unhelpful assumptions and practical problems encountered in multicultural education, and these problems are fleshed out by contributors who provide examples from local settings. In Chapter 2, Bashir moves beyond finessing the ideal of multicultural education within individual nation states to the idea of reconfiguring democratic citizenship and civic education along regional lines. Starkey, in Chapter 3, goes further by advocating the concept of education for 'cosmopolitan citizenship', based on global human rights instruments, as a means of enabling educators to embrace unity and diversity within national contexts. These various themes and ideas are discussed and amplified by contributors in Parts 2-6 of the book, who detail the historical evolution of citizenship and educational policy and the current practice of citizenship education in local contexts. Again, Banks has carefully arranged these contributions into chapters focusing on experiences in industrialised, democratic nations (the US, Canada and South Africa) and in nations that share many historical, cultural and geographical characteristics in particular regions: Europe (England, Norway, Germany and France); Asia (China, South Korea and Singapore); the Middle East (Lebanon, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Turkey and Israel); and Latin America (Mexico and Brazil). Collectively, these chapters provide a comprehensive overview of the many ways in which citizenship education has been conceptualised, shaped and controlled by nation states and the corresponding implications for migrants. Many chapters, for example, clearly reveal how the manner in which 'citizenship' itself is legally constructed and framed in public discourses ('active', 'passive' 'national', 'global', 'cosmopolitan') is inextricably linked to education policies and practices (Akar, in theoretical terms - Chapter 14; Eskner and Cheena, in regard to Germany - Chapter 8; and Al-Nakib, in regard to Kuwait - Chapter 15). Others record how policies of secularisation, securitisation, neoliberalism and meritocracy have inevitable negative effects on educational policy and the experience of minoritised students (Osler, in regard to England and Norway - Chapter 7; Bozec, in regard to France - Chapter 9; and Ismail in regard to Singapore - Chapter 12). While contributors offer a range of creative recommendations for curriculum and policy reform to address these deficits, one of the particular strengths of the book is the way in which numerous contributions illuminate, through practical examples, how individual educators in many of these countries have sought to meet the alienating effects of official citizenship discourses and exclusionary policies so as to facilitate cultural recognition and empowerment among their students. By meticulously detailing the perspectives and techniques used by experienced teachers to foster a sense of structural inclusion and political efficacy, the book thus fulfils one of its central aims in a way that will be of particular interest and utility to educators and practitioners worldwide.

In a volume this size, spanning so many jurisdictions, there is necessarily a broad swathe of context-specific information, theoretical perspectives, insights and emphases. So much so that it might be easy for the reader to lose track or struggle to identify common threads emerging from the book as a whole. Banks appears to have anticipated this potential difficulty by book-ending the collection with a thought-provoking foreword written by Will Kymlicka and an equally provocative concluding chapter by Walter Parker. Each discern a striking 'take-away' theme of the book in the emphasis placed by many of the contributors on human rights education (HRE) as a vehicle for negotiating the challenges raised by global migration. While acknowledging the potential strengths of HRE, both Kymlicka and Parker warn of its

shortcomings as a panacea to solve all problems. Kymlicka doubts whether HRE can ever realistically supersede ideas of membership and belonging, while Parker points to powerful critiques of HRE – its ‘ties to Western colonialism, its faux neutrality, its individualism, its hollow appropriation by governments...’ that can serve to undermine its legitimacy in practice. Although these critiques are familiar territory for HRE scholars, this collection does make its own fascinating contribution, in helping to progress the conversation between scholars and practitioners of diverse backgrounds on the appropriate interplay between multicultural citizenship and human rights education in the context of citizenship education. James Banks is to be congratulated once again for his skill and perspicacity in bringing together such a wide body of expertise to produce a work of enormous value to educators, policymakers and scholars of numerous disciplines.