

---

# Democracy & Education

---

## Pathways to Strengthen Multicultural Education.

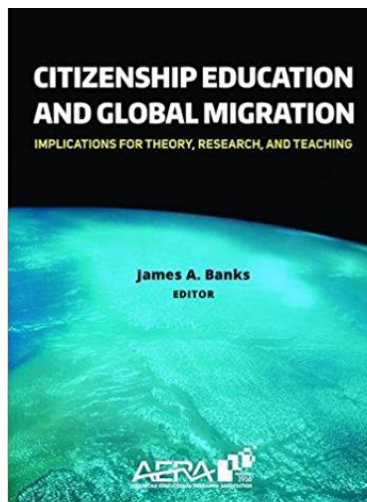
### A Book Review of *Citizenship Education and Global Migration: Implications for Theory, Research, and Teaching*

Isolde de Groot (University of Humanistic Studies)

---

**I**N 2004, THE founding director of the University of Washington's Center for Multicultural Education, James Banks, published the edited book *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, which proved to be a valuable resource on multicultural education for many teachers and researchers. Ten years later, Banks again invited scholars to join him in discussing the intersection of education and diversity. In *Citizenship Education and Global Migration: Implications for Theory, Research, and Teaching*, experts from 16 nationalities presented and wrote about their work on “perspectives, issues, theory, research, and strategies for implementing citizenship education courses and programs in schools that will facilitate the *structural inclusion* of students from diverse ethnic, cultural, racial, linguistic, and religious groups into their nation-states” (Banks, 2017, p. x). Characteristic for students who feel structurally included in their nation's civic culture is, according to Banks, that they “have *political efficacy* and a belief that their participation in the polity can make a difference” (Banks, 2017, p. x).

Similar to the earlier book, *Citizenship Education and Global Migration* offers a rich and multivocal account of conceptual and empirical work on multicultural education in light of persistent—and perhaps intractable—issues that follow from migration movements in the history of mankind, as well as recent shifts in migration patterns. The authors pointed, for example, to ongoing public and political debates within nation-states about whether they want to identify as multicultural. They explained how, in many nation-states, students learn about democratic ideals and



values within educational and socioeconomic conditions that contradict those ideals. Furthermore, they referred to the “differential exclusion” of immigrants, which means that immigrants are included in the economic realm but “excluded from full social, economic and civic participation” (Banks, 2017, p. xxix).

After the introductory chapter and three chapters that discuss the empirical and conceptual background of multicultural education, scholars from different countries and continents around the world defined the challenges that marginalized and minoritized racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups face in their specific context. They illustrated how teachers in civic and multicultural education support a sense of structural inclusion, political efficacy, and civic participation among minoritized students. Following each country discussion, they also shared their recommendations for multicultural education and structural inclusion, equity, and cultural recognition in schools and in society at large. In the foreword and discussion chapter, Will Kymlica and Walter Parker raised important questions regarding possible incompatibilities between the premises that underlie multicultural education and human rights education and the extent to which international democratic institutions will—and can—become more influential in addressing the minoritization of immigrants. From a sociological perspective, Walter Parker also discussed the

---

ISOLDE DE GROOT is an assistant professor in the education department of the University of Humanistic Studies in the Netherlands.

viability and the “powerfulness” of human rights education as a curriculum reform initiative.

The multiplicity of theoretical lenses that the authors presented, the range of migration-related sociopolitical and educational issues that they discussed, their analysis of current policies and practices in multicultural education, and their presentation of promising—and courageous—teacher initiatives in this regard make this book a must-read for educational professionals. In particular, it is of interest to policy officers, school leaders, teachers, and teacher educators who aim to advance democratic and cosmopolitan values like respectful engagement, structural equality, and a sense of belonging among—and beyond—residents of democratic communities at the local and international levels. For researchers in citizenship education, this book also offers rich insights into migration movements and policies across countries and continents and thoughts on the prevalence of traditional, nationalist types of civic education, (critical) approaches to learning democracy, and multicultural, cosmopolitan, and/or human rights education.

To illustrate the significance of the book, I shall highlight some of the theoretical frameworks that the authors adopted and some of the teacher initiatives employed within and across different contexts. As a teacher educator in citizenship and worldview education, I also reflect on the significance of this book for my students.

In chapters 2 to 19, the authors presented various theoretical lenses that, in their views, (should) inform multicultural education. Hugh Starkey (chapter 3), Kogila Moodley (chapter 6), Audrey Osler (chapter 7), and Rania Al-Nakib (chapter 15) used a human rights and/or cosmopolitan education lens to explore sociopolitical and educational inequalities and the value of multicultural education in identifying and countering differential exclusion and differential segregation.

Bashir Bashir (chapter 2) argued that deeply divided societies require a transnational approach to multicultural education. He critiqued traditional and democratic citizenship education frameworks that take the nation-state as focal point for identifying both sociopolitical and educational issues. Such frameworks, he argued, insufficiently take into account that nation-states are a historical construct and that, especially in light of global migration patterns, people are linked to a variety of communities and discourses within and beyond state borders. Instead, the transnational education that he proposed contributes to a deterritorialized, regional notion of citizenship and “pursues a decolonized epistemology that recognizes and cultivates multiple and overlapping identities and connections, promotes deep regional integration and normalization, advances radically revised curricula, and insists on coming to terms with past injustices” (Banks, 2017, p. 34).

When writing about “othering” in Germany, Julia Eksner and Saba Nur Cheema (chapter 8) also advocated a postcolonial lens. In their chapter, they demonstrated how this lens helps “identify longstanding narratives of ethnic citizenship, secularism, and ethnicity that define who is of the German state and who is not” (Banks, 2017, p. 161). In her analysis of U.S. congressional hearings, among other texts, Angela Banks (chapter 4) focused on

“respectability narratives” that “seek to alter the social meaning of the immigrant groups that have been constructed as a problem” (Banks, 2017, p. 65). This analysis revealed that “the fundamental aspects of American culture for citizenship purposes are a commitment to democracy and the rule of law, a belief in individualism, self-sufficiency, Christian belief and morals, and English language skills” (Banks, 2017, p. 66).

The chapters also show how teachers, at the micro-level, seek to serve marginalized and minoritized citizens who attend formal education, youth without a legal status and without entitlement to formal education, and citizens whose narratives are rather invisible, also in current (multicultural citizenship) education. With regard to the latter, Bradley Levinson and Maria Eugenia Luna Elizarras coined the term *stealth diversity* to highlight “those forms of ethnocultural identity and membership that remain relatively invisible in Mexico, overshadowed by the indigenous question and thus barely registering on the radar of most citizenship education programs” (Banks, 2017, pp. 403–404). They portrayed the work of Esteban, a young teacher in a rural area of Mexico’s northern region who tries to address the distorted and “harmonized” notions of cultural diversity as presented in public discourse and school textbooks:

*As part of this [state elective course Indigenous Language and Culture] class Esteban’s students also invite various adults to narrate the founding of their community and to speak their indigenous language, so that students can have an opportunity to listen to key words and understand their significance. Given the multiethnic nature of the community, Esteban guides the students to appreciate the efforts of the community’s founders, especially those that have permitted a fruitful coexistence between the two main original groups: Nahuatl and Totonac. (Banks, 2017, p. 422)*

In several chapters, the authors explained about the highly standardized, test-driven, competitive, and/or knowledge-based curricula in their countries (e.g., France, Iran, and South Korea) and presented what Rania Al Rania Al-Nakib (chapter 15) termed “unsanctioned” teacher initiatives in this regard. In their chapter on South Korea, Yun-Kyung Cha, Seung-Hwan Ham, and Mi-Eun Lim (chapter 11) presented the case of Ms. Lim. This high school teacher developed and implemented her own 12-week module on “fair travel” in order to “help students become acquainted with the various problems of global society related to travel (the knowledge domain), experience attitudinal changes through reflective thinking (the value domain), and cultivate global citizenship through applying their changed attitudes in social participation (the function domain; Kim & Lim, 2014)” (Banks, 2017, pp. 245–246). In other examples, teachers develop courses and initiatives that help students identify denial of diversity in public discourse and/or in the education system and education materials (chapter 11) or go against the “security”-led discourse in society and education (chapters 7 and 10). Combined with the extensive information about the sociocultural backgrounds and developments of (citizenship) education policy in each country, the chapters provide a valuable resource for teachers and teacher educators. In particular, they are of interest to teachers in

secondary education who seek to identify the different types of exclusion and discrimination that minority groups face; to evaluate legislations, policies, and practices that perpetuate inequity and social exclusion; and to imagine alternative outlooks and advance pupils' competences to engage in equitable, or transformative, political participation.

As a teacher educator in citizenship and worldview education in a northern European country, I appreciate the examples of teacher initiatives in countries that offer limited space in the curriculum for multicultural education. For my students, who are often discouraged by constraints (e.g., an overloaded curriculum and limited time for collaboration and curriculum development), it would have helped if the book included initiatives at the level of teacher units or schools, however. Examples that transcend the classroom or the unsanctioned actions of one teacher do not contribute only to a sense of empowerment. Such examples can also help students envision how, through collaboration with other educational professionals and NGOs, they might manage to achieve more sustainable change. As such, I wonder whether the choice to present initiatives at the individual level was a deliberate one.

I also noticed a tension between Kymlica's claim that the central task of citizenship education is "to replace older exclusionary ideas of nationhood with a more inclusive or multicultural conception of citizenship, which challenges inherited hierarchies of belonging and insists that society belongs to all its members, minority as much as majority" (Banks, 2017, p. xix) and Parker's claim that educational reforms cannot be transplanted but need to emerge from within the national school system (chapter 20). In line with Parker's argument, one might question the viability of a quest to "replace" one type of education by another—especially

when one can also frame these strands as two sides of the same coin. Let me illustrate the distinction with an example. A recent study on Teaching Common Values (TCV, hereafter) in Europe revealed that, of the various components of teaching democracy and tolerance that are distinguished, the themes of "democratic politics" and "inclusive society" receive the least attention. It also revealed that attention for the international dimension is often superficial and that, in some European Union member states, teachings at the national level lack a critical lens (Veugelers, de Groot, Stolk, & Research for CULT Committee, 2017). On the one hand, following the either/or rhetoric, proponents of multicultural education might recommend replacing uncritical national education for transnational or human rights education. Following Parker's argument, on the other hand, one might argue that multicultural and human rights education frameworks can help strengthen the critical dimension of attention for democracy and tolerance at the national *and* the international (or global) level of citizenship education. I look forward to learning more about the different strategies applied by governments, schools, and NGOs in this regard and about their impact on school reform in various countries.

## References

- Banks, J. A. (2017). *Citizenship education and global migration: Implications for theory, research, and teaching*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Veugelers, W., de Groot, I., Stolk, V., & Research for CULT Committee. (2017). *Teaching common values in Europe: Study*. Brussels, Belgium: Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, European Parliament.