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Theories of Human Rights Education in Comparative and International Education

From Declarations to New Directions

MONISHA BAJAJ AND NOMSA MABONA

INTRODUCTION

Human rights education (HRE) has created a lot of change in the school itself. Earlier, there was this big tree behind my school and if you take a stick from that tree, and hit someone on the hand or anywhere, the place will swell up a lot. We used to get beaten black and blue with those sticks before human rights education. Once we got the book and HRE started, our teachers came and told us, "hereafter, we are not going to touch the stick." That really took us aback and we were shocked, in fact. That increased our interest and curiosity about the entire [HRE] book because they became so different. . . . The teachers became so friendly that we could go and even stand close to them, which we couldn't do earlier because you would not know what kind of mood they are in, and if they were just going to hit you and take it out on you. Now we even go into the staff room and ask any questions we have. . . . So, we really like school now.
 —Madhu, eighth-grade student respondent from India, as cited in Bajaj 2012, p. 116

I was cut at seven years old. I remember it as if it was yesterday . . . . the pain was indescribable. I didn't understand what was happening. After I was cut, I hemorrhaged for three days. I loved school, but I missed a lot while I was recovering . . . . As I grew older, I learnt that being cut is an ancient practice that meant girls would be respected in the community . . . . Years later, we took part in a basic three-year education program in our language, thanks to a grassroots organization [Tostan]. We learnt so much about human rights and responsibilities. Even though we had been questioning it on our own, it took us a long time to speak openly about female genital cutting (FGC). It was difficult, but once we did, we learnt that most Muslim women in the world aren't cut. We also learnt that FGC is a violation of our human right to health. We spoke to religious leaders and found that this tradition is not an obligation of Islam or any religion . . . . After our education program, we made a community-wide decision to

end FGC together! . . .Now, I volunteer with others in the communities traveling to villages to share why we chose to abandon FGC. After much discussion, many villages joined the movement too.

—Assiata's Story, from Tostan, 2018

Human rights education (HRE) has emerged as a global field of scholarship practice since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 in the aftermath of the devastating Second World War that claimed the lives of more than 60 million people. Over the past 70 years, differing definitions and forms of practice have been developed in distinct contexts (as in the examples of HRE from India and Senegal presented above), each of which is undergirded by its own theories about human rights and social change. This chapter provides an overview of the theories that underpin scholarly approaches to human rights education and practice and how they are applied in the field of comparative and international education (CIE).

OVERVIEW

There is no single fixed theory of HRE, but rather evolving strands of theories that reflect the depth of the field's research, which has roots in legal, political, philosophical, and pedagogical aspects of education. These different theoretical approaches offer distinct perspectives of HRE and, therefore, constitute a complex field of study.[1]

Historical overview and development of the field

Despite its initial mention in the 1948 the UDHR, human rights education as a global movement only gained considerable momentum after the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. Article 26 of the UDHR identifies first the right to education, and second the right to an education directed toward "the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UDHR, 1948, para 2). The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child—which has since become the most widely ratified piece of international human rights law— further enshrines all children's right to an education that is culturally affirming and fosters their free expression. Although there were many antecedents to HRE in individual initiatives and community-based efforts spanning several centuries, the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna was a watershed moment for HRE. The resulting Vienna Declaration stated that "human rights education, training and public information is essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace" (Vienna Declaration, 1993, para 78). The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action resulting from the Conference had an extensive subsection on HRE and called for a United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, which subsequently ensued from 1995–2004 and which brought policymakers, government officials, activists, and educators into more sustained conversation.

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[1]The overview section draws from a previously published introductory chapter of the book *Human rights education: Theory, research, praxis* (Bajaj, 2017).

While there are many different approaches to human rights education, there is broad agreement about certain core components. First, most scholars and practitioners agree that HRE must include both *content* and *processes* related to teaching human rights (Bajaj, 2011; Flowers, 2003; Mentjes, 1997; Tibbitts, 2002). Second, most literature in the field discusses the need for HRE to include goals related to cognitive (content), attitudinal or emotive (values/skills), and action-oriented components (Tibbitts, 2005). Amnesty International's Human Rights Friendly Schools framework weaves together the intended outcomes of HRE by highlighting three prepositions linking education and human rights in a comprehensive manner: education *about* human rights (cognitive), education *through* human rights (participatory methods that create skills for active citizenship), and education *for* human rights (fostering learners' ability to speak out and act in the face of injustices) (Amnesty International, n.d.). As the UN Decade on HRE came to a close, the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education was established in 2005 and housed within the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET), further highlighting the importance of HRE at the level of national policy and reform. As defined by the United Nations (UNDHRET, 2011):

Human rights education can be defined as education, training and information aiming at building a universal culture of human rights through the sharing of knowledge, imparting of skills and molding of attitudes directed to:

(a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
(b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
(c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples, and racial, national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups;
(d) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law;
(e) The building and maintenance of peace;
(f) The promotion of people-centered sustainable development and social justice.

Emphasized in the United Nations definition of HRE is knowledge about human rights and tolerance/acceptance of others based on such knowledge. UN initiatives are largely directed toward member states and attempt to foster adoption of national plans of action for integrating HRE into their educational systems.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations have also long been active in human rights education and utilize human rights discourses as a strategy to frame the demands of diverse social movements—a more bottom-up approach to HRE. At the grassroots level, HRE has often taken the form of popular education or community education to mobilize constituencies for expanding social movements (Kapoor, 2004). In Latin America, for example, many efforts aimed at HRE blossomed immediately after the end of dictatorships, when NGOs that had fought for human rights turned their attention to education as a tool for reconciliation and the prevention of a return to authoritarian rule (Magendzo, 1997). As such, human rights education efforts are seen as both a political and pedagogical strategy to facilitate democratization and active citizenship.

In practice and implementation, human rights education can take a variety of forms. In formal schooling, human rights can be integrated into textbooks or other subjects, such as civics or social studies (Meyer et al., 2010). Teaching about children's rights occurs all over the globe, and has been enacted through youth assemblies and children's parliaments in places as diverse as India, Scotland, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In some contexts, direct instruction in a "human rights" class is mandated or offered as an elective at the secondary level in both public and private schools. In universities, undergraduate and graduate programs in human rights and, increasingly in human rights education, are emerging and becoming institutionalized (Suárez, 2006).

More commonly, elective programs either during the school day, after-school through clubs or co-curricular programs, or through summer camps and other programs offer students exposure to human rights. In professional settings around the globe, human rights training—either optional or required, ad-hoc or sustained—has been offered for judges, police officers, military personnel, health professionals, social workers, teachers, among others (Reichert, 2001; Wahl, 2014). Additionally, non-formal HRE is flourishing in community-based settings worldwide. Further, the types of rights brought into focus (civil, political, social, economic, cultural, or a cross-section of equality rights for a specific group) depends on the context and the approach. Thus, human rights education varies in content, approach, scope, intensity, depth, and availability.

Drawing on the promise of grassroots level efforts to impact awareness about human rights, Amnesty International (2015) defines HRE as:

> a deliberate, participatory practice aimed at empowering individuals, groups, and communities through fostering knowledge, skills, and attitudes consistent with internationally recognized principles. . . Its goal is to build a culture of respect for and action in the defense and promotion of human rights for all.

—p. 1

The Amnesty International's (2015) definition places greater responsibility on human rights learners becoming activists for human rights through the process of HRE by sharing information with others and actively working to defend human rights. Both social change as an outcome, and learners becoming agents of this process of claiming their own rights and defending others' rights, is central in this definition. Differences in the way individuals or organizations approach HRE account for the ways it is conceptualized as an education reform or strategy.

Existing models

As is the case with fields in development and in motion, many articulations of models and approaches emerge—rooted in distinct theoretical orientations—to understand phenomena and chart the boundaries of a field; HRE is no exception. Similar to the folktale of a group of blind men who seek to describe an elephant by touching its various parts and who disagree about its nature based on their positioning (e.g., touching the tusk, trunk, feet, tail, etc.), human rights education may look differently depending on the angle and perspective one takes. More recent articulations have elaborated the definition of what HRE must include in different contexts—beyond the teaching of international human rights norms and standards—and have cited a variety of goals and learners.

HRE models provide productive schemas for theorizing its emergence, conceptualization, and implementation across the globe. Tibbitts (2017) created a three-tiered model for

human rights education that explores differing levels of implementation by distinct actors. Tibbitts (2017) differentiates between the socialization approach of values and awareness of human rights that can be utilized in formal and non-formal settings to socialize learners into basic knowledge about human rights; the accountability or professional development approach for those working directly with victims of rights abuses (e.g., police, health workers); and the more activist transformation approach which offers a holistic understanding of human rights knowledge, attitudes, and actions.

Bajaj (2011) argues elsewhere for the importance of following the varying ideologies of human rights education initiatives as they have proliferated across the globe. Depending on relationships to power and conditions of marginalization, the perceived and actual outcomes of human rights education may differ based on social location (Bajaj, 2012). Some programs, particularly those adopted at national and international levels or in sites of relative privilege, may discuss global citizenship as an outcome. In conflict settings, coexistence and respect for difference may be prioritized. In disenfranchised communities, HRE may be a strategy for transformative action and empowerment (Bajaj, 2011; Tibbitts, 2002; 2017). Recent critiques (Keet, 2007) have noted that the overly "declarationist" approach of HRE which anchors itself in normative standards limits its emancipatory potential since it fails to consider broader debates in the field of human rights.

Initiatives working towards human rights education tend to fuse Freirean notions of consciousness-raising with the philosophical tradition of cosmopolitanism (Bajaj, 2014; Bajaj et al., 2016; Mentjes, 1997; Osler and Starkey, 2010; Tibbitts, 2002). Freire's (1970) notion of *conscientization* results from individuals—often those from disadvantaged groups—analyzing collectively conditions of inequality and then acting and reflecting to inspire new action in a cyclical fashion in order to overcome situations of oppression and subordination. Cosmopolitanism is a philosophical position that posits a shared human community and a global notion of citizenship and belonging (Appiah, 2007). Pairing these philosophical orientations together results in local action and critical analysis (a la Freire) informed by global solidarity and connection (as is posited in some versions of cosmopolitanism). Some scholars have termed this type of HRE "transformative human rights education" (THRED) and have documented its principles and components across formal and non-formal settings (Bajaj et al., 2016).

For such transformative HRE approaches, a basic theory of change—drawing on Freire's (1970) notions and cosmopolitan ideas of global citizenship—that might unite the purpose of human rights education for empowerment efforts (in its ideal form though in practice it may look different) could be posited as follows:

1. Learners (in formal or non-formal settings) learn about a larger imagined moral community where human rights offers a shared language;

2. Learners question a social or cultural practice that does not fit within the global framework;

3. Learners identify allies (teachers, peers, community activists, NGOs) to amplify one's voice along with other strategies for influencing positive social change. (Bajaj, 2017)

While the theory of change posited above can account for the way in which transformative human rights education is conceptualized, there are often many tensions and contradictions in actual practice. What has yet to be elaborated fully is the need for strategies to deal with the unintended consequences of human rights education (Osler and Yahya, 2017;

Mejias, 2017) and corresponding action as well as the co-optation of rights language for entirely different ends (see Bajaj, 2012; Wahl, 2001). Additionally, nation-states and policymakers have diverse reasons to take on human rights education—that may or may not include a transformative vision. These are areas that the field of human rights education must continue to engage and contend with.

Whether offering prescriptive insights, models for engagement, research findings or analyses of global trends, scholars of human rights education have employed various theoretical orientations to contribute to ongoing scholarly discussions of globalization, citizenship, and education.

Theoretical underpinnings of human rights education scholarship

There are diverse theoretical underpinnings to the field of HRE. As with the different HRE models discussed above, these different theories examine HRE from distinct vantage points, depending on what side of the "elephant" one is looking at following up on the metaphor introduced before. As a way of visualization, Table 21.1 represents an overview of the different strands of theories of HRE.

As shown in the Table 21.1, human rights theories can be categorized in three sets, which may or may not overlap depending on the focus of a given study. Scholars of neo-institutional and convergence theory argue that human rights education is a result of educational convergence (Meyer et al., 2010; Ramirez et al., 2007; Suárez, 2007): a process that reduces local distinctions within education systems. This means that policy discourse and textbooks converge towards human rights frameworks. In their research, scholars make cross-national analyses of the extent of institutionalization of the field, for example by examining the proliferation of HRE publications, the emergence of HRE policies and organizations, and the representation of human rights in textbooks as well as curricula. In a recent study, Russell and Suárez (2017) conclude that "the human rights education movement has evolved from a global discourse linked to the international human rights framework to a broader education movement incorporating concrete policy changes and actions in national and local contexts across diverse nations" (pp. 30–31). Therefore, they make the point that "HRE gains international traction because of widely held cultural scripts about progress, justice, and the individual" (Russell and Suárez, 2017, p. 10).

Scholars committed to the second set of theories foreground cultural or historical context in their analysis of human rights education. Another common feature of studies conducted by Marxist, post-colonial, and critical theorists is their investigation of power imbalances, particularly in their questioning of the universality of human rights and their emphasis on the importance of cultural and historical context when teaching human rights. Al-Daraweesh and Snauwaert (2015) elaborate on this fundamental argument as follows:

> the relational and hermeneutic epistemology is based on the idea of contextualizing the domain of knowledge, in general, and with regard to human rights, in particular. Contextualizing knowledge requires an understanding of culture and how cultures function within as media to transmit knowledge conducive to human rights. It is through culture that a commitment to human rights protection and dissemination can be cultivated.

—p. 49

TABLE 21.1: Theoretical underpinnings of human rights education scholarship

Focus of HRE	Key Concepts	Theoretical Underpinnings	Fundamental Argument	Scholars
Law; Policy; Textbooks; Educational Systems	Policy; declarations; discourse; convergence	Neo-institutional theory; convergence theory	*Human rights seen as global legal and moral consensus; education systems and textbooks converge towards these frameworks.*	Bromley Meyer Ramirez Russell Suárez Tarrow
Discourse Ideology; Knowledge Production	Historical analysis; asymmetries of power; decolonization of HR and HRE	Marxist theory; critical theory; post-colonial theory	*Culture, context, and historical relations of power need to mediate any and all forms of HRE and schooling.*	Al-Daraweesh & Snauwaert Coysh Keet Zembylas
Classrooms; Communities; Schools; Professions	Transformation; empowerment; praxis-oriented; dialogue; agency, collective Action	Critical theory; Freirean critical consciousness	*HRE should be driven by local actors, rooted in community, and contextually adapted in order to foster individual and collective transformation.*	Bajaj Hantzopoulos Holland & Martin Katz Magendzo Osler & Starkey Spreen Tibbitts

In *Power and Discourse in Human Rights Education*, Coysh (2018) breaks down the interconnectedness of power, discourse, and (human rights) knowledge as follows: "discourse is the site where meanings are contested and power relations determined, and it is through examining the ways that certain systems and institutions control discourse and meaning, that we can understand how power is operating to regulate knowledge" (p. 53). Coysh (2018) further argues that because HRE has become a global institution, its discourse has become dominant and thus, it is failing to be truly transformative and challenge oppression.

Scholars who utilize theories in the third set of perspectives base their studies on the concept of Freirean critical consciousness (Freire, 1970), which builds on a collaborative approach to education where learning is a dialogical cycle of reflection and humanizing action in order to achieve liberation from social and political oppression. Therefore, these scholars conceptualize human rights education as an emancipatory and transformative process that is focused on dismantling local power asymmetries through grassroots activism. In their recent publication, Spreen et al., (2018) advocate for transformative HRE pedagogy that "must focus on relating the context to critique and then to social

change, with various opportunities for students to learn about, deeply reflect on, and then transform their lived experiences;" further, the authors add that "part and parcel of this model of transformative HRE are notions of reconciliation, social solidarity, social cohesion, inclusivity and antidiscrimination which provided the basis for the rationale, purpose, and structure of (what we argue) is a more socially just HRE curriculum" (p. 220). Studies that emerge from this set of theories are classroom- and community-based and focus on the immediate and specific issues communities are facing.

While all of the HRE categories in Table 21.1 explain different aspects of the same phenomenon of HRE, theories and scholarship in the first strand focus on policies, documents, and texts relevant to HRE; theories from the second strand are more context-oriented bringing into focus and critiquing the Western character of rights discourses; and theories from the third strand are classroom-based, examining pedagogy and possibilities for transformation. Scholarship rooted in different theories and worldviews tackle an academic field whose complexity arises from the legal, political, philosophical, and pedagogical dimensions of HRE, as well as the changing nature of human rights issues, which call for continuous adjustment and flexibility of theoretical concepts.

APPLICATION IN COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

CIE scholars have developed a substantial literature exploring civic education and political socialization, specifically the role and purpose of schooling as part and parcel of nation-building in diverse regions (Boli et al., 1985; Fagerlind and Saha, 1989; Fuller and Rubinson, 1992; Torney-Purta et al., 1999). In contrast, HRE implies that students will develop allegiance to a supra-national system of norms developed through international human rights law and that they will, in effect, claim global citizenship in addition to national citizenship (Bajaj, 2012; Soysal, 1994; Suárez and Ramirez, 2004). One of the first books to develop a comprehensive framework for the nexus of human rights and education within CIE was *Human Rights and Education* published by scholar Norma Tarrow in 1987. This edited volume, with an epilogue by John Humphrey (1905–1995)—a Canadian jurist who was one of the original drafters of the UDHR in the 1940s—covered diverse global issues ranging from the right to education in sub-Saharan Africa to disability rights in Europe and Asia, to human rights education in schools and teacher preparation. Around this same time the first Education for All meeting was held in Jomtien, Thailand (1990) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force (1989) codifying the most elaborate framework for children's rights to date in international law; in all of these global meetings and international documents, a marked shift in language occurred from access to education as a functional means to increasing human capital towards a universal right for all children to access free, basic education.

Human rights and education have been connected by three prepositions: education *as a* human right; education *with* human rights; and education *for* human rights (Bajaj, 2012). All three of these branches from the nexus of human rights and education concern CIE scholars, and they have had wide-reaching impact on CIE research and practice. Education *as a* right underpins the issue of access to education, a topic that is extensively researched and the focus of much policy and practice in the field. The second area—education *with* human rights—is concerned with quality education, the eradication of

bias, discrimination, corporal punishment, and other forms of marginalization in schools and other educational settings. The third area is where human rights education squarely sits with examinations of different types of human rights education offered in different formats (formal/non-formal, explicit/implicit) and settings, with different approaches, and in educator preparation, curricular development, or focused on outcomes and reforms at the grassroots, regional, national, and/or international levels.

With increasing attention to issues of human rights and education, in the 1990s and early 2000s, multiple books and articles were published by scholars in the field pertaining to teachers and human rights education (Osler and Starkey, 1994; 2010); handbooks for human rights education implementation particularly with its proliferation after the 1993 Vienna Declaration that codified a global mandate for a focus on human rights literacy in all sectors as mentioned earlier in this chapter (Bajaj, 2017b; Flowers, 2003); and a seminal book, more than 600 pages long, documenting scholarly approaches to HRE and cataloguing different HRE programs globally called *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century* edited by Andreopoulos and Claude (1997).

Since the early 2000s, scholars in the field have explored the rising global convergence towards human rights in textbooks and policy discourses globally; these scholars utilize neo-institutionalist theory as discussed in Table 21.1 as well as in Chapter 12 of this book. In these studies, distinct rights (e.g., women's rights; disability rights; children's rights; environmental rights) or topics (e.g., social justice; Holocaust education) are examined cross-nationally (Meyer el al., 2010; Ramirez et al., 2007; Russell and Suárez, 2017; Suárez, 2007). Another strand of neo-institutional scholarship applied to human rights education has tracked the textbook changes of individual countries over distinct periods of time and are mapped onto regional and global political shifts and linkages (Suárez, 2008). These forms of scholarship can be rooted in modernist theoretical assumptions about the rise and convergence of the best forms of education, and in this case, HRE would constitute a path to modernization of educational systems; on the other hand, scholars could also point to convergence of educational approaches as a form of hegemony and coercion with a more Marxist analysis, as discussed in Chapter 3 of this book.

Similarly, at the policy or organizational level, scholars in the field have explored cross-national data and/or networks to understand how actors and organizations connect across time and space to influence how HRE is enacted. For example, in the edited textbook that was published in recent years, *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis* (Bajaj, 2017a), Pizmony-Levy and Jensen (2017) examine in their chapter how international organizations over the past decade have advocated for the protection of LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and/or Intersex) individuals who face persecution in their home countries. Utilizing data from an exit survey collected in seven different locations (namely: India, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Senegal, and Turkey), their chapter engages with the participants in training programs aimed at helping United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) personnel and NGO workers engage with LGBTQI individuals. In her scholarship, scholar Sirota (2017) explores how human rights education has expanded through grassroots efforts—particularly through the formation of networks in the United States and South Africa demanding policy shifts in each national context, with varying degrees of impact.

Over the past two decades, other scholars in CIE primarily have looked at localization (Bajaj, 2012; Hantzopoulos, 2016), vernacularization (Bajaj and Wahl, 2017; Merry, 2006), and resistance (Mejias, 2017; Wahl, 2017). Such studies tend to be qualitative in their methodological approach and examine HRE in a particular context in great depth

over a sustained period of time. For example, in Hantzopoulos' (2016) study of human rights education in a high school in New York City, she examines how dignity—a core conceptual foundation of the human rights framework—infuses the operations of the school from content to pedagogy to discipline to the layout of the physical building. In Wahl's (2017) study of police officers partaking in a human rights certificate program in northern India, the co-optation of rights concepts for other agendas demonstrates how globally circulating discourses get modified and reinvented at the local level in distinct contexts. Bajaj's (2012) longitudinal work in India examines how one non-governmental organization (NGO) has incorporated a three-year human rights education curriculum in thousands of schools across the country and the transformative impacts of such learning for Dalit (formerly called "untouchable") and *Adivasi* (indigenous) young people at the very margins of a "rising" and stratified Indian economy. Cislaghi et al., (2017) examine the NGO Tostan and its community empowerment program that provides human rights non-formal education to communities across West Africa; in these programs, gender issues have been debated and renegotiated by men and women in thousands of villages, many of which have afterwards abandoned the practice of female genital cutting in their communities (as discussed in Assiata's story in the epigraph to this chapter). In Katz and Spero's (2015) edited book *Bringing Human Rights to U.S. Classrooms*, case studies of educators utilizing human rights education in classrooms and communities are presented and analyzed to highlight grounded practice in the field. Such approaches privilege local experiences and anchor the cosmopolitan vision of human rights in Freirean approaches to critical consciousness raising for transformative learning (Bajaj, 2017b), rooted in critical social theory and resistance theories (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983); in their focused analysis of local settings, such scholarship pushes human rights education forward into new conceptual terrain where possibilities, tensions, and new directions emerge.

Scholars in the field have argued that the mere insertion of human rights content into textbooks absent larger efforts for deepening learners' affective and action-oriented dispositions is a superficial form of HRE (Tibbitts, 2017). Current trends in the field include expanding the definitions of transformative human rights education that require deep engagements with the content and pedagogy of formal and non-formal education programs (such as those exemplified at the outset of this chapter) (Bajaj et al., 2016; Hantzopoulos, 2016); critical human rights education that questions some of the very foundations of Western education and modernist assumptions about liberal human rights (Keet, 2018); and decolonial approaches to human rights education (Williams, 2018; Yang, 2015; Zembylas, 2017a) that "advance the project of re-contextualising human rights in the historical horizon of modernity/coloniality" in order to achieve "a less Eurocentric outlook and thus a more multiperspectival and pluriversal understanding of human rights—one that recognizes the histories of coloniality, the entanglements with human rights, and the consequences for social justice projects" (Zembylas, 2017a, p. 487).

Critical debates and juxtapositions include the relationship of human rights education to citizenship education, peace education, social justice education, and global citizenship education, particularly as each form has its proponents, dispositions, and theoretical orientations that slightly distinguish one from the other. For example, human rights education within the United States—given legacies of American exceptionalism in examining rights issues—is often structured as a form of international education as opposed to a way to critically examine injustices within the United States and engage students in action around such issues, as is the charge of social justice education. In

settings of conflict, peace education may be seen as a form building capacity for coexistence and fostering reconciliation, such as in the Education for Peace program in the former Yugoslavia (Danesh, 2006) or the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research's educational program in Cyprus (Zembylas and Kambani, 2012). A challenge for human rights education is making itself flexible enough to be meaningful in diverse locations, yet not so open that it becomes just another buzzword that signals the latest educational trend with few common definitions or shared understandings across settings.

Critiques of HRE within the field of CIE have argued the incompatibility of divergent actors' agendas within state-run schools and the emancipatory vision of human rights education. For example, in his chapter on *Politics, Power and Protest: Rights-Based Education Policy and the Limits of Human Rights Education*, scholar Mejias (2017) draws on his extensive ethnographic research in a London secondary school to discuss gaps between the vision, implementation, and outcomes of Amnesty International's global whole-school human rights education initiative, *Human Rights Friendly Schools* (HRFS). Mejias (2017) discusses how rather than aligning school practices with HRE, the school used the program and affiliation with it as a political tool to showcase during national inspections. Later, HRE was utilized by disgruntled teachers and students to destabilize the school's leadership team and ultimately the school itself. The promise of HRE was held out in the face of a wide gap between rights and actual realities in a contested school setting. Through an examination of the "micropolitical" activity in the school, Mejias (as cited in Bajaj, 2017c) explores some of the limits of human rights education discourse when co-opted by various actors for divergent purposes.

Other critiques of human rights education have paralleled critiques of the field of human rights as a whole for its liberal and individualistic orientations that have been seen to preclude more collective forms of social organization that might radically restructure asymmetrical power relations to be more just. For example, scholar Hopgood (2014) argues that popular grassroots movements that once formed the forefront of the human rights movement have been co-opted by funding and agendas advanced by the U.S. government and other Western powers:

> after decades of obscurity, global human rights advocacy has secured a foothold at the very highest level in the foreign policies of Western states and at the United Nations. This is a total transformation from the 1970s, when the language of human rights was new at the level of popular discourse, and the 1980s when a concern with sovereignty made even the UN reluctant to identify too fully with the human rights demands of a growing number of activists worldwide. . . . Human rights advocacy is funded to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars a year and human rights now form part of the discourse of humanitarian intervention. . . . This is the Global Human Rights Regime. I capitalise it to illustrate the distinction I want to make between the vast array of local human rights struggles that use various strategies . . . to advance demands for protection and progress. There is, I maintain, a significant difference between this less institutionalised, more flexible, more diverse and multi-vocal level, where social movements operate, and the embedded Global Human Rights Regime where law, courts, money, and access to power in New York and Geneva are more familiar terrain. Lower-case human rights may help, alongside other forms of social mobilisation, in changing the world in myriad small and positive ways, but they will never revolutionise global politics which is what Human Rights advocates aspire to do.

—pp. 12–13

Human rights education stems from a presumed value in human rights, a concept that has been contested by some scholars as limited at best, and neo-colonial and oppressive at worst (Mutua, 2008).

These critiques challenge human rights education scholars and practitioners who root themselves in resistance theories that seek to advance transformative and decolonizing approaches to HRE to work alongside community organizations/movements; such alignments can ensure that "human rights" education (in lowercase) remains true to the vision of advancing greater equity, justice, and freedom rather than merely being part of the discursive flexing of nation-states, with limited benefit to the individuals and communities who face the brunt of human rights violations in their daily lives.

CONCLUSIONS

As a young field and one in constant motion, the theories of human rights education are evolving. Diverse theoretical and conceptual underpinnings inform different actors, scholars, and practitioners in the field, and offer insight into the way that human rights education has been popularized and expanded into a global movement. A specific search for "human rights education" in Google Scholar produces nearly 30,000 entries; without the quotation marks, over 3 million unique citations appear. As one of the founding mothers of the field of HRE, Flowers (2017), has noted in the afterword to a recent book:

> entitled *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research & Praxis* would have made no sense thirty years ago when I first encountered human rights education (HRE). There was no theory then, only aspiration; no research, only supposition. And although magnificent praxis was taking place—the People Power Revolution in the Philippines, popular education to oppose military dictatorships in Latin America—educators in other parts of the world learned about and from these heroic efforts only after the fact. Indeed, this book in itself demonstrates the phenomenal growth of HRE since then, with scholars and educators from around the world contributing to a textbook to serve the needs of students in the field. Originally there were no students and no "field" as such.

—p. 317

In this chapter, we have provided an overview of the history of the field, summarized the theories that have informed core scholarship and models of HRE, and offered analysis of how HRE has been taken up by scholars of CIE, including key debates and critiques currently being engaged.

While some theories presented in this book are fixed and enduring, the theories of human rights education are continually being advanced and expanded upon with new research; an exciting proposition for new scholars in the field to contribute to the theoretical dimensions of this young and growing field. Given the nature of the field of HRE—one that posits a utopic vision for a global community in which basic needs are met and rights fulfilled—all theories of HRE are, to some degree, "theories of change." Even scholarship that describes the rise of the field or engages in the analysis of micro-politics of contestation, at some basic core, begins inquiry with a basic belief in the value of such efforts and their need for greater clarity and precision. Since the first global mention of human rights education in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights over 70 years ago to the present day where it is an established field of inquiry,

study, and practice, the future theoretical directions of HRE can further unify its many strands towards greater dignity, equity, and justice in settings near and far.

FURTHER READING

1. *Path to dignity: The power of human rights education* (2012). [Film]. Dir. Ellen Bruno (2012). Retrieved from www.path-to-dignity.org
2. Amnesty International (2017). *Human rights friendly school toolkit*. London, UK: Amnesty International. Retrieved from www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ POL3266092017ENGLISH.PDF
3. Bajaj, M., Cislaghi, B., and Mackie, G. (2016). Advancing transformative human rights education. Annex to G. Brown (Ed.), *The global citizenship commission report the universal declaration of human rights in the twenty-first century: A living document in a changing world*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers. Retrieved from www.openbookpublishers. com/shopimages/The-UDHR-21st-C-AppendixD.pdf
4. Bajaj, M. (Ed.). (2017). *Human rights education: Theory, research, praxis*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
5. Bajaj, M. (2012). *Schooling for social change: The rise and impact of human rights education in India*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

MINI CASE STUDY

The key considerations around HRE in CIE are illustrated in the following hypothetical scenario.

Philanthropic agencies have come together to launch a grant competition to fund research on human rights education in any sector that advances knowledge and will be published in a book to honor the tenth anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET) in 2021.[2] After an initial review of the hundreds of proposals submitted, an international selection committee convenes at the UNESCO regional office in Dakar, Senegal to discuss four of the finalists. Each proposal asks different questions, utilizes different methodological approaches, and represents a different conceptual lens or way of making sense of social phenomena. As a member of the selection committee, how would you rank these proposals from one to four? (Hint: your ordering might indicate your theoretical leanings).

Proposal A: A team of researchers will be gathering textbooks produced before and after 2011 when the UNDHRET was first adopted. Textbooks will be sought from as many countries as possible and will be analyzed for any changes vis-à-vis human rights content occurring since the 2011 Declaration. These changes will then be discussed with regards to each country's role in the global community and any global linkages and policies that may have influenced the adoption or reforms related to human rights in national educational systems. Different forms of rights emphasized in distinct contexts will also be analyzed (LBGTQI rights, women's rights, disability rights, linguistic rights, etc.). Global trends will also be analyzed to understand how education reforms occur cross-nationally.

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[2]This is a hypothetical situation written by the authors of this chapter.

Proposal B: A team of researchers will be collecting materials and data from *Human Rights Friendly Schools* that are part of Amnesty International's network to better understand their programs (curriculum, pedagogy, after-school, and summer programs, teacher training, etc.). Since such schools operate in 22 countries, the team has decided to do surveys with educators, activists, and members community organizations that participate in the program in all 22 countries, and conduct case studies of five focal schools (with observations and interviews of students, parents, and teachers) in different countries (Ghana, Hungary, Mongolia, Australia, and Colombia) through one-week visits to each site. Data will be analyzed to understand if this program is tailored to its context and is effective in meeting its stated goals. Opportunities for cross-learning across context will also be discussed in analysis of the data.

Proposal C: After an inordinate amount of police killings of unarmed individuals of marginalized ethnic and racial groups in the United States, a team of researchers has decided to study the way that police officers are trained in three different cities across the country, including one city that has included human rights training for incoming officers. Methods include observations (of trainings, and via "ride-alongs" with officers); interviews with officers, sergeants, and community members; focus groups; and review of training materials and incident reports. The research will be utilized (1) to write up scholarly findings about any observed differences between those officers receiving human rights training and those not receiving such training, (2) to challenge the secrecy around the release of any data related to police violence, and (3) to advocate for reforms in the training process if findings point to greater respect for due process and dignity through the incorporation of human rights.

Proposal D: A decades-old social movement in the Philippines has incorporated Freirean-inspired popular education around human rights into programs for indigenous community members (young and old) who have very little access to formal education. Such communities face land grabs and other violations of their individual and collective rights, particularly with an (elected) authoritarian regime in power. A team of researchers proposes to work in collaboration with community members through an extended ethnographic project that also includes local capacity building wherein the research team will train members of the local community as co-researchers. Key research questions include: What are the most salient human rights issues for local community members and how can solidarity-based international research partnerships be developed? How can human rights education align with social movements to advocate for greater social justice and resistance to state-sponsored violence/violation?

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