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BOOK REVIEWS

Changing citizenship: democracy and inclusion in education, by Audrey Osler and Hugh Starkey, Maidenhead and New York, McGraw Hill and Open University Press, 2005, 240 pp., £60 (hardback), £19.99 (paperback), ISBN 97-8-0335-2118-21

In *Changing citizenship: democracy and inclusion in education*, Audrey Osler and Hugh Starkey explore the contradiction presented by the 'shrunken world of globalization' (8) in which people's lives are increasingly influenced by what happens beyond national borders, even though their political influence continues to be felt most strongly within those borders. This contradiction is apparent in schools' approaches to democratic education, which is not surprising, given that schools tend to reinscribe rather than challenge reigning political ideas. While the slogan 'think global, act local' gets bantered about, in most schools in liberal democracies young people are taught to 'think national' – educated as if the nation state was the only political entity that really matters.

Osler and Starkey argue that this conception of democratic education as a national identity project is a problem. They challenge governments and schools to accept a new status of citizen – the cosmopolitan citizen – who recognises the nation and world as equally important and worthy of allegiance. This category of citizenship is one level above national citizenship and requires people to adopt a worldview of citizenship, with rights and responsibilities on the world stage. However, in their definition of cosmopolitan citizen, the importance of national citizenship is not dismissed. They are not naive about the connection between suffrage and power, readily admitting 'citizens are likely to have more leverage over a government that depends for re-election on their votes than over foreign governments or international organizations' (24).

But given the important and normatively mixed impact of globalisation on the lived experiences of people across the globe, they argue that it is time to get beyond national identity as the reigning definition of citizenship and recognise the reality that many people have multiple identities, need to be concerned about what happens beyond national borders, and should be encouraged (and taught to) act on those concerns. In such a global context, they see cosmopolitan citizenship responding to the three features that define citizenship: status, through which citizens are entitled to human rights; belonging, that gives citizens recognition by local as well as global communities; and practice that connects to the role education, and therefore schools, should carry out to promote democracy.

To accomplish this conceptual transition, they stress the need for universal values 'as its standard for all contexts, including national contexts' (7). By their definition, embracing cosmopolitan citizenship requires nations to accept and affirmatively act on the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) and other fundamental human rights treatises, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Because cosmopolitan citizens are not born, but made, the bulk of the book deals with how schools in liberal democracies should structure their democratic education programmes to embody the premises of these covenants.

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One of the strengths of this book is the rich and succinct explanations of fundamental documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Conventions on the Human Rights of the Child. While we agree with the central premise that focusing on nation-based citizenship in this time of globalisation is both theoretically and practically problematic, we are not as confident as Osler and Starkey seem to be about how ripe most liberal democracies are for this change to cosmopolitan citizenship based on these documents. Admittedly, our trepidation may be rooted in the fact that we are all currently living in the US, where we regularly witness loud and vociferous debates about whether making political decisions based on international agreements undermines national sovereignty (and also where, it is important to point out, the CRC has not been ratified).

But we are not convinced that this will be such an easy sell in other liberal democracies either. Most countries will say they follow the tenets of the UNDHR and the CRC, but examining their actions often presents a different picture – especially with respect to economic inequalities, and immigration and refugee policies. Unfortunately, noble goals often do not translate into workable policy, and the push for cosmopolitan citizenship, with the UNDHR as the basis, unfortunately may be a case in point. It lacks practicality, in its reliance on the UN Declaration of Human Rights and in the assumption that the world is ready and the time is right for nations to embrace citizenship on a global level, when world events show us that nations have difficulty defining citizenship on a national, or even local, level. In short, while we agree with the ideals embedded in these documents, it is clearly the case that on their own they fall short of dealing with those social and economic conflicts that Osler and Starkey present as trouble-some for building democracy in countries.

That being said, there is a long and noble tradition in democratic education for advocates of change and reform to suggest that the schools are an especially powerful lever for conceptual change. A natural extension of that, then, is to turn the spotlight on education, and it is here where the book shines – no doubt because of the authors' extensive experience in research and practice in democratic education. Using data from a wide array of research they have conducted, the authors use policy and document analysis, case studies, questionnaire analysis and life histo-ries to probe forces and factors that undermine democratic education (such as policies that exclude children), and illuminate democracy-enhancing policies and practices that have worked well in schools in England, Ireland and Sweden.

We were impressed by the authors' treatment of children's rights – especially the case they made for schools to treat students as citizens now, instead of 'citizens-in-waiting'. To instantiate that recommendation, of note is appendix 4, a 30-question checklist titled 'Does your school environment give everyone a chance to enjoy their rights?' Because each question is correlated to the relevant article of the document, schools could use it to assess whether they are meeting both the spirit and the letter of the CRF. The checklist lays out an ambitious agenda for those interested in moving beyond nation-centered democratic education. This is also true of the book as a whole, which is why it makes such a powerful contribution to the field.

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