

# Review of: "International Education and the Crises of Cosmopolitanism and Global Citizenship"

Milton McClaren<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Simon Fraser University

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

I have reviewed the manuscript of the article titled, *International Education and the Crises of Cosmopolitanism and Global Citizenship* as submitted by Hazzan Moses Kayode and dated June 8, 2023. I am pleased to report that the manuscript is well-written and organized in a structure that supports the main theses of the document. The author has also provided a Conclusion and offered Recommendations that are generally well-grounded in the overall content of the document.

The focus of the manuscript is on the relationships among International Education (IE), Cosmopolitanism, and Global Citizenship (GC) as elements shaped by the forces of Globalisation. The manuscript clearly describes Globalization as a world-wide force trending toward increasing human mobility and driven by changing technologies, as well as the by the diverse distribution of capital and physical resources and by the multi-media dispersion of various cultures and value systems.

The thesis presents a provocative question by asking whether the wide-spread application of new media and digital technologies admits and accepts all persons world-wide to be enabled as global citizens and cosmopolitans or not. I think the author would be well-served by opening the thesis with a clear definition of cosmopolitanism. While some readers may be familiar with the term, I suspect that more than a few will not have regular familiarity with it.

In practical terms, cosmopolitanism encourages the recognition of cultural diversity and the celebration of different perspectives, while also emphasizing the need for shared values and norms that promote global well-being. It often calls for cosmopolitan education, which aims to cultivate global awareness, empathy, and an understanding of global issues.

I think that the article would be strengthened if the author had considered cosmopolitanism as being a shaping force in the development and implication of curriculum for international education (IE), a curriculum having educational goals in which participants/students are viewed as having responsibilities and duties that extend beyond national boundaries and a curriculum in which the learning experiences promoted the idea that every human being deserves respect and consideration, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or cultural backgrounds.

A cosmopolitanist curriculum would embrace the notion of universal human rights, advocating for equality, justice, and fairness for all individuals worldwide. It recognizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of people across the globe, emphasizing the importance of fostering mutual understanding, dialogue, and cooperation among diverse cultures and nations. In that sense a Cosmopolitanist curriculum is also a curriculum for Global Citizenship.

Schooling and education are related concepts, but they have distinct meanings and refer to different aspects of the learning process. Schooling typically involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills through teacher-led instruction, textbooks, assignments, and examinations. It is often organized into grade levels or academic years and leads to the attainment of certificates, diplomas, or degrees. Education, on the other hand, is a broader and lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that go beyond formal schooling. Education encompasses learning experiences and opportunities that occur both within and outside formal educational institutions. It includes self-directed learning, informal learning, experiential learning, and learning through interactions with others and the environment.

In a sense schools can be seen as a form of social technology, a technology designed to foster citizenship among students within the political agenda of a particular country or region. Citizenship contributes to an individual's sense of identity and belonging. It connects individuals to a particular nation or community, and it often involves shared cultural, historical, and linguistic ties. Citizenship can foster a sense of patriotism and loyalty to the country of citizenship. Citizenship plays a fundamental role in shaping individuals' rights, responsibilities, and opportunities within a society. It reflects the relationship between the individual and the state, and it forms the basis for participation in the political, social, and economic life of a country.

In the manuscript I found the following statement to the effect that, “with few exceptions scholars across the disciplines who have examined cosmopolitanism and citizenship are yet to come to terms with its educational significance” to be somewhat confusing. Given that statement the author might have found it useful to consult the UNESCO educational goal statements outlined as the Global Education 2030 agenda. In particular, Statement 3 speaks to the goal of promoting global citizenship education while Statement 4 refers to the need to build “inclusive and effective education systems on a world-wide basis.”

I think that while the author appreciates the challenges that accompany avoiding globally translating and exporting modern, largely western concepts of liberalism, pluralism and citizenship, that more attention might be paid to discussing the role of schools and school curricula in how the concepts of International Education are implemented.

The mid-section of the article includes several sections which include a “critical analysis of “Western, Asian and African perspectives as well as crises of Global Citizenship and cosmopolitanism in the light of International Education (IE). “ The regions considered are “Western, Asian, and African”. The discussions under each section are preceded by consideration of the terms International Education, Global Citizenship, and cosmopolitanism. I did wonder whether it might have been better to include those definitions and discussions earlier along with my comments on how cosmopolitanism could be seen as shaping an educational curriculum.

The author provides reasonable discussions of each of these terms and questions whether they are “nominal or realistic”... While I appreciated the division of the manuscript into these broad categories I do feel that they may give the reader an impression that the processes of cosmopolitanism, international education, and global citizenship can be broadly applied across these geographic categories. In other words, can the concepts of global citizenship be seen as relatively the same across the “Western” world or Asia or Africa.

As I have indicated above, while terms such as International Education might be treated as having common meanings and definitions if instead they are treated as educational programs or curricula then it is very likely that they will have different realities and implications in diverse geographies, political regions, and areas with differing languages and socio-cultural characteristics. In other words, will International Education as an educational program and curriculum be realized and defined in the same way in different Canadian provinces or African political units?

The author recognizes this issue when he writes:

*We in this treatise, focus on a critical x-ray of the concepts of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship in the light of Western, Asian and African perspectives; discuss the crises of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship in the realm of the global higher education and how these have seriously engaged the discussions of the scholars from various fields and or walks of life.*

As noted previously in this commentary, the UNESCO Statements in the Education 2030 Agenda intend to encourage global level consideration of developing inclusive and effective education systems. Statement #4: “This goal aims to improve the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of education systems worldwide.” However, the UNESCO statement recognizes that implementation of this goal at the local level will entail “strengthening educational policies, teacher training, curriculum development, and educational infrastructure....”. Overall, cosmopolitanism proposes a vision of a more inclusive and interconnected world, where individuals transcend narrow national or cultural boundaries and embrace their common humanity.

The author closes the thesis with a powerful general statement: *“If there is going to be one, a common world requires concerted efforts to be built by dint of hard work and collective commitment.”* I would suggest that a major component of the hard work will belong to the challenges of developing and implementing effective programs of education, in particular international education (IE).

I sum, I think the article offers a reasonable description and discussion of the challenges presented by cosmopolitanism, international education, global citizenship, and International Education. I do think that the article suggests a need for greater research into how these challenges are presented in the educational policies, curricula and operations by range of programs offered in various nations rather than focusing on large regional categories: western, Asian, or African. In other words, do the educational policies and curricular goals, and approach to cosmopolitanism of different nations reflect the influence of diverse geographies, politics, economics and socio-cultural histories. That question should be addressed by research into the differing educational practices and policies of specific and various nations. It would be fascinating and useful to ask whether the cosmopolitanism of Indonesia differs from that of South Africa or Sweden.