

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Political Violence¹ and Education

From the Balkans to Central America, from Jamaica to South Africa, and in nearly every other region of the world, political violence has an undeniable impact on the content and process of education. Schools may serve as sites for resistance or emancipation, or they may be actual targets of physical violence. Dominant political forces may use education to legitimize state violence or to promote mass socialization toward particular nationalist agendas. In addition, armed conflict and civil unrest often close school buildings and alter dramatically the context in which education systems operate. In its form, role and impact, education is profoundly affected by these phenomena, yet the ramifications of political violence on education have received little research attention.

For the fall 1999 issue, CICE presents contributions that explore the ways violence establishes national, ethnic, racial and gender identities via education before, during and after conflict. The authors reflect on the intersection of violence and education from the disciplines of history, anthropology, sociology, politics and psychology. Practitioners add a unique and important perspective, increasing the relevance of theory to practical activity. While some authors demonstrate how education can help to establish and maintain social stability and peace, others address the role education plays in maintaining inequitable conditions and hosting ideological battles. Several authors point to gaps in current literature and practice, outlining agendas for future research in this area².

Adila Kreso writes from Bosnia and Herzegovina, "What could not be done in war is attempted in peace by nationalist differentiation of education." With a bold critique of nationalist political ideologies and their impact on education in BiH, Kreso expresses her concern for the future of education in the country, and, inextricably linked to education, the future of the nation. Kreso describes the divisive role education and schools have played in BiH, and calls for urgent attention to develop a form of multicultural education: culturally responsive pedagogy in *Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Minority inclusion and majority rules*.

With human rights, conflict resolution and peace education receiving increased international attention as positive interventions for countries in transition from war to peace, Paul Martin, Tania Bernath and Tracey Holland delineate the necessary components of human rights education programs in conflict and post-conflict regions. In *How can human rights education contribute to international peace-building?* they argue that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in concert with increased global emphasis on "education for all" have created an atmosphere in which human rights education can be used to reduce violence and increase the movement "from conflict toward peace and security."

Joaquin Flores presents the results of a detailed psychological study documenting the effects of violence upon children exposed to the civil war in El Salvador in *Schooling, family, and individual factors mitigating psychological effects of war on children*. Flores

discusses the "relevance and challenges of psychological research and intervention as vital components of advocacy for child victims of war," including the difficulty of advocating for treatment without empirical evidence of psychological trauma. According to Flores, psychologists and social scientists can and should assist affected communities in responding to the psychological needs of their children, through education and community-based institutions.

Jane Lowicki and Barry Chevannes call our attention to the plight of adolescents in *Missing out: Adolescents affected by armed conflict face few education opportunities*. Lowicki identifies a gap in attention to refugee adolescents in emergency education programs and planning; she shows the importance of adolescent programming, given that they are "at risk for various forms of sexual and economic exploitation and abuse, criminality and indoctrination." Chevannes discusses violence among male youths in Jamaican culture from a socio-anthropological perspective, suggesting that "in a situation where an entire section of a population is deviant, our focus inevitably must be directed to processes that shape the foundations of behavior." He explains why this phenomenon must be addressed to establish even the hope for a future of peace.

Writing from South Africa, Isaac Ntshoe expresses misgivings about multicultural education that are similar to the concerns expressed by Kreso regarding education as a tool for political ideology. In *What you sow is what you reap: Violence and the construction of male identity in Jamaica*, he describes the way the South African apartheid government exploited ethnic differences among Africans to "suppress particular communities" and consolidate its own power. Yet he notes the dual role education played in the history of the struggles against apartheid, "(...) education simultaneously facilitated social change, political emancipation, and democracy." He concludes that a revised form of multicultural education can promote "unity in diversity."

Thomas Clayton invites us to consider the notion of education as a site for ideological struggle and control in *Education under occupation: Political violence, schooling, and response in Cambodia*. From a historical perspective, he examines the effect of Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia on higher education, describing the way "the Vietnamese invasion brought Cambodians salvation from the Khmer Rouge's policies of social destruction." At the same time as they filled the educational void left in the wake of the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese also "erected a sophisticated hegemonic apparatus dedicated to the dissemination of ideas congruent with their vision for the country."

After examining the root causes of violence in South Africa, Salim Vally links the structural violence of apartheid with a culture of violence visible in South African schools today. In *Violence in South African schools*, he describes the "complicated combination of past history and recent stresses (...) in a society marked by deep inequities and massive uncertainty" and the impact this has on operations. He ends with specific policy recommendations to address the problem of violence.

Belge Brochmann and Eldrid K. Midttun, in *Human rights education and peace building*, broaden the scope of human rights education slightly by presenting it as a preventive measure which can reduce the risk of conflict occurring or recurring, as well as set important standards for countries in transition from authoritarian rule to democratic

societies. They also share some experiences in the implementation of HRE projects particularly in Southern Caucasus.

Fay Chung closes this CICE issue with comments and questions from the field. In *Education: A key to power and a tool for change--a practitioners perspective*, her observations point to striking features of political violence and provide suggestions for further study and debate.

This topic and these issues are particularly close to the hearts and minds of many of the CICE Editorial Board members. For our colleagues in education and their students around the world, we would like to make a special appeal to our readers to contemplate these dilemmas, broaden the debate and contribute insights to the analysis that will in turn support social change.

Notes

1. Political violence is very generally defined as the exercise of physical or other forces interfere with personal freedom or the free development of choice of one group for the benefit (social, political, economic) of another group. For the purposes of this issue, we will define political violence as both the exercise of power (acts of war, civil strife) and the emotional and psychological conditions that serve to create and maintain unequal power relationships.
2. It is important to note that the articles in this issue of CICE are not exhaustive in their discussion of the relationship between political violence and education, nor are all regions of the world covered. For example, a piece on violence in the United States and Western Europe and its impact on schools and education is absent. The issue reflects the submissions we received.