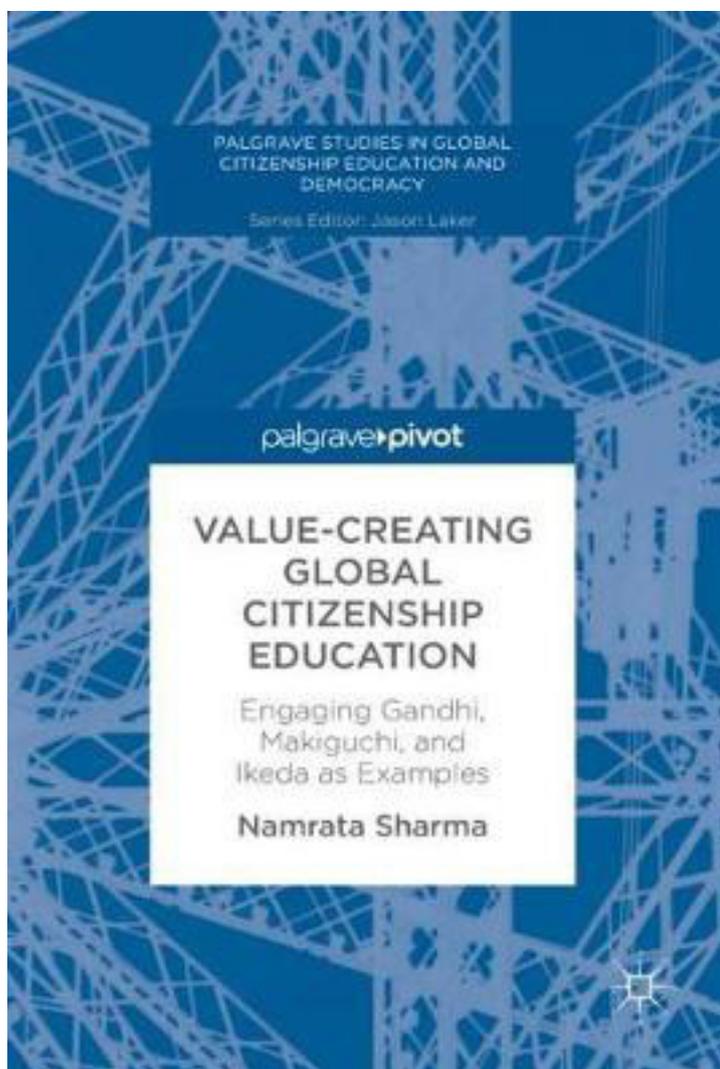


## Book review

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### *Value-Creating Global Citizenship Education: Engaging Gandhi, Makiguchi, and Ikeda as examples*, by Namrata Sharma

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 165pp., ISBNs: 978-3-319-78243-0 (hbk), 978-3-319-78244-7 (ebk)



In *Value-Creating Global Citizenship Education: Engaging Gandhi, Makiguchi, and Ikeda as examples*, Namrata Sharma addresses the field of global citizenship education, issuing a call for inclusion of diverse voices. In response to a field that, she argues, has been dominated by neoliberal perspectives rooted in Western conceptions of

humanity, society and nature, Sharma introduces the ideas of three Asian thinkers. Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948), Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944) and Daisaku Ikeda (b. 1928) developed philosophies that integrate political engagement, religious humanism and pedagogies of liberation. Sharma argues that their philosophies can be used to re-conceptualize global citizenship and profoundly transform educational practice. If her diagnosis is correct, and I think that to a large extent it is, perspectives of the kind she introduces in this book are badly needed. The scholarly contributions to the theory and practice of education offered in this volume are welcome and timely.

The book is organized in two parts. Part 1 is devoted to theory and research, where Sharma accomplishes three tasks:

1. It provides an excellent introduction to the philosophies of and scholarly literature on Gandhi, Makiguchi, and Ikeda.
2. It articulates an original conception of cosmopolitan education, which she calls 'value-creating global citizenship education'.
3. It locates these ideas within a larger conversation on global citizenship education with a special focus on UNESCO-led initiatives.

Part 2 builds on the theoretical foundations of Part 1 and engages issues of praxis, developing a framework for educational practice. The transition from theory to practice is well developed, all the way down to the design of specific lessons to illustrate the application of theoretical themes into educational practice.

The structural spine of the book runs through the four pillars introduced by UNESCO (1996) in the Delors Report *Learning: The treasure within*: learning to know; learning to do; learning to be; and learning to live together (p. 7). The opening chapter presents the theoretical framework and makes the case for the project. Part 1, on 'Theory and Research' begins with Chapter 2, where Sharma introduces the ideas of Gandhi, Makiguchi and Ikeda. Chapter 3 contributes to the conversation on *learning to know*, emphasizing a vision of a decentralized curriculum open to diverse ways of thinking about the human experience, society, nature and the universe. Chapter 4 develops the pillar of *learning to be*, emphasizing dialogue as a mode of existence. In Chapter 5, Sharma tackles the behavioral dimension of *learning to do*, exploring conceptions of engaged citizenship.

Chapter 6 opens Part 2 on 'Praxis' with an investigation of *learning to live together*, incorporating ideas from the previous chapters into a framework for global citizenship education in six themes:

- Sense of interdependence, common humanity, and a global outlook
- An awareness of climate change as planetary citizens
- A commitment to reflective, dialogic, and transformative learning
- A commitment to sustainable development through intercultural perspectives
- A belief in the value-creating capacity for social-self actualization
- An understanding of peace and non-violence being central to the human rights agenda (see Figure 6.1 on p. 94).

The framework features a detailed explanation of each of the six themes, including key points, challenging assumptions and suggestions for practice. On 'Sense of interdependence, common humanity, and a global outlook' (p. 95), for example, Sharma identifies as key points exploring existential questions and challenging colonial perspectives, on 'Awareness of climate change as planetary citizens' (p. 97) she lists acknowledgement of climate change, reverence for nature, wonder and appreciation for life as creative coexistence, and a sense of urgency for action and

concern. Each theme also questions assumptions, including challenging ignorance of structural inequalities, narrow scientific-industrial revolution influences in modes of thought, including dualistic views on humanity and nature, and more. For each theme, Sharma also proposes specific suggestions for practice including ideas and resources for developing curriculum. Chapter 7 features a series of lessons for professional development of in-service teachers, or undergraduate or graduate level courses in international and comparative education, global learning, developmental education or related fields. Chapter 8 closes the volume with concluding reflections and implications for policy and practice.

The themes in Sharma's project find points of resonance in the scholarship on global citizenship education (see Andreotti, 2006; Appiah, 2008; Dill, 2013; Hansen, 2011; Obelleiro, 2014; Tarozzi and Torres, 2016; Torres, 2017; Todd, 2010; Nussbaum, 1994), which Sharma acknowledges and documents, rendering this volume a valuable introduction to the literature. From the themes in concert, however, a new vision of global citizenship education emerges. This is a conception of global citizenship education that is humane and critical, embracing of difference and sensitive to the suffering of vulnerable communities, but with teeth to pierce through structures of power and the greed, hatred and fear that drive injustice. A vision at once loyal to the three heroes of the book and refreshingly original.

The originality of the book comes in part from the way in which Sharma weaves together discourses at different registers: philosophical investigation, historical analysis, policy analysis, pedagogical and curriculum theory and practice. The book is not only about ideas, but also about their application for education and political work. Some of the brightest spots in the book come when Sharma engages the ideas of the thinkers in comparative analysis, reaching moments of real insight. For example, Sharma's treatment side by side of the Soka movement and Gandhi's *satyagraha* composes a compelling picture of democratic practice. Sharma argues that central to Gandhi's project was a sense of political creativity that involved the integration of two aspects of his movement. 'There can be said to be two Gandhis,' Sharma writes, 'the first is Gandhi the person, for whom truth and non-violence was his creed. Then there is Gandhi who had to play the role of the *mahatma*, the moral leader and a nationalist, who had to work through the problematic intercultural issues' (p. 30). Sharma argues that in the Soka movement we find a similar kind of political creativity to bridge the personal and the public, to bring the sphere of morality into the orbit of power. Ikeda, Sharma claims, 'has provided an example of the positive use of religious values in a public domain ... [showing that] personal values can be of benefit not only to the individual but also to the society at large,' provided that values are engaged with a focus on political education that empowers people to 'hold the political powers accountable' (p. 34).

The perspectives Sharma introduces into the conversation can help correct two errors common in much of contemporary debates on cosmopolitanism: a problematically narrow view of its history, and a serious conceptual misrepresentation by its critics. Contemporary debates on global citizenship education trace a history that begins in Ancient Greece with the Cynics and the Stoics, re-emerging periodically throughout the history of Western philosophy, reaching a high point in the European Enlightenment, with Immanuel Kant as the chief representative, and eventually finding in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) and other post-World War II international agreements its fundamental articles of faith. Then you have the critics who raise objections to global citizenship education. Some complain that global citizenship has come to be formulated in terms of Western liberal democratic values

that are exclusionary, especially of individuals and communities in the global South and minorities everywhere (pp. 46–7; see also Jooste and Heleta, 2017; Calhoun, 2003; Bowden, 2003). What these criticisms truly target, however, is a kind of parochialism with imperial ambitions disguised as and co-opting the vocabulary of global citizenship. The values these critics propose to substitute global citizenship are, in fact, genuinely cosmopolitan values. Jooste and Heleta (2017: 44), to mention an example Sharma cites on p. 47, propose ‘socially responsible, ethical, and global competent graduates’, and Dower (2000: 553) calls for cultivating a sense of ‘global responsibility’.

The errors of excluding non-Western perspectives from the history of global citizenship and, as a result, misconstruing the tradition as exclusively Western liberal democratic creates a stalemate between friends and foes of global citizenship. In Sharma’s skillful hands, I believe, Makiguchi’s vision of value-creating education (pp. 18–23), Ikeda’s interpretation of the global citizen in terms of the Buddhist ideal of the *bodhisattva* (pp. 64–5) and Gandhi’s ideas of non-violence and dialogue are ideas with the potential of moving the global citizenship education debate out of the tracks where it seems to be stuck. Now when I mention ‘foes of global citizenship’ I am referring to those who see themselves as such because they perceive the tradition to be Eurocentric and imperialistic. There are, by contrast, the real enemies of global citizenship, whom Appiah (2008) calls counter-cosmopolitans of two kinds: the fundamentalists and the nationalists. ‘Cosmopolitanism’, Appiah (2008: 92) writes, ‘is a double-stranded tradition: in a slogan, it is universality plus difference.’ Global citizens appreciate cultural, religious, linguistic, ethnic and most other forms of diversity. They also value universality; they care not only about what makes each group and individual unique, but also what makes us similar, part of the human family. Each of the two kinds of counter-cosmopolitan deny the legitimacy of one of the strands. Nationalists value difference, they cherish and seek to protect what makes each culture, and each nation, unique. But they reject the legitimacy of universality. Fundamentalists value universality – their views *are* the incarnation of universal truth – but they reject diversity. For the fundamentalist all difference is but error or, worse, blasphemy. I am not confident Sharma’s account of value-creating global citizenship education will convince genuine counter-cosmopolitans to change their minds, but she might convince those who are cosmopolitan at heart but hardened by a history of colonialism and neoliberal imperialism to reject the concept of global citizenship, at least as it has been articulated in the Western philosophical tradition. Sharma shows a way forward for rescuing the ideal of the global citizen through Gandhi, Makiguchi and Ikeda.

*Value-Creating Global Citizenship Education* offers a perspective that refocuses the discussion on global citizenship education from questions of neoliberal values back to questions of morality, justice, culture and coexistence. In this sense, she demonstrates that Gandhi, Makiguchi and Ikeda can be counted as partners in the cosmopolitan tradition of Diogenes, Marcus Aurelius, Immanuel Kant, Eleanor Roosevelt and Martha Nussbaum. She shows that cosmopolitanism is not merely a Western affair. In my reading of the book, what stands out is precisely the continuities in cosmopolitan thought across cultural differences. This category of non-Western perspectives that Sharma attempts to demarcate stands in low contrast in relation to its opposite, Western perspectives. She acknowledges that key features of the non-Western perspective she presents find expression in the West. Bergson and Whitehead, for example, give us a conception of reality in terms of interconnectedness (p. 62), Freire and Buber have a dialogical conception of humanity’s relation to the world (p. 63). Sharma enlists Ikeda himself to mark the distinction between Bergson’s or Whitehead’s conceptions of interconnectedness and the Buddhist concept of

*dependent origination*, which holds that ‘all beings and phenomena exist or occur in relation to other beings or phenomena’. From the point of view of *dependent origination* ‘a greater emphasis is placed on the interdependent relationships between individuals than on the individual in isolation’ (Ikeda, 1991b: 4, quoted on p. 62). Ikeda (1991b: 4, quoted on p. 62) adds, ‘The deeper essence of Buddhism, however, goes beyond this to offer a view of interrelatedness that is uniquely dynamic, holistic, and inner-generated’. Readers of Bergson and Whitehead would disagree, insisting that the idea of all beings and phenomena existing in relation to other beings and phenomena, with an emphasis on the web of relations over the isolated individual *is* the view of these Western philosophers and, they may add, many other thinkers in the West. They would demand that we *demonstrate* how Buddhism’s view of interrelatedness is unique, not that we simply *tell* them it is the case.

I welcome the perspectives of Gandhi, Makiguchi and Ikeda, citizens of non-Western countries who lived and wrote outside the West. I am not convinced, however, that their ideas are best described as non-Western. These are thinkers of wide appeal whose ideas have diverse sources. I am partial to reading these thinkers with the care and lightness of touch that the author exemplifies when cautioning against ‘isms’ (see Sharma’s critique of the notions of Gandhism and Ikedian-ism on p. 134). There is something in the ideas of these thinkers that carry the mark of their geographical and cultural origins. Positionality is for these thinkers, like for everyone else, constitutive of their philosophies. And perhaps it is the fact that these philosophies come from Asia that makes them fresh, that allow ideas to do their work free of the metaphysical, historical and moral burdens of the Western philosophical tradition and the evils with which strands of this tradition are inextricably entangled. And yet, in the spirit of the Buddhist idea of *dependent origination*, according to which ‘everything is linked to an intricate web of causation and connection—and nothing—whether in the realm of human affairs or of natural phenomena—can exist or occur solely of its own accord’ (Ikeda 1991a, quoted on p. 61), I think it is more fitting to characterize these philosophies as emerging not from the East, but from the dialogue across cultural differences that has been the predicament of humanity since the beginning. This is the origin to which value-creating global citizenship seeks to return, not once and for all, but at every turning point in history, every day, and even, as Buddhist scriptures and commentaries put it, ‘every single moment in life’ (Nichiren, 1999: 354).

Namrata Sharma’s *Value-Creating Global Citizenship Education: Engaging Gandhi, Makiguchi, and Ikeda as Examples* makes important contributions to the fields of global citizenship education, Gandhi scholarship and *soka*, or value-creating education, the tradition of educational philosophy established by Makiguchi and now continued by Ikeda. In accordance to the two-part structure of the book, Sharma’s contributions pertain to both educational theory and practical application. I recommend this volume for both students and experts.

## Notes on the contributor

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