

Anders Sjöborg and Hans-Georg Ziebertz (eds): *Religion, Education and Human Rights. Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*. (Vol. 1, Religion and Human Rights). Cham: Springer, 2017.

If we agree that the language of human rights is a useful language for human social life, the legitimacy of these human rights depends on the extent to which the population at large agrees with the rights, inscribed in law, and lends them their support. When people identify with human rights, it is possible that a kind of human rights culture may develop. (p. 2)

This anthology brings welcome theoretical, and perhaps more importantly, empirical perspectives to the field of human rights education (HRE). Its articles are mainly a result of a 2014 international workshop in Uppsala, which aimed to explore the relationship between religion, human rights, and education. Although religion is common to all the articles, the main focus is on human rights and how they can best be promoted. Starting from what the editors call the modern view that human rights implementation must be the responsibility of individuals as well as governments, the book's authors set out in different ways to shed light on the conditions for the shared support of human rights in various countries.

As is often the case in anthologies, the articles deal with very different topics. The editors pro-

vide only a short introduction, and there are no concluding remarks. Although this is understandable, a larger effort by the editors to tie the threads together would have been welcome. This makes it a little difficult to review the book as a whole. Yet the effort to bring together the fields of religion, human rights, and education is commendable, and the articles bring important insights for those interested in the intersection of these fields.

Four articles deal explicitly with religious education (RE) from different perspectives. Zielinska and Zwierdzynski (Chapter 2) provide an analysis of how textbooks used in confessional religious education in Poland understand and construct human rights. The authors find that RE textbooks provided by the Roman Catholic, the Orthodox and the Pentecostal Churches present human rights according to a religious understanding, limiting their applicability and universal status. Olga Breskaya (Chapter 3) gives an interesting account of the public debates on RE in Belarus. Using the framework of 'twin toleration', she problematizes the Belarusian model of secularism to identify whether the realization of the rights of its citizens can be properly protected. The role of the state, established religious institutions, and public opinion play important roles in considering RE models. Poulter et al. (Chapter 4) discuss how different considerations of human rights in relation to religion should be considered in the Finnish context when implementing RE.

Schihalejev and Ringvee offer a very interesting article about the role of RE in promoting respect for the freedom of religion in Estonia (Chapter 5). Estonia provides a fruitful context for this question, because it offers three different models: no RE; non-confessional RE; and confessional RE. Their analysis of data from the REDCo project and a newer supplementary study suggests that RE, both confessional and non-confessional, affects how students see issues such as fewer prejudices, more complex ideas about religion, and a more positive attitude towards religious difference. Although the picture is complex, the study indicates that the difference between having RE and no RE is more significant than whether RE is confessional or non-confessional in promoting respect for the freedom of religion.

The articles from Scandinavia examine religion and education more broadly. Based on the recurring public controversy about the role of Christian church services in Norwegian public schools, Pål Ketil Bottvar (Chapter 6) uses two cases to explore the complexities in attitudes to the public role of religion. Dan-Erik Andersson (Chapter 7) problematizes the teaching of the history of human rights in higher education. He shows that common human rights and religious narratives simplify complex historical issues. Victoria Enkvist (Chapter 8) delves into the complexities concerning freedom of religion in schools by analysing the Swedish Education Act in relation to the Instruction of Government and

the practices of the European Court of Human Rights. She shows that schools can become a special case concerning pupils' human rights and points out that there may be inconsistencies in Swedish law in this respect. Kavot Zillén (Chapter 11) explores conscientious objection in clinical healthcare education in relation to Article 9 of the European Declaration of Human Rights. Examining both the Article itself and relevant jurisprudence, she shows that conscientious objection can be covered by the right to manifest one's religion. However, the right can still be limited to protect other rights, which seems most relevant to this case.

In Chapters 9 (Ziebertz) and 10 (Ziebertz et al.) the authors explore the individual level in attitudes to human rights, discussing various factors relevant to their structuring by individuals. In the final article Paula Gerber (Chapter 12) deals directly with HRE, identifying six key elements of successful human rights education in schools.

Despite or perhaps because of the wide range of topics covered, the book offers many relevant perspectives on religion, human rights, and education. I feel the book's most important contribution is to empirically demonstrate the importance of the national and sociocultural context for attitudes to human rights. Ziebertz et al. deal directly with this question in Chapter 10. Aiming to make an empirical contribution to the debate concerning whether culture and society or individual

factors are more important in shaping attitudes to human rights, they analyse survey data from young people in Germany, Sweden, Indonesia, India, Kenya, and Nigeria. A statistical analysis of this data shows that the sociocultural context has a significant explanatory relevance for the respondents' attitudes to human rights compared to the influence of personality and individual factors. The anthology's other empirical articles confirm the importance of the national and cultural context. In the studies from Poland (Chapter 2), Belarus (Chapter 3), Estonia (Chapter 5), Norway (Chapter 6), and Germany (Chapter 9) historical, demographic, religious, political, and cultural factors unique to each nation are shown to significantly influence the conditions affecting the development of attitudes to human rights. This insight makes an important contribution to the international field of human rights education. One implication of this is that while HRE aims at universality, a common European HRE design may not be the most efficient way forward. The national context needs careful consideration in implementing HRE.

Another overarching theme is the role religion plays in promoting human rights. Across the articles this is shown to be ambiguous, especially when the role of religious institutions is considered. Different models of RE may provide various conditions for promoting human rights. At an individual level religious affiliation seems to influence

the way people structure their views of human rights. Although the book does not treat the role of religion systematically, the concerns the articles raise will be important if RE is to be relevant in promoting human rights. The editors propose that 'religious education has to develop programmes that do not cover the ambivalence but develop concepts from the inner heart of the religion, which can work as a religious source for modern liberties'. However, I feel this proposition raises serious questions about how such a development of concepts from 'the inner heart of the religion' can be undertaken and by whom, given the multifaceted state of religious education across Europe.

This anthology is a welcome addition to the field. A major strength of the book is that the empirical articles build on extensive studies with large samples, providing solid foundations for its conclusions. The relationship between human rights at the state level and the attitudes of individual citizens is complex, and the role of education in building and sustaining a human rights culture may be essential. This book significantly contributes to expanding our knowledge of this complexity.

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