
INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF URBAN EDUCATION

PART ONE

 Springer

INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF URBAN EDUCATION

PART TWO

INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF URBAN EDUCATION

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International Handbook of Urban Education

Part One

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PREFACE

Urban education, as a field of study, has been plagued by a social problems orientation. Urban areas are often seen as collections of problems and urban schools are as well. The sad reality is that urban areas are full of both poverty and wealth and the educational system reflects both of these. In practice, urban schools are often segregated by class, caste, and race. Such schools are also segregated because public policy allows this to be true. Policy creates the schools that serve young people who are marginalized and for whom life is difficult and unforgiving. Such schools make it difficult for students to use education to alter their life chances.

The field of urban education emerged precisely to highlight the above and to argue that such students and families, and the schools that serve them, deserve better. The field itself has led to many new understandings about how to improve schools and how to better serve such students and their families. These are great accomplishments but they are also always limited by the asymmetry of possibilities created by social stratification, segmentation, and segregation. Urban schools that are created to reflect divided societies cannot significantly improve without the dismantling of the schools that serve those that derive considerable benefits from the stratified society. In turn, this would seem to require dismantling the wider societal stratification systems. The field of urban education then exists both as an amelioration in such societies and as a moral conscience – calling attention to effects of racialization, class formation and maintenance, and patriarchy. This moral conscience is never far from the research in urban education whether it be in service of improving schools or critiquing policy and practice.

Across the globe we have been experiencing a steady process of urbanization. Yet urbanization takes on different forms given different social and cultural histories. In many parts of the world, the poor are not in the central cities but in rings around the city. The schools that serve them (if there are schools that serve them) share the challenges of all schools that serve the urbanized poor. This Handbook enables the reader to compare the different forms of urbanization and urban education and to make some fundamental comparisons about what is different and what is the same about urban education

across the globe. We encourage a critical reading of these works. Readers should delve deeply into the chapters and into the myriad issues evident. In doing so, the editors and authors of these works invite you to reconsider the lenses you use to understand urban education. If these chapters do nothing else, they should make it clear that context is almost everything in urban education. Urban schools contain a society's hopes and limitations. In declaring the schools to be problems, we blame the victims for what others have done to them. The charges should be leveled not at the victims but at the perpetrators. Who set in motion rural destabilization such that migration to the cities becomes the only option for the displaced? Who created an economy that leaves so many impoverished, unemployed and/or underemployed? Who created residential segregation? Who promotes stratification and segmentation of a society's people? Who set up educational systems that cannot meet the needs of people who must rely on them? Who is culpable for the draining of resources from urban schools? Who is responsible for not addressing these and other issues? We have emphatically stressed *who* because social science along with those with power have created a language that suggests processes and factors that are beyond the control of people. This creates an image of inevitability and, of course, leaves the poor to exist as an unfortunate fact of life.

Globalization is a phenomenon that some portray as a process or force that has an independent existence. It permeates the chapters in this volume. Every local scene is interpenetrated with an economy that spans national borders. Every urban area, every urban school, finds itself subject to economic shifts connected to the global economy. This said, it is also true that the global economy was and is being created and recreated every day by the actions of business leaders and policymakers. It is inevitable only because these leaders see benefit in it for themselves and for global trade, which in the end benefits the dominant classes worldwide. If this is who, then the question becomes how do we hold them accountable for increasing poverty? For a centralization of wealth that has all but destroyed the middle classes? For displaced populations that are now urbanized and marginalized? The only mechanisms that have some history are governmental or involve the universal politics of protest and insurrection? The former seems all too compromised to act definitively, while the latter has an unfortunate history of demagoguery and anti-democratic effects. Thus globally, this could be a turning point in governmentality – one where potentially both the economy and the population exceed the reach of the state. In this, it seems clear that urban areas will be the terrain of struggle. Hope must be possible for the alternative is devastation. We offer this volume in service of hope.

This project began over 7 years ago as it became apparent that globally urbanization was proceeding at a remarkable rate, and that, in both policy and popular imagination, urban education was the locus of the action. As we thought through the volume's orientation, this became increasingly true. Riots in Paris immigrant suburbs, the bulldozing of squatters villages in Africa, and the exportation of school reform ideas from the West to the world all increasingly signaled the centrality of urban education in the new world order.

We began the substance of the work by engaging lead scholars from across the globe in discussions about the way the world was organized and divided, especially in regards to urban education. From these emerged, the sections of this book and the invitations to section editors. We wish to be clear that the sections of this book are not meant to be

some definitive statement about the way the world is partitioned. Rather our discussions yielded this organization as a heuristic to begin to understand urban education as a global phenomenon. It was more a way to come to understand than the sense that this is *the* way to understand urban education globally. We are convinced that now, after we have assembled some semblance of what is known about urban education around the world, we would want to reconsider the sections and potentially change them in fundamental ways. For example, we were unable to organize a section on what used to be called Eastern Europe but this is clearly an arena that needs to be investigated. We wonder about the wisdom of going with continents like Latin American and Africa. There is much variety as well as similarity across these continents. They deserve additional consideration. We have the US, the UK and Europe as sections. We were all aware from the beginning that these sections reflect Western dominance in global affairs (and not inconsequentially the major book markets). This deserves even more interrogation. The Asia-Pacific reflects a more recent understanding of how the old “East” is now a set of emerging economic and political relations. This heuristic seems to be productive here but is it the best way to organize our understanding of urban education or, as importantly, will it be as useful in the near future? In future volumes, we will take on these and other tasks, but for now we revel in what has been revealed by the heuristic we did employ. The sections and chapters create a knowledge base that has never before existed. It will be studied as the state of the art in the field of urban education and serve as the starting point for a new research agenda for this century, this world.

This accomplishment should be credited, not to us, but to the entire team who made it possible. The section editors conceptualized their sections, sought out who they thought to be the best thinkers and scholars in the regions to write chapters, diligently and doggedly worked with the authors to produce high quality pieces, and wrote the section introductions. The authors had the major responsibility for conducting the necessary primary and secondary research, for conceptualization and writing, and finally for the quality of the chapters themselves. We have been fortunate to work with some of the best scholars in the world and this volume demonstrates how impressive their collective work can be. It is important for the reader to be aware that just as urban education varies so do the practices of scholars. You will note variations in research and writing practices across the sections and even between nations or regions within sections. Some of this is really about the limits of translating into English, but less than might be presumed. We have learned much about scholarship internationally by working through this volume, and in particular learned to acknowledge the differences in practices but even more so to respect what the practices yield.

A number of the section editors were able to meet together at the American Educational Research Association conference in San Francisco, California in April of 2006. The others were consulted with via email and in-person meetings in other venues. In these discussions, we worked on pulling the volume together. One key item was how to end the volume. It seemed to all involved that there was no sensible way to write a conclusion to the volume. Yet the section editors thought that there was value in some novel way of pulling the work together. In the end, Allan Luke offered to write a dystopia that would allow the section editors to envision the future from where they were now in each region. This became our way to push the volume beyond what was