

SYNCHRONIZING CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES TOWARDS GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

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Summary

This chapter starts from the call of the UN Commission on Global Governance to all sectors of society to contribute towards the practice and institutionalization of core values such as respect for life, liberty, justice and equity, mutual respect, care and integrity. It is argued that strategies of change towards global governance based on such values need to consider the challenge of how cultural changes are synchronized with structural changes. On the background of theoretical insights on how individual cultural preferences develop in harmony with contextual conditions, separate and isolated strategies – whether only cultural or only structural - are seen as ineffective. A call for synchronism between cultural and structural attempts at practicing and institutionalizing core values necessary for global governance to be an effective instrument for reducing different forms of violence and safeguarding peace is made. The discourses within and between the fields of conflict resolution and peace education are discussed in the light of how this challenge of synchronism has been met. A typology of four contextual conditions is analyzed in light of the presence or absence of synchronism between cultures and structures of peace and violence. Variable contextual conditions are also discussed in the light of a typology of violence based on the extent of violence and the composition of direct and structural violence. Conscientization and education as praxis is viewed as basic in forming consciousness in which the individual and the world are constantly seen in relation to each other - in constant interplay leading to changes in both. Education as praxis is seen as a relevant educational strategy regardless of volume and blend of violence. Education as praxis is characterized by synchronism between cultural and structural change and is seen as an integrative concept in developing a common discourse for integrating peace education and conflict resolution.

1. Introduction

More than ten years after the United Nations Commission on Global Governance issued its report *Our Global Neighbourhood* (1995) the world does not seem to have progressed closer to the goal of strengthening the recognition of common rights and responsibilities such as respect for life, liberty, justice and equity, mutual respect, care and integrity. It seems evident that these core values need 1) to be implanted and/or strengthened in the rules of old and new institutions and 2) to find their cultural expression in the behavior of human beings. This would mean that both institutions and people have to change in case current practices are obstacles to the realization of these core values. It is argued in this chapter that much is to be gained by *simultaneous* change in culture and structure.

Central to the idea of synchronization is that the simultaneous change in both culture and structure would be the most efficient method towards global governance. If both roads are taken simultaneously the transformations would support each other and thereby result in more and “better” cultural and structural change. One-sided attempts at changing cultural preferences without consideration of structural change or structural change without regard to cultural preferences would be the opposite of synchronism. In attempts at changing smoking behaviors, for example, it would be ineffective to only disseminate information about how dangerous it is to smoke or only introducing laws about smoking without such information. What is necessary is to develop insight into the danger of smoking amongst the public at the same time as smoking rules are changed. Knowledge about the danger of smoking will contribute towards the acceptance by the public of laws prohibiting the habit in specific places and times – an experience reflected in policy making in many countries the last 20 years. The challenge of synchronization is therefore a challenge to policy makers formulating policies in harmony with the core values of global governance. And it is a challenge to social theorists who contribute to our understanding of how the behavior of individuals and groups relate to immediate contextual conditions in their communities as well as the macro structures regionally, nationally and globally. And it is a challenge to educators as the idea of simultaneous change in both culture and structure may be of special importance to educators because they are in a position to exert power and control in pedagogical practices fundamental to the formation of consciousness.

Consciousness about effective strategies of changing from violent behaviors and structures to peaceful behaviors and structures is seen as basic to the practice and institutionalization of core values necessary for global governance. However, as formal educational systems are under the control of governing authorities it may not be surprising to find that they are designed in ways that support, maintain and reinforce present political and economic systems. In cases of violent political and economic systems it would be an idealistic undertaking to assume that *official* discourses about pedagogical principles preferred in the formal educational system would comprise this aim of contributing towards effective ways of practicing and institutionalizing core values in harmony with global governance. It is more likely to find answers to this challenge of synchronism in the *professional* discourses in selected educational fields aiming at overcoming violence – also that violence which is structural. Thus, in the professional discourse in fields such as peace education and conflict resolution it might

be expected that this challenge of synchronization is made explicit and visible - a base on which to build pedagogical practice aiming at a world in peace and social justice. This expectation will be discussed in relation to the following question: How have the fields of peace education and conflict resolution met the challenge of synchronizing cultural and structural change? The first part of our answer deals with the question to what extent these two fields have developed a common concern about this challenge; a second part discusses how different contextual conditions make this challenge more or less difficult to overcome; and the final focus is on how the concept of 'education as praxis' represents an answer to this challenge independent of the volume and composition of different types of violence in the contextual conditions.

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Biographical Sketch

Magnus Haavelsrud is Professor of Education at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway. His work deals with the critique of the reproductive role of education and the

possibilities for transcendence of this reproduction in light of the traditions of educational sociology and peace research. He took part in the creation of the Peace Education Commission of the International Peace Research Association at the beginning of the 70's and served as the Commissions Executive Secretary 1975-79. He was the Program Chair for the World Conference on Education in 1974 and edited the proceedings from this conference entitled *Education for Peace: Reflection and Action*. He served as the Carl-von-Ossietzky Guest Professor of the German Council for Peace and Conflict Research. His publications include: *Education in Developments* (1996), *Perspektiv i utdanningssosiologi* (Perspectives in the Sociology of Education (1997, 2nd edition), *Education Within the Archipelago of Peace Research 1945 - 1964*, (co-authored with Mario Borrelli, 1993), *Disarming: Discourse on Violence and Peace* (editor, 1993) and *Approaching Disarmament Education* (Editor, 1981).

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